

The abdication of the Kaiser and the German Revolution 1918-19

- ❑ By November 1918 Germany was suffering after 4 years of the Great War. 1.8 million soldiers had been killed and German civilians were starving due to a lack of food and a naval blockade by the Allies.
- ❑ Many people blamed the King of Germany – Kaiser Wilhelm II who had led Germany for the past 20 years as a dictator.
- ❑ Sailors at the German naval base of Kiel mutinied (refused to follow orders) and strikes and protests spread across Germany. It was clear that Germany was about to lose the war but the Allies insisted the Kaiser must abdicate (resign).
- ❑ On 9 November Kaiser Wilhelm abdicated. Germany became a republic and on 10 November a new democratic government led by President Ebert was set up. On 11th November the new Republic signed an armistice with the Allies to end the war and Germany surrendered.

Strengths and weaknesses of the new German Republic and the Constitution

- ❑ The new German Republic was very democratic but it faced lots of difficulties and had lots of enemies that did not want to see it succeed. **Germans were not used to democracy** and it was not immediately welcomed.
- ❑ In January 1919 a new German Constitution (rules to say how the country would be run) was established. It was **very democratic** but it also had weaknesses which would later create instability.
- ❑ Strengths of the Constitution: All men and women over 20 could vote. The President was the Head of State, elected every 7 years and had the power to appoint and/or sack the Chancellor (Head of Government). **Proportional Representation** in elections meant that the percentage of votes won equalled the proportion of seats in the Reichstag (the German Parliament). This was very fair.
- ❑ Weaknesses of the Constitution: **Article 48** said that in an emergency the President could take control and pass laws without the Reichstag. This was a bit like dictatorship. Proportional Representation made it difficult for any one party to have an overall majority in the Reichstag which led to coalition governments. PR also allowed small extreme parties to win seats.

Reactions to the Treaty of Versailles

- ❑ On 28 June 1919 Germany was forced to sign the very unpopular Treaty of Versailles and it treated Germany very harshly:
 - Germany was forced to accept blame for starting the war (Article 231 the War Guilt clause)
 - Germany had to pay reparations to the Allies, later set at 6.6 billion pounds.
 - The German Army was not allowed tanks, submarines or an airforce and only 100,000 soldiers.
 - 10% of Germany's land was taken away including all its overseas territories. This included 13% of Germany's population as well as raw materials and industry.

- ❑ Germans were furious with the Treaty of Versailles. They were humiliated, felt that reparations were too high and territory taken away made Germany insecure and undermined the economy.

- ❑ The new Weimar Republic was blamed for accepting the Treaty of Versailles. Many Germans blamed them for accepting the armistice in November 1918. Some believed that Germany could have continued fighting the war and that Germany was "Stabbed in the back" by the "November Criminals" (the new government who they saw as traitors).

Challenge from the Left – The Spartacist Uprising 1919

- ❑ Most Germans accepted the Weimar Republic but there were still powerful opponents (both left-wing and right-wing) who hated democracy and wanted to see an end to Weimar democracy.
- ❑ The Spartacist League (later known as the German Communist Party or KPD) was a communist group led by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. They wanted Germany to have a communist revolution like the one that took place in Russia in 1917. They did not think Ebert's government was ruling in the interests of the workers.
- ❑ In January 1919 the Spartacists began an uprising in Berlin. They took control of government buildings and telegraph and newspaper offices and encouraged workers to seize control of the city. There wasn't enough widespread support for the uprising however.
- ❑ To fight back Ebert's government ordered the Army, helped by the Freikorps (right wing, nationalist, ex-WWI soldiers who still had weapons and hated the left wingers), to fight back and crush the rebellion. Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were both killed by the Freikorps and order was restored.

Challenge from the Right – The Kapp Putsch 1920

- ❑ In March 1920 there was a right-wing attempt to get rid of the Weimar Republic.
- ❑ The Freikorps were furious about the Treaty of Versailles and plans to reduce the size of the Army. They refused to hand back the weapons they had used to defeat the Spartacists and instead organised an attempted take-over of Berlin. The plan was to take over the Weimar government and replace it with a right-wing dictatorship under the leadership of Wolfgang Kapp.
- ❑ 12,000 Freikorps marched on Berlin. The Army refused to fire on their right-wing friends who were former soldiers so Ebert's government fled Berlin to the safer town of Weimar (hence its name).
- ❑ In order to stop the Kapp Putsch (uprising) from succeeding, Ebert's government ordered the ordinary workers of Berlin to not cooperate with the Freikorps and to go on strike. There was a general strike and Kapp was left in charge of a city that was not working. Kapp's Putsch collapsed after 4 days and he fled Germany.
- ❑ The Weimar Republic survived this latest attempt to see it crushed but still had many enemies.

French occupation of the Ruhr, 1923

- ❑ In 1921 Germany was ordered to pay reparations of 100,000,000 pounds per year for 66 years. It managed to pay at the end of 1921 but in 1922 announced that it could not afford to pay.
- ❑ France did not believe Germany could not pay and in January 1923 French and Belgian troops invaded the industrial area of Germany known as the Ruhr. Troops occupied the area for ten months, taking industrial goods from factories to pay the reparations.
- ❑ In response, the Weimar government ordered the workers of the Ruhr to refuse to cooperate with the French and Belgian soldiers and begin passive resistance. This involved going on strike and refusing to work, sometimes sabotaging factory equipment.
- ❑ Passive resistance caused more economic problems for the Weimar government because Germany was not producing goods and making as much money and in addition the government promised to pay the workers their wages while they were on strike.

Causes and effects of Hyperinflation, 1923

- ❑ The French occupation of the Ruhr and the Weimar government's policy of passive resistance meant that Germany lost money. To make up for this shortfall it decided to print more money. This was disastrous because the more bank notes that were in circulation, the more their value dropped.
- ❑ This led to hyperinflation, when prices were rising at an incredible rate and money became worthless.
- ❑ In the short term, prices sky-rocketed. A loaf of bread in 1918 cost 0.63 marks. By July 1923 it was over 3000 marks and by November 1923 it cost 201,000,000,000 marks!!
- ❑ Those on fixed incomes like pensioners were hit hardest and the middle classes saw the value of their savings were worthless. Millions were plunged into poverty overnight and resorted to bartering for goods. The Weimar Government was blamed for this mess.
- ❑ Some people did benefit from hyperinflation – people with loans and mortgages could pay off what they owed more quickly and some businesses made a profit because prices rose faster than wages.

The work of Gustav Stresemann, 1923-29

- ❑ Gustav Stresemann was a hugely influential German politician who served as Chancellor in 1923 and then Foreign Minister 1924-29.
- ❑ He ended the hyperinflation crisis of 1923 and the French occupation of the Ruhr.
- ❑ Stresemann also restored Germany's international reputation by improving its relations with foreign countries.
- ❑ The period of stability in the years 1924-29 is sometimes referred to as the 'Golden Era' of the Weimar Republic or the 'Stresemann Era'.

The Rentenmark

- ❑ In order to solve the hyperinflation crisis in 1923 Stresemann introduced a new, temporary currency called the Rentenmark.
- ❑ All the old banknotes were recalled and destroyed. They were replaced by the Rentenmark and only a limited supply of these new notes were printed and put into circulation. 1 Rentenmark was equal to 1,000,000,000,000 old marks. The value of the new currency increased and the economic situation stabilised.
- ❑ In 1924 the Rentenmark was replaced by a permanent currency called the Reichsmark. This way, inflation was brought under control.

The Dawes Plan (1924) and the Young Plan (1929)

- ❑ To help the German economy, Stresemann organised loans from the USA and American banks. These loans gave a massive boost to help kick-start the economy.
- ❑ The Dawes Plan of 1924 was arranged by the US politician Charles Dawes. As part of the plan it was agreed that Germany could have longer to pay back its reparations to the Allies and payments were linked to Germany's economic performance.
- ❑ With the extra money German industrial production reached pre-war levels by 1928 and wages and pensions rose. More money was spent on improved housing, hospitals, schools and roads.
- ❑ As a result of the Dawes Plan Germany resumed its reparations and France agreed to remove its troops from the Ruhr.
- ❑ In 1929 the Young Plan reduced reparations from 6.6bn to under 2bn pounds.
- ❑ Despite these improvements, many Germans were still unhappy that the Weimar Government was cooperating with reparations and therefore accepting blame for the war. Right-wingers regarded this as a betrayal.

Successes abroad – Stresemann's foreign policy

- ❑ Stresemann realised that Germany was in no position to fight against the Treaty of Versailles so he relied on international diplomacy to improve Germany's position in the world:
- ❑ **The Locarno Pact, 1925.** Germany signed an agreement with Britain, France, Belgium and Italy to respect the borders in Western Europe that the Treaty of Versailles had established. This improved relations between Germany and France and led to more cooperation.
- ❑ **The League of Nations, 1926.** Germany had been banned from the League of Nations which had been set up as part of the Treaty of Versailles to keep world peace. In 1926 Germany was given a permanent seat on the League of Nations Council and returned Germany's "great power" status.
- ❑ **The Kellogg-Briand Pact, 1928.** This was an agreement signed by Germany and 64 other nations to resolve international disputes "by peaceful means". This pact further improved international trust in Germany while confirming its status as a great power.

Hitler's changes to the German Workers' Party 1920-22

- ❑ Hitler joined the small German Workers' Party (DAP) in 1919 and its leader, Anton Drexler, put Hitler in charge of party propaganda. In 1920 the name of the party was changed to the NSDAP – the National Socialist German Workers' Party – Nazi for short.
- ❑ The Nazi Party was extreme right-wing nationalist. Among its 25 Point Programme the Nazis wanted to replace the Weimar Republic and democracy, get rid of the Treaty of Versailles, ban Jews from German citizenship and create a union between Germany and Austria.
- ❑ In 1921 Hitler replaced Drexler as leader of the NSDAP. He controlled the party with strict leadership demanding complete loyalty. The Swastika became the Party symbol and the distinctive arm salute and "Heil Hitler" were introduced. The Nazis also bought a newspaper to spread their views but they were still one of many small political parties in Germany.
- ❑ Also in 1921 Hitler established the SA (Sturmabteilung meaning "stormtroopers"). This was the Nazi's private army and they wore a brown uniform with the nickname 'brownshirts'.

Causes, events and effects of the Munich Putsch (1923)

- ❑ The Occupation of the Ruhr in 1923 and the hyperinflation crisis that followed it was seen as a humiliation of Germany by right wingers and nationalists. This prompted the Nazis to organise a putsch – an attempt to take power using force - in Munich where the Party had stronger support. The plan was to take control of the Munich government and march onto Berlin.
- ❑ On the night of 8 November Hitler hijacked a political meeting of nationalist politicians in a beer hall in Munich. He was supported by ex-WWI General Ludendorff and 2,000 Nazis who began taking over government buildings. The next day they marched through Munich but were stopped and shot at by armed police. 16 Nazis were killed. Hitler escaped in the chaos and arrested later.
- ❑ Hitler was put on trial in 1924. He pleaded guilty and used the publicity of the trial to argue that the Weimar Republic's leaders were the "November criminals" who had betrayed Germany and accepted the humiliation of the Treaty of Versailles. Hitler was able to present himself as a spokesman for all right wing nationalists and he impressed many.
- ❑ The judge was sympathetic to Hitler. He gave him a very lenient sentence for treason of only 5 years in jail with the opportunity of early release. He served only 9 months. In the short term the Munich Putsch was a disaster for the Nazis but in the long term it gave Hitler the opportunity to reorganise and take a different approach.

Reorganisation of the Nazi Party (1924-28)

- ❑ Hitler served only 9 months in jail and in that time wrote his popular memoir Mein Kampf (My Struggle).
- ❑ Hitler decided that the Nazis needed to change their tactics in order to achieve power. Instead of gaining power through a violent takeover he decided to out-vote the political parties in the Reichstag and win support through democratic ways.
- ❑ The structure of the Nazi Party was changed: Local branches of the NSDAP were set up throughout Germany. The youth wing of the Nazi Party was formed in 1926 called the Hitler Youth. The SS (blackshirts) were established as Hitler's private body guard.
- ❑ The tactics were changed to gain more votes: Joseph Goebbels was put in charge of propaganda and rallies were organised to show the might of the party. By 1928 there were 100,000 members. The SA were encouraged to tone down their violence to give the impression of order.
- ❑ Despite these changes the Nazi Party by 1928 still only gained 12 seats in the Reichstag.

Impact of the Great Depression

- ❑ The Wall Street Crash in October 1929 led to the collapse of the US stock market and a worldwide depression. Many countries suffered economically but Germany was worst hit because it relied on US loans for its recovery in the 1920s.
- ❑ US banks recalled their loans and German businesses lost money and were forced to close down or lay off their workers. This led to mass unemployment in Germany. By the end of 1932 there were 6 million Germans unemployed. People went hungry and homeless.
- ❑ The Chancellor from 1930-32 was Brüning. He was nicknamed the "hunger Chancellor" as his coalition government cut unemployment benefits to save money and struggled to agree on how best to tackle the Depression.
- ❑ As a result of the failure of Brüning's government, political parties that were anti-democracy like the Communists and the Nazis gained more and more votes.
- ❑ In 1928 the Nazis only had 12 seats in the Reichstag. By 1930 they had 107 and by 1932 they were the largest party in the Reichstag with 230 seats.

Nazi methods to win support, 1929-33

- ❑ The Nazis were skilled at using propaganda. They concentrated on simple, easy to repeat messages that appealed to a wide audience like "Work and Bread" and presented Hitler as "Our Last Hope".
- ❑ Nazi propaganda also focused on the **threat of a communist takeover** and increasing numbers of middle class Germans voted Nazi.
- ❑ Hitler was **presented as a strong leader** at a time when leadership was needed as the Weimar government drifted from crisis to crisis. He entered the 1932 election for President and polled 12m votes coming second to President Hindenburg's 18m but still ran an impressive campaign.
- ❑ The Nazis **appealed to a broad range of people**. As well as middle class Germans who feared the growth of communism, they also received large donations from German businessmen to pay for their campaigning. Hitler appealed to many younger voters and his charisma attracted the votes of women. Farmers were also keen supporters of the Nazis because they campaigned effectively in many rural areas.

The role of the SA

- ❑ Led by **Ernst Rohm**, many SA members were ex-Freikorps. The SA often recruited from the ranks of young unemployed men who were grateful for a job, a uniform and a community of like-minded people to belong to.
- ❑ They helped control crowds at Nazi events and provided protection. They also beat up opponents at political meetings, especially the KPD.
- ❑ By 1931 there were 3 million members of the SA.
- ❑ There were frequent fights on the streets between the police, Communists and Nazis. Hitler knew that this disorder alarmed many middle class Germans and exploited this by presenting the SA as the guardians of order at a time of chaos.

Roles of von Papen, von Schleicher and von Hindenburg

- ❑ In the November 1932 Election the Nazis were still the largest party in the Reichstag but polled 2 million votes less than in July 1932 and had 38 fewer seats. Surprisingly it was at this point that Hitler was chosen by Hindenburg as Chancellor in January 1933. The leading politicians made a **deal to try and control Hitler** but the plan backfired.
- ❑ Hindenburg as President had ruled by decree using Article 48 of the Constitution since 1930. He used this power to appoint and sack Chancellors who he thought could deal with the economy and the threat of the Communists.
- ❑ In July 1932 Hindenburg appointed **Franz Von Papen**, leader of the Catholic Centre Party, as Chancellor. The Nazis were the largest party by far but Hindenburg hated Hitler and did not want him as Chancellor.
- ❑ Von Papen lasted until November when there was another election and **Kurt Von Schleicher** was appointed in December 1932. He fared no better.
- ❑ On 30 January 1933 Hitler was eventually appointed Chancellor after Hindenburg reluctantly agreed. **Von Papen persuaded Hindenburg that as Vice Chancellor he would be able to control Hitler and the other two Nazis in a Cabinet of 12 ministers.** They underestimated him.

Setting up of the Nazi dictatorship

- In your classwork / notes you have learned the mnemonic **CFEETLANDO** to remember the sequence of events that led from Hitler becoming Chancellor in January 1933 to becoming the Fuhrer by August 1934. This sequence of events turned Germany from a democracy into a dictatorship.
- C is for **C**hancellor in January 1933
- F is for **F**ire in the Reichstag in February 1933
- E is for **E**lection of March 1933
- E is for **E**nabling Act May 1933
- T is for **T**rade Unions banned in May 1933
- LA is for **L**aw **A**gainst New Parties July 1933
- N is for **N**ight of the Long Knives June 1934
- D is for **D**eath of Hindenburg August 1934
- O is for **O**ath of Loyalty to the Fuhrer August 1934
- The next slides look into detail at the key developments...

Setting up the Nazi dictatorship: The Reichstag Fire

- ❑ On 28 February 1933, just a week before the planned March election, the Reichstag building caught fire and was badly damaged.
- ❑ A **Dutch communist called Marianus van der Lubbe** was caught and confessed to setting fire to the Reichstag. Historians are unsure whether van der Lubbe was behind the attack or whether he was set up and the Nazis deliberately caused the fire to blame the communists.
- ❑ Hitler used the attack on the Reichstag to **declare a state of emergency** and he had **communist leaders arrested** and banned from the forthcoming election.

Setting up the Nazi dictatorship: The Enabling Act

- ❑ The March Election gave the Nazis 43% of seats in the Reichstag but they did not have the **66% majority they needed to pass an Enabling Act** and change the rules of the constitution.
- ❑ Hitler wanted to pass an Enabling Act which would give him as Chancellor to suspend the Reichstag and **make laws without the Reichstag's consent for a period of 4 years**. This would effectively end democracy in Germany.
- ❑ Hitler managed to do a **deal with the Catholic Centre Party**, who agreed to voting with the Nazis and backing the Enabling Act in return for a promise from the Nazis that they would not interfere with the Catholic schools and religion.
- ❑ The vote on the Enabling Act took place in May 1933 at the Kroll Opera House (the temporary Reichstag as the Reichstag Building had been damaged in the fire). The total votes were 444 to 94 against. **Only the SPD politicians voted against the Enabling Act, bravely ignoring the intimidation** from the SA as they entered the building.
- ❑ Hitler went on to use the Enabling Act to ban all other Nazi opposition like trade unions and other political parties and **create a one-party state** dictatorship.

Setting up the Nazi dictatorship: Night of the Long Knives

- ❑ By 1934 the Nazis had established a dictatorship and got rid of most political opposition. They had also begun to "Nazify" many aspects of German society. However, Hitler was not completely in control. Technically he could still be dismissed as Chancellor by President Hindenburg, so he still had to tread carefully.
- ❑ Hindenburg was Head of State and also Commander in Chief of the Army. The Army leaders were concerned at the growth of the SA brownshirts, who numbered 3 million and their leader Ernst Rohm had ambitions for the SA to become the official German Army.
- ❑ Hitler needed to deal with Rohm. They had been good friends but Rohm disagreed with some of Hitler's actions since becoming Chancellor and was in danger of sabotaging Hitler's plan to take over the role of President when Hindenburg eventually died.
- ❑ On the night of 30 June 1934 Hitler acted ruthlessly. With the help of Himmler's SS blackshirts, he organised the arrest and **murder of over 400 SA leaders including Rohm**. Several other high profile opponents of the Nazis were also killed.
- ❑ The Night of the Long Knives consolidated Hitler's power as leader and made the official German Army happier about his future position as their leader.

Setting up the Nazi dictatorship: Hitler as 'Führer'

- ❑ In August 1934, just weeks after the Night of the Long Knives, President Hindenburg died of old age.
- ❑ On his death, Hitler combined the roles of Chancellor and President and became known as the **Führer (meaning *Leader*)**.
- ❑ Hitler was now leader of the Government, Head of State and also Commander in Chief of the Army. He had total political control.
- ❑ To ensure his position Hitler got the **Army** to swear **an oath of personal loyalty** to him as Führer. The Army were happy to do this because Hitler had already removed the potential threat of the SA in the Night of the Long Knives.

The Nazi police state

- ❑ The Nazis won over many supporters through promises and propaganda, but critics and opponents of the Nazis were controlled through repression and the threat of force. Germany became a **totalitarian state** (a country where the government totally controlled all aspects of life and forbid opposition).
- ❑ The **SS** led by **Henirich Himmler** was set up in 1925. Known as the blackshirts it was fiercely loyal to Hitler. Its job was to destroy Nazi opposition and implement racial policies. It later became responsible for running the camps and implementing the Final Solution.
- ❑ **Concentration camps** like Dachau were initially set up in 1933 to jail political opponents like socialists and communists. Conditions were harsh, food was limited and hard labour compulsory. Prisoners were regularly beaten up and sometimes killed. By 1939 1.3m Germans had spent some time in a camp.
- ❑ **The Gestapo** (secret state police) was set up in 1933 by Himmler to spy on the people and root out opponents. It was greatly feared and got a lot of its information from members of the public who informed on their neighbours out of spite. People became frightened to talk openly.
- ❑ The **police and courts** were controlled by the Nazis and judges were loyal to Hitler. Opponents rarely received a fair trial and could be kept indefinitely in police custody.

Nazi control: censorship

- ❑ The Nazis controlled the ideas that people were exposed to by using censorship. Propaganda was used to promote Nazi ideals, but censorship prevented any non-Nazi ideas emerging.
- ❑ Joseph Goebbels was the Minister for Propaganda and Enlightenment. He ensured that the media, culture and information that Germans received was the "Nazi" version only.
- ❑ Radio, books, films and newspapers were all censored so that only Nazi approved content was allowed. Cheap radios called "People's Receivers" were designed so that they could not pick up foreign radio programmes. All books were had to be pre-approved by Goebbels. Non-Nazi newspapers were shut down. Actors and directors critical of the Nazis were forced to flee abroad.
- ❑ The Nazis held "book burning" ceremonies where non-Nazi books were publicly destroyed.
- ❑ All media and culture promoted official Nazi view. Themes such as Aryan superiority, Germany regaining its strength, hatred of the Treaty of Versailles, the inferiority of communists and Jews and the importance of traditional values like a woman's place being in the home were common themes.

Nazi control: the use of propaganda

- ❑ Propaganda was used extensively by the Nazis. Once in power they could use the apparatus of the state to push their messages more widely and effectively. **Joseph Goebbels** was the **Minister for Propaganda and Enlightenment** and was extremely effective at pushing Nazi ideas.
- ❑ **Simple messages** repeated often was the key to effective propaganda. The Nazis controlled all media and culture and information was censored to only promote the Nazi view.
- ❑ The film industry made over 100 movies a year. Goebbels realised people had to be entertained so subtle propaganda messages were included in films like comedies and love stories. For example the evil characters might be Jewish or the good characters might follow Nazi ideals and love their Fuhrer. Musicians, actors and artists all had to be members of the **Reich Chamber of Culture**.
- ❑ **Mass Rallies** were used by the Nazis to promote their values. The most famous and spectacular were the Nuremberg Rallies held every summer. There were parades, airforce fly-pasts, gymnastic displays, choirs and fireworks and the highlight was often a speech by Hitler. They were impressive and showed the strength of the regime.

Nazi control of Education

- ❑ The Nazi Education minister Bernhard Rust said that “the purpose of Education is to produce Nazis”. This involved using the classroom to indoctrinate students so that they would not question Nazi ideals.
- ❑ The school curriculum was changed to help indoctrinate children. Subjects like History had textbooks re-written to tell the Nazi version of events. More PE and sports made sure the population was fitter. Nazi Party Beliefs was introduced as a new subject.
- ❑ Eugenics and Race Theory were also taught so children believed in the superiority of the Aryan race and the inferiority of Jews and other non-Aryans. Girls were given lessons on how to be good housewives and mothers.
- ❑ Teachers were sacked if they did not join the Nazi Teacher’s League.

Nazi policies towards women

- ❑ The Nazis believed that women were important and that their role was to support their family and bring up as many children as possible with Nazi ideals.
- ❑ The phrase "Kinder, Kirche, Kuche" meaning "Children, Church and Kitchen" summed up the interests of the ideal Nazi woman.
- ❑ Women were encouraged to have as many babies as possible. Marriage loans were offered as an incentive to start a family early and medals called the German Mothers' Cross were awarded to women with 5 (bronze), 6 (silver) or 8 children (gold).
- ❑ Contraception was banned and divorces were easier to obtain so women could re-marry quickly and have more children.
- ❑ Women were not encouraged to work and those in the professions like lawyers and doctors were forced to leave their jobs. Married working women in professions were sacked.

Nazi policies towards young people

- ❑ Young people were very important to the Nazis. They were easily influenced and the Nazis wanted all young people to become committed Nazi followers.
- ❑ Education and schools were used to indoctrinate young people.
- ❑ Outside school hours, the Nazis took control of children's spare time. Boys could join the Hitler Youth to learn how to become loyal Nazi soldiers. Military style activities like camping, map reading, mock battles and target practice were enjoyed. By 1938 the Hitler Youth numbered 8 million and membership was compulsory.
- ❑ Girls joined the League of German Maidens which was the sister organisation of the Hitler Youth. Here girls learned how to become good wives and mothers and support their soldiers. They also focused on girls leading good moral values by shunning make-up and perms and following traditional peasant styles of hair and dress.
- ❑ In total 82% of German children belonged to a Nazi youth group.

Nazi policies toward the Churches and religion

- ❑ 95% of Germans were Christians – 40m Protestants and about 22m Catholics, so the Church was the largest non-Nazi organisation. Hitler wanted to remove Christianity's influence, but had to tread carefully and never fully succeeded in controlling the Church.
- ❑ **The Protestant Church** – The Nazis set up their own National Reich Church which was a collection of Protestant churches under the leadership of committed Nazi Bishop Ludwig Muller. The Reich Church combined Nazi symbols like the swastika with Christian symbols like the cross and it banned the Old Testament because it was written by Jews.
- ❑ Some Protestant pastors, such as Martin Niemoller and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, formed their own Confessional Church and openly criticised some Nazi policies. In 1937 the Nazis arrested 700 pastors for disobeying government guidance on sermons.
- ❑ **The Catholic Church** – In 1933 Hitler signed the Concordat with the Roman Catholic Church. He promised not to interfere with the Catholic Church and schools and the Pope agreed not to interfere in politics.
- ❑ By 1936 Hitler broke the agreement. Crucifixes were removed in Catholic schools and Catholic youth groups were replaced closed.
- ❑ Some Catholic priests spoke out. In 1941 Cardinal Galen criticised euthenasia of the disabled.

Nazi racial policies and treatment of Jews 1933-39

- ❑ Hitler's racism argued that some racial groups were superior to others: The Aryan "master race" was superior to others and he regarded Jews as "sub-human". Once in power the Nazis wanted to remove groups who they felt were not "racially pure" or a burden on society.
- ❑ From 1933 mentally and physically disabled people were sterilised to stop them "contaminating" future racial health. From 1939 disabled children and adults were euthanised until it was abandoned in 1941 due to complaints from the Catholic Church.
- ❑ Gypsies/people of Romany origin were rounded up in 1938 and sent to concentration camps. Tramps, beggars, prostitutes, criminals and homosexuals were also sterilised in large numbers because they were seen as "asocials" who might pass on their traits to future generations.

The treatment of Jews 1933-39

- ❑ Hitler made it clear in Mein Kampf and his speeches that he regarded Jews as a threat to the German race, even though they only made up 1% of the population. He blamed them for everything from Germany's defeat in WWI to the economic depression as well as communism. The policies against the Jews were gradual in several stages.
- ❑ **In 1933 the Nazis organised a one-day boycott of Jewish shops**, where the SA stood outside Jewish owned shops to deter customers. Jews were also banned from government jobs.
- ❑ **In 1935 The Nuremberg Laws were passed.** Jews were banned from serving in the Army. They were stopped from using public places like cinemas, parks and swimming pools. Laws ensured that Aryans could not marry non-Aryans and Jews could not have sex with non-Jews. Jews also lost their status as German citizens.
- ❑ In 1938 Jews had to register their possessions with the government and could have them confiscated. They were also forced to carry identity card stamped with a 'J' for Juden.
- ❑ **On 8-9th November 1938 Kristallnacht** ("Night of Broken Glass") happened: Jewish businesses and synagogues were attacked and burned down in nights of violence organized by the government. 30,000 Jews were rounded up and put in concentration camps.

Policies to reduce unemployment and their impact

- ❑ The Nazis promised “Work and Bread” and were determined to reduce unemployment. From 6m unemployed in 1933 they managed to reduce it massively to 300,000 by 1939. How?
- ❑ They doubled spending on **public work schemes** such as autobahns (motorways) and big projects like the Olympic Stadium. Hundreds of public buildings like schools, hospitals and swimming pools were built. This created jobs and reduced unemployment.
- ❑ **Rearmament** created more jobs. Hitler broke the Treaty of Versailles and increased the German Army to 500,000 in 1935 and 900,000 by 1938. Factories started building tanks and aeroplanes that the Treaty had forbidden.
- ❑ Unemployed men aged 18-25 were conscripted to join the **National Labour Service (RAD)** where they worked on government projects for little pay for a period of six months.
- ❑ Finance Minister Hjalmar **Schacht’s New Plan** in 1933 and Hermann **Goerring’s Four Year Plan** in 1936 both aimed to cut imports and focused on **Autarky (self sufficiency)** which also boosted German industry.
- ❑ The reduction in unemployment was impressive but the real numbers of “**hidden unemployment**” meant that not everyone was counted in the figures. For example Jews and married women were not counted, and temporary workers were counted as permanent.

The Labour Service (RAD)

- ❑ The National Labour Service (Reichsarbeitsdienst) was set up in 1935 to put young unemployed men to work. Men aged 18 to 25 were given 6 months of employment in the countryside or on public works schemes.
- ❑ Most of the conscripts were unemployed working class men. They were sent to different parts of the country away from home, housed in barracks and given a uniform and food – a bit like army training.
- ❑ The idea was to educate the German youth in the spirit of National Socialism through work-pride and employment. After the six months many went on to be conscripted into the army.

The Labour Front and Strength Through Joy

- ❑ The **German Labour Front (DAF)** was the organisation that had replaced trade unions when they were banned in May 1933. It was led by **Dr Robert Ley**. Its purpose was to control the workforce and encourage them to work hard for Germany.
- ❑ The Nazis wanted to control workers' in the workplace and also their leisure time. The DAF created two organisations called "Strength Through Joy" (KdF) and the "Beauty of Labour" (SdA)
- ❑ The **Strength Through Joy** (KdF) movement aimed to create satisfied workers who would work harder. It provided leisure activities such as subsidised holidays and cruises, cheap theatre tickets, sporting events and concerts. Millions of workers took part in KdF activities.
- ❑ However there was some disillusionment by 1939. All KdF activities included propaganda like political lectures and people got bored. There was also the Volkswagen ("Peoples' Car) scheme which in return for weekly payments promised a cheap reliable car. This never materialised.
- ❑ The **Beauty of Labour** (SdA) aimed to improve workers' conditions in work by providing hot meals in canteens and improved facilities like toilets and showers. Despite these improvements, workers were generally working longer hours for less pay and were worse off than in 1933.

Hitler's aims and policies with regard to the Versailles settlement

- **Adolf Hitler** was the leader of Germany from 1933.
- The **Treaty of Versailles** was an agreement that Germany had been forced to sign following its surrender at the end of the First World War. The Treaty of Versailles forced Germany to do the following:
 - reduces the Germany Army to a tiny 100,000 soldiers.
 - it took 10% of Germany land away from it and all its empire. This land included areas with German-speaking people in them.
 - Germany was only allowed 6 battleships in its navy and no submarines or tanks.
 - it was also forced to pay £6,600 million in reparations (compensation) – that's £100m per year for 66 years.
- Like many Germans, Hitler hated the Treaty of Versailles and wanted to see Germany re-build its strength as a powerful country like it had been before the First World War.



Hitler's aims and policies with regard to the Versailles settlement

You need to know about two particular long-term aims that Hitler had...

Lebensraum

- Lebensraum is a German phrase meaning "living room" or "living space" or "room to live" and it was an important idea that Hitler believed in and had written about in his autobiography *Mein Kampf* in the 1920s.
- Lebensraum was the idea that Germany, with a large and growing population, should invade countries to the East of Germany (like Poland and the USSR). The Nazis believed that the people of these lands, being Slavs, were inferior, and therefore Germany had the right to conquer these lands.

Grossdeutschland

- Grossdeutschland means "Greater Germany". Hitler wanted to see all German-speaking people united and living in one "greater" Germany.
- Lots of land containing Germans had been taken from Germany by the Treaty of Versailles. Also there were many German speakers in countries such as Austria and Czechoslovakia that Hitler wanted to be part of greater Germany.

Lebensraum and Grossdeutschland were two of Hitler's ideas that became part of his aggressive foreign policy.



Rearmament

- Hitler was determined to make Germany a great military power once again as the Treaty of Versailles had weakened Germany.
- Hitler **withdrew from the World Disarmament Conference** in October 1933, arguing that no other nations would disarm so why should Germany stay weak?
- Hitler also **withdrew from the League of Nations in 1933.**
- In 1935 Hitler announced the German Army would increase to 600,000 soldiers and he **re-introduced conscription**. This went against the Treaty of Versailles which said that Germany was only allowed an army of 100,000.
- The **Anglo-German Naval Treaty of 1935** was an agreement between Britain and Germany which allowed the German navy to increase in size, as long as it was no more than 35% the size of the British Navy. This agreement went against the Treaty of Versailles, but this time Britain was accepting it.



The Saar Plebiscite, 1935

- The Saar (or Saarland) was an area of Germany taken from it by the Treaty of Versailles and put under the control of the League of Nations for 15 years. It was a small area but contained lots of natural resources like coal mines.
- In January 1935 a plebiscite (a vote or sometimes known as a referendum) was held by the people of the Saar to decide whether they wanted continued control by the League of Nations or a return to control by Germany.
- 90%+ agreed on a return to Germany.
- Hitler greeted this as a massive triumph and declared that this was the first injustice of the Treaty of Versailles to be reversed.



The Re-occupation of the Rhineland, March 1936

- In March 1936 Hitler gambled and took German troops back into the Rhineland area of Germany. This was an area that had been demilitarized – the Treaty of Versailles had said that no German troops were allowed in this area to protect France. The troops were greeted and cheered by the German people of the Rhineland.
- This was risky because:
 - a) it was clearly against the Treaty of Versailles
 - b) German troops were not strong enough at this stage, and had orders to pull back if French troops tried to stop them.
- Britain and France did not stop the remilitarisation of the Rhineland, because:
 - a) France was too busy with its own domestic problems.
 - b) Britain thought that it was quite reasonable that German troops should be allowed “in their own back yard” and that the Treaty of Versailles had been too harsh
 - c) Both Britain and France were busy trying to sort out the Abyssinian Crisis involving Mussolini’s Italy.
- Historians argue that if Britain and France had stood up to Hitler at this point then he would not have had the confidence to take further risks.



Germany's links with Italy and Japan in the 1930s

- Hitler also strengthened his position by making alliances with other aggressive countries:

The 1936 Rome-Berlin Axis was an informal agreement between Germany and Italy to work more closely together. Both Hitler and Mussolini provided weapons and soldiers to help the anti-communists in the Spanish Civil War (1936-39).

The 1937 Anti-Comintern Pact was an agreement between **Germany, Italy** and **Japan** to say that they would work together to oppose communism. These three countries were known as the **Axis Powers**.

The 1939 Pact of Steel was a formal alliance between **Germany** and **Italy** in which they agreed to support each other in a future war.



The Anschluss, March 1938

- Anschluss means the joining together (a union) of Germany and Austria. The Treaty of Versailles forbid this from happening.
- Hitler was born in Austria and the Anschluss fitted in with his aims of Grossdeutschland (all German-speaking people living together in one country).
- Hitler had tried unsuccessfully to achieve Anschluss in 1934 when the Austrian Nazi Party murdered the Austrian Chancellor Dolfuss and tried to take power. This attempt failed because Mussolini the Italian leader made it clear he would step in and stop Germany.
- By 1938 Hitler and Mussolini were friends following the Rome-Berlin Axis and Hitler felt ready to try again to achieve the Anschluss.
- Hitler persuaded the Austrian Chancellor, Schuschnigg, into accepting a Nazi, Seys-Inquart, as his Minister of the Interior (in charge of police).
- Schuschnigg tried to spoil things for Hitler by ordering a plebiscite to be held to find out if the Austrian people really wanted union with Germany.
- Hitler feared a “no” vote in the plebiscite, so he moved German troops to the Austrian border and threatened he would invade if Schuschnigg didn’t resign in favour of Seys-Inquart



Cont...The Anschluss, March 1938

- Schuschnigg resigned and Seys-Inquart became Austrian Chancellor. As a Nazi he "invited" German troops into Austria in March 1938. German troops entered to crowds cheering.
- The Anschluss was now complete and Austria became part of a Greater German Reich (empire).
- A rigged vote was held afterwards showing 99% of Austrians who voted in favour of the Anschluss with Germany. There was certainly lots of support for joining with Germany but not this much.
- This was another clear breach of the Treaty of Versailles.
- Britain and France complained but did nothing to stop it happening.



Chamberlain and Appeasement

From 1935 to 1939 Britain and France tried – unsuccessfully – to prevent German aggression by following a policy called **appeasement**.

Appeasement meant giving in to Hitler's demands, as long as they were reasonable, in order to avoid another war.

The British leader most closely associated with the policy of appeasement was the prime minister **Neville Chamberlain**.

Chamberlain followed appeasement because:

- He hated the idea of war and his own sons were killed in the trenches of the First World War.
- Many British people felt the same and wanted peace.
- He thought the Treaty of Versailles had been too harsh on Germany and need revised.
- Britain was not in a position to fight another war in 1938. It had enough problems of its own like unemployment.
- Many British people saw communism (from the USSR) as a greater threat than Hitler. Hitler was very anti-communist so Germany could act as a “buffer” against the communist threat.



Cont...Chamberlain and Appeasement (2)

People have strongly criticised Chamberlain and his policy of appeasement. Their arguments are as follows:

- It gave Hitler an advantage and he grew more confident and stronger, knowing that Britain and France would not stop him. If Hitler had been stopped earlier it might not have been against a stronger Germany in Poland.
- It was morally wrong to allow Germany to break the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, which Britain and France were meant to uphold.
- Chamberlain was also willing to give away parts of other countries like Czechoslovakia to avoid war. Therefore appeasement can be seen as weak and cowardly.
- Chamberlain misjudged Hitler whom he thought was rational and reasonable.
- There was an excellent opportunity to stop Hitler in his tracks in 1936 when he moved German troops into the Rhineland.
- Appeasement did not stop war happening in 1939 and the policy was abandoned following Germany's invasion of the remainder of Czechoslovakia in March 1939.



Appeasement in action – The Sudetenland Crisis, September 1938

- Following his success with the Anschluss in March 1938 Hitler's next target was Czechoslovakia.
- Hitler hated Czechoslovakia because it was a democracy and had been created by the Treaty of Versailles.
- Part of Czechoslovakia known as the Sudetenland which bordered Germany had 3 million German speaking-people living there (known as Sudeten Germans).
- Hitler claimed that the Czech government – led by President Benes – was badly treating its German-speaking inhabitants.
- Hitler order Konrad Henlein (the leader of the Czech Nazi Party) to stir up trouble and demonstrate against the Czech government. German newspapers printed false stories about crimes committed by the Czechs against the Sudeten Germans.
- Hitler threatened Benes that Germany would invade Czechoslovakia if a solution to the Sudeten German problem was not found.
- With war looking likely between Germany and Czechoslovakia, Chamberlain the British PM decided to intervene to try and ensure peace.



Cont...The Sudetenland Crisis, September 1938

Chamberlain visited Germany three times in September 1938:

On 15th September at Berchtesgaden:

- Hitler promised that the Sudetenland was the “last problem to be solved”.
- Chamberlain decided that Hitler was “a man who can be relied upon”.
- Hitler asked for those parts of the Sudetenland to be handed over to Germany where there was more than 50% of the population German. Chamberlain agreed and got the Czech President Benes to reluctantly agree.

On 22nd September at Bad Godesberg:

- Chamberlain was taken by surprise when Hitler went back on his word and demanded the whole of the Sudetenland.
- Chamberlain was very pessimistic and returned to Britain expecting war.

On 29th September at Munich:

- a four-power conference was organised for Germany (Hitler), Britain (Chamberlain), France (Daladier) and Italy (Mussolini who suggested and chaired the Conference).
- It was agreed that the whole of the Sudetenland would be given to Germany. This decision was known as **the Munich Agreement**.



Cont...The Sudetenland Crisis, September 1938

The Consequences of the Munich Agreement

- Czechoslovakia was not even invited to the Munich Conference, and Benes was told by Britain and France to accept the agreement or else it would have to fight Germany alone without British and French help. Benes reluctantly resigned in disgust.
- The USSR (led by Josef Stalin) was also not invited to the Munich Conference. Stalin was very suspicious that Britain and France were trying to encourage Hitler to take more land to the east of Germany in the direction of the USSR.
- Chamberlain arrived back in Britain with an Anglo-German Declaration which was “a piece of paper” signed by Chamberlain and Hitler declaring that Germany and Britain would never go to war with each other again.
- Chamberlain was declared a hero having saved Britain and Europe from all-out war.



The takeover of Czechoslovakia, March 1939

- Just 6 months after the Munich Agreement, in March 1939 Hitler invaded the rest of Czechoslovakia.
- Hitler had now invaded a country that did not contain any German-speaking people and it was clear that he had lied. His promises at Munich were worthless.
- Chamberlain was made to look a fool and his policy of appeasement had clearly failed.
- Britain and France now realised more was more likely. They did not do anything to stop Czechoslovakia being taken over by Germany, but they did start rapidly rearming and preparing for war.



Agreements with Poland, April 1939

- After the takeover of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, Hitler's next obvious target was Poland.
- In the Treaty of Versailles, German territory in West Prussia and Posen had been given to Poland (known as the "Polish Corridor") and the German city of Danzig had been put under control of the League of Nations.
- In March 1939 Hitler demanded the return of Danzig and the Polish Corridor to Germany.
- Now Britain and France acted decisively. In April 1939 they gave a guarantee to Poland (and Greece and Rumania) to support them against a German attack.
- The prospect of a future war over Poland now partly depended on the attitude of the USSR, Poland's neighbour on its eastern side.
- Britain and France hoped to make an agreement with the USSR so that Hitler would think twice about invading Poland. They had given a guarantee to Poland but had no real way of enforcing it. Only the USSR could stop Hitler taking more land to the East.



The Nazi-Soviet Pact, August 1939

- After the fall of Czechoslovakia, Britain and France had hoped to do a deal with the USSR and began talks about agreeing to stop Hitler. However Stalin was very suspicious of Britain and France (remember they hated communists too) and talks were slow.
- In August 1939, to the astonishment of the world, a deal was made between Germany and the USSR known as the **Nazi-Soviet Pact** (also called the **Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact** after the foreign ministers of the two countries).
- The reason why this was so shocking was because Nazi Germany and Hitler hated communism and were committed to seeing communism destroyed. Germany and the USSR hated each other and yet this deal benefited both of them:
 - Germany and the USSR would **not fight each** other in the event of war.
 - Both powers **secretly agreed** to divide up Poland between them.
 - Germany would let the USSR occupy Romania and the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.
- The Nazi-Soviet Pact was ideal for Hitler. It meant he could attack Poland without the fear of the USSR stopping him, thus avoiding a war on two fronts.
- Stalin also got extra territory out of this deal, even though he knew war with Germany was likely at some point.



Poland and the outbreak of war, September 1939

- On 1st September 1939, German troops invaded Poland. Under the secret agreements of the Nazi-Soviet Pact, the USSR did not intervene and a few weeks later Poland was carved up between Germany and the USSR.
- Hitler did not believe that Britain and France would honour its guarantee to Poland. The policy of appeasement had given the impression that Britain and France would do anything to avoid war.
- However on 3rd September 1939, Britain declared war on Germany.
- Poland was too far away for Britain and France to provide any real help. Within six weeks Poland was conquered and the Second World War had begun.

