

Summer Homework – History Department @ Solihull Sixth Form College.

Welcome to the History Department at Solihull Sixth Form College. We look forward to meeting you! This Summer homework is designed to get you thinking and do some background reading ahead of September. Please give it your best time and attention – we would like to see your best work.

The Summer homework focuses on background reading to our course Germany 1919-1963 as this is the first course we study in the Autumn. It doesn't matter if you have studied Germany before or not – this should give you an introduction and will definitely extend your current knowledge. Later in the course we will study the Mid Tudor Crisis – Edward VI and Mary I and then the reign of Elizabeth I. In year 13 you will study Russia 1855-1964.

Please produce all of your Summer homework as a WORD document that could be sent or uploaded to your teacher. Your homework is your first impression to your teacher and we will be looking at this work.

TASK A.

1. Read the following article '*Hitler Overview*'. Then re-read it – some parts might need thinking about to understand!
2. What does this article reveal about Adolf Hitler? **Write a paragraph** explaining what the article says about him and why he came to hold absolute power in Germany. Look carefully at the ideas that are given in the article. You can include quotes but make sure you explain what you think they mean in your own words.
3. **Write down 4 or 5 questions** that would be interesting to ask about Hitler as a key individual in History. What do you want to know more about? What interests or intrigues you? Is there anything in the article you don't understand?
4. **Write a paragraph** explaining why YOU think it is important to study the rise of Hitler and his role in History. Give specific reasons and explain them. Be convincing!

Hitler Overview(From History Review)



This is the best known face of the last century. Its appearance on the cover of a book or magazine is known to increase sales by 25-50%. The political career of Adolf Hitler is the most fully documented this century, and more has been written about him than anyone else in history – with the possible exception of Jesus Christ. He provokes endless, sometimes barmy, internet questions and comments. Over 1000 biographies have been published. Yet, after 50 years of historical debate, the phenomenon of Hitler still amazes.

Alan Bullock points out that he began with no advantages (though not as humbly as he liked to claim), not even a citizen of the country he was to rule. Entirely reliant on his own resources, he came to wield in Germany an absolute power unequalled in a modern industrialised state. His domination of Europe, comparable to Napoleon's at his height, was broken only by the combined efforts of the three most powerful nations in the world. How did he do it? Not through hard graft, as he was in some ways lazy, often bored by his administrative duties. Bullock draws attention to his mastery of the irrational in politics, gift for simplification, sense of timing, opportunism, strength of purpose in pursuing his aims, unshakable belief in himself as a man chosen by destiny. His main qualification for politics was arguably his staggering gifts as an orator – 'a mass psychologist of really diabolical genius' (Schacht).

Adolf Hitler poses unique problems for historians. 'The Nazi period in German history is an object of academic historical enquiry and detailed scholarly research. It is also a live and painful issue for thousands of Germans and other Europeans, the explanation of why they have no relatives or children. (Michael Burleigh). For many Germans, 1933-45 is a black hole in their history, which somehow has to be reinvented. Twinned with this problem is the puzzle of Hitler's personal responsibility for two of the greatest catastrophes in world history – World War Two and the Holocaust. He is the supreme example of the debate about the historical role of 'great' individuals – whether the Hitlers and Napoleons bend social, economic and demographic forces to their will or are their prisoner.

Both these dilemmas are addressed in AJP Taylors *Origins of the Second World War*, which is the start of modern revisionism. Little can be discovered so long as we go on attributing everything that happened to Hitler. He supplied a powerful dynamic element, but it was fuel to an existing engine. He was in part the creation of Versailles, in part the creation of ideas that were common contemporary Europe. Most of all, he was the creation of German history and of the German present. He would have counted for nothing without the support and cooperation of the German people. He gave orders, which Germans executed, of a wickedness without parallel in civilised history. His foreign policy was a different matter. He aimed to make Germany the dominant power in Europe and maybe, more remotely, in the world. Others have pursued similar aims, and still do. Other powers treat smaller countries as their satellites. Other powers defend their vital interests by force of arms. In international affairs there was nothing wrong with Hitler except that he was a German.

It is remarkable how much of the current historical agenda is here. Taylor encompasses the issues of whether he was product or creator of the times he lived in, whether he worked to a monstrous blueprint in foreign policy or instinctively followed more normal paths of self-interest, even the complicity of the Germany people – the subject of Goldhagen's recent and controversial *Hitler's Willing Executioners*. (1996).

TASK B

Task B looks at the impact of World War One on Germany.

1. On a WORD document, insert a table like this then complete it using the information below. This should be clear notes -a summary of the text in your own words.

Social Impact of WW1 on Germany (And Physical impact)	Economic Impact of WW1 on Germany	Political impact of WW1 on Germany.

2. What do YOU think had the greatest impact on Germany?**Write a paragraph explaining your answer.**You could consider both short-term and long-term impact. Again, be convincing and give reasons for your answer.
3. Can you see anything here that *might help explain* the rise of Hitler? Explain what you think and why.

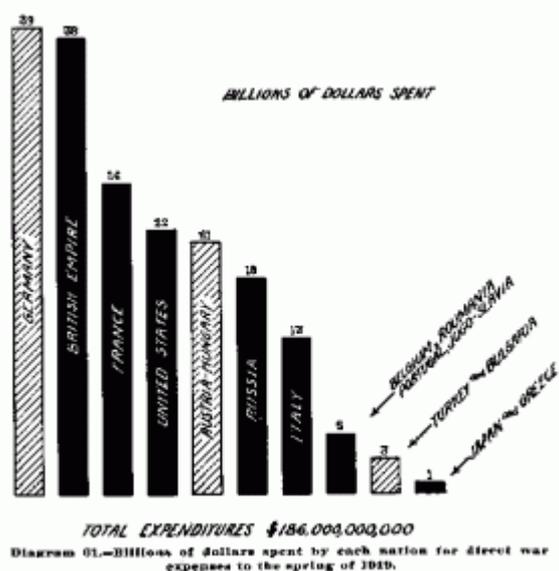
The Impact of the First World War on Germany

Social consequences of the War

German society changed enormously as a result of the war. During the war the percentage of women in the workforce had risen to 37%, a massive rise. At the end of the war this figure did not fall dramatically, meaning that from now on women had a significant role to play in the German economy. The reaction of many Germans to the ending of the war also had a large impact on Germany society. Many of the former soldiers were of the opinion that they had not lost the war, they believed that the army had been cheated. (Hitler later phrased this as 'The Stab in the back'). As a consequence of this, many Germans looked for people to blame. Some lay the blame in the hands of the Kaiser. Others, many others, looked to the new Government. They had immediately sued for peace and accepted the terms of the Armistice. For many Germans this showed that they were largely to blame. Other theories that were popular amongst the former soldiers were that it was the result of Communists or Jews. So in the immediate Post War era, there was a mass of suspicion within Germany. Combined with these factors is the potential threat to the social order. Under the Kaiser the armed forces and aristocratic Prussian elite had enjoyed many privileges. These groups now had to try and re-establish their authority. In a democracy this proves difficult and can lead to further tension. The first President of the Weimar republic, Ebert, worked hard to try and win the support of the elite groups. he wanted their support in order to maximise the stability of the new republic. Likewise he had to work hard to gain the support of the army, who in return needed his support if they were to survive as a significant political power in the years following the peace settlement.

Economic Consequences of the War

The economic consequences of the war were dire for Germany. This diagram illustrates the cost of the war for each of the major participants:



The cost during the war was bordering on \$40 Billion. Consider the fact that there has been 85 years of inflation since this expenditure, in modern terms this figure would be closer to \$1100 Billion.

The German economy had suffered terribly during the war. Industrial output fell by over 40% between 1914 and 1918. Machinery was, at the end of the war, obsolete in many cases, run by ill trained people – remember that millions of working men had been killed in the war. The workforce was not physically fit enough to work as hard as required as food shortages had been so bad that, “Germans ate dogs, crows, zoo animals and rodents, and even the front-line troops were reduced to meagre portions of horse-meat.” Estimates suggest that up to 35% of all trade was organised illegally on the Black market. The economy also suffered from shortages of raw materials. From 1915 until the end of the war, Germans were forbidden to drive a car. The situation hardly improved as a result of the Armistice, the Germans hadn't the means to purchase fuel on a large scale and found it difficult to purchase raw materials in any case as the international community shunned them as a consequence of the war.

Political impact of the war

This is the most obvious area of change. It signalled the end of the Second Reich. This led to the Kaiser being forced into abdication. In turn, this left a power vacuum that was filled first by an interim government and then by the Weimar Republic. However, there were other political consequences of the war that may be less obvious. The food shortages across Germany led to a radicalisation of people's views. As a result, extremist views, such as communism, became widely supported, particularly in the industrial cities. In 1919 there were several Left Wing uprisings; The Spartacists attempting a revolution in Berlin and a short lived Soviet Republic was formed in Bavaria. The implications of these uprisings was great. The government was forced to make use of a body called the Freikorps. This group was made up of disillusioned soldiers, who were right wing in their beliefs. Some historians argue that the methods employed by the government at this early stage of its existence, led partially to the governments fall 14 years later.

Germany was extremely isolated at the end of the war. Trade was hard to come by as most of her previous trading partners now shunned Germany, preferring to do business with the victorious Allies. Likewise, the Germans struggled diplomatically, most notoriously their views were ignored at the Peace conference at Versailles.

Physical cost of the war

The cost of the First World War for Germany is estimated to be in the region of \$38 Billion. In addition to this consider the massive loss of life. Germany suffered the loss of 1.7 million young men, with another 4.3 million men being wounded during the conflict. The total casualties amounted to over 7 million, though this includes some men who were prisoners or missing.

TASK C

Task C asks you to do some background reading about how Germany transitioned from a country run by the KAISER (During WW1 and before) to a democratic country after WW1.

1. Read the article below about the forming of the Weimar Republic. You may find it helpful to highlight key parts but don't go too crazy on the highlighters!
2. **Start a GLOSSARY** in your word document to include at least the following words. Add any other words you feel unsure about. You may need to use the internet/a revision guide or a dictionary.

KAISER

REPUBLIC

WEIMAR REPUBLIC

ABDICATION

DEMOCRACY

COALITION GOVERNMENT

SPD (GERMANY)

REICHSTAG

SPARTACISTS

CONSTITUTION

3. **Make notes OR draw a diagram** explaining how the new Weimar Government Constitution would work. Consider the roles of the President, the Chancellor and the Reichstag particularly.
4. Finally, **write down any CHALLENGES** that you think the new democratic government (the Weimar Government) will face from what you've read in this homework. If you have any prior knowledge feel free to add this as well.

Forming of the Weimar Republic

The forming of the Weimar Republic

The Weimar Republic was announced following the abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II in November 1918. The removal of the Emperor left an apparent power vacuum, with no Head of State the political structure of the Second Reich was obsolete, and an alternative form of government would have to be established. In fact the move towards a different form of Government had begun prior to the Kaisers abdication. As it became apparent to the German High Command that the war was lost, moves were made to not only sue for peace but to amend the way in which the decision-making process was conducted in Germany.

In October of 1918 a significant change in the construction was instigated. The Chancellor and his ministers were no longer accountable directly to the Kaiser. Removed from the construction was the right of the Kaiser to install and remove his chief minister as he saw fit. From this point onwards the Chancellor was accountable to the Reichstag. *Thus the first moves towards a democratic state were made prior to the abdication of Wilhelm II. This is significant in that this illustrates that there was recognition of the need to change.* What is open to debate is where the pressure for this change came from. Historians are split as to whether the impetus for change came from the High Command and the Kaiser himself, or whether pressure from leading members of the Reichstag led to the change in the construction. Whichever interpretation is more valid, it meant that upon the Kaiser's abdication, there was still a form of government in which authority, no matter how much weakened, was held. This meant that to an extent the power vacuum left by the abdication was filled, if left in an extremely precarious position.

Interim Government

On November 9th 1918 Prince Max von Baden, the Imperial Chancellor, announced the abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm and the Crown Prince. He also transferred his own position of Chancellor to Friedrich Ebert, leader of the SPD. Ebert immediately set about forming a coalition government that could administer Germany in the interim. He made an agreement with the USPD, a Socialist party, which placated many of the disillusioned workers, soldiers and sailors. Workers and soldiers councils confirmed this on 10th November. Also on 10th November the armed forces agreed to support the new government, on the understanding that the government would support the High Command in its attempts to preserve high levels of discipline within the forces (Mutinies were common at this point, see notes on the problems Weimar faced upon its inception).



The interim government was faced almost immediately with problems. In December the left wing Spartacist group held a demonstration that had to be suppressed by use of armed forces. In January 1919 this group again threatened the fledgling government, as the Spartacist Uprising occurred. Again the interim government made use of force to quell the rebellion. Following the successful defeat of the Spartacists, elections were held across Germany for the National Assembly.

The Weimar Government and the formation of the Constitution

The early meetings of the newly elected National Assembly were held in the quiet town of Weimar. Between February and August 1919, much of the work of the representatives was focused upon

forming a constitution and establishing the mechanisms within which democratic government would work within the German Republic. The process was so lengthy as many aspects of the constitution had to be redrafted as they moved power from local state governments to the central authorities, for example. The following is an overview of the main features of the constitution that emerged in August of 1919.

The President

The constitution of the Weimar Republic stated that the people would elect the President. The term of the presidency was set at 7 years. The President had a range of powers that need careful analysis when evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the constitution. These included: The President was the head of the armed forces; The President chose the Chancellor and had the legal right to dismiss him; It was the President who decided when to call elections, therefore allowing him to dismiss governments; Article 48 of the constitution allowed the President to rule independently of the Reichstag in the case of national emergency and; The President had the right to call referendums.

The Reichstag

The Reichstag was the main legislative body under the Weimar constitution. Members of the Reichstag were elected using a system of Proportional Representation based on Universal Suffrage for all adults aged 20 or older. This system worked as follows. Germany was divided into electoral regions. Within each of these regions a political party would put forward a number of candidates. The number of these who became deputies within the Reichstag was based on the total number of votes the party received within that electoral region. One member could be sent for every 60,000 votes cast for the party.

The elected deputies then sat in the Reichstag. The leader of the most powerful elected party would usually then be appointed Chancellor by the President. The Chancellor could then choose his own Cabinet from the elected deputies. The Chancellor and the Cabinet answered to the Reichstag, so they were reliant upon the continued support of the majority of deputies. Should they lose the support of the majority a vote of no confidence was sufficient for the President to dismiss the Chancellor and either call new elections or appoint an alternative Chancellor.

It was the Reichstag that debated issues and voted on proposed legislation. Once passed by the Reichstag the legislation would then be debated in the Reichsrat, the second German house of Parliament where it would be either ratified or rejected.

The Reichsrat

The Reichsrat was the second Parliamentary house. Each of the Regional governments could appoint members to this house. The numbers of members sent to this house by any state were roughly in proportion to the size of the state, though the constitution forbade any one state having more than two fifths of the representatives in the Reichsrat. This was to prevent larger states, Prussia for example, dominating proceedings. The Reichsrat had limited authority. It could not propose legislation nor could it amend it. Its function was to offer advice and it had the right to reject legislation that was approved by the Reichstag.

Regional Government

Each of the states that make up Germany retained its own State Parliament. These governments controlled education, operated the local police force and Judiciary and managed local affairs. Under the Weimar constitution several powers that had previously been held by the States now moved to central control, most notably control of the armed forces.

Referendums

The constitution of the Weimar republic allowed the people to force a referendum on issues. In order to do this 10% of the electorate needed to sign a petition in favour of a proposal. Were the Reichstag to dismiss the proposal it then had to go to a referendum. This would allow the people to vote on the issue, answering a single question with a 'Yes' or 'No' vote.

The guarantee of rights

The constitution also had a section that guaranteed the basic rights of German citizens. In this section the constitution outlined the right to localised self-government, a 'dignified existence for all people', economic freedoms, religious freedom and freedom of the Trade Unions. These rights were not only guaranteed but also supported by the development of additional welfare measures such as unemployment benefits, sick pay and the establishment of labour exchanges.

Well done on completing your Summer homework. We hope it stretched you and made you think! Keep this work ready to submit to your new teacher in September - you will be asked to upload it as a word document.