



GCE AS/A LEVEL

2100U80-1



S25-2100U80-1

MONDAY, 19 MAY 2025 – AFTERNOON

HISTORY – AS unit 2

DEPTH STUDY 8

Germany: Democracy and dictatorship c.1918–1945

Part 1: Weimar and its challenges c.1918–1933

1 hour 45 minutes

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

A WJEC pink 16-page answer booklet.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Use black ink or black ball-point pen. Do not use gel pen or correction fluid.

Answer **both** questions.

Write your answers in the separate answer booklet provided, following the instructions on the front of the answer booklet.

Use both sides of the paper. Write only within the white areas of the booklet.

Write the question number in the two boxes in the left-hand margin at the start of each answer,

for example

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Leave at least two line spaces between each answer.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

The number of marks is given in brackets at the end of each question.

You are advised to spend approximately 50 minutes on each question.

The sources used in this examination paper may have been amended, adapted or abridged from the stated published work in order to make the wording more accessible.

The sources may include words that are no longer in common use and are now regarded as derogatory terminology. Their inclusion reflects the time and place of the original version of these sources.

Answer **both** questions.

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Using your understanding of the historical context, assess the value of these three sources to an historian studying economic challenges facing the Weimar Republic during the period from 1921 to 1932.

[30]

Source A Minutes of the British Cabinet discussing German reparations and war debts (22 December 1921)

The position [of the Cabinet] as regards German reparation was: that on 15 January and 15 February next, Germany would have to find 30 to 35 million [pounds] sterling, and it was pretty clear that the German Government could [only] produce £10 to £12 million. ...

Undoubtedly her inability to pay was due to her own action. As a result of the generous subsidies given by the German Government, the State Budget showed a deficit. The real fact was that the German Government was a very weak Government, in fear of Bolshevism on the one hand, and a revival of Prussianism on the other. The experts were unanimously of the opinion that if the Allies were to insist on Germany making considerably heavier payments than she could at present afford to make, she would collapse into a hopeless state of chaos.

Source B Betty Scholem, a resident of Berlin, in a letter to her son who had emigrated (15 October 1923)

Conditions have taken a catastrophic turn here. Notice that this letter cost 15 million marks. It will be 30 million beginning the day after tomorrow and this price will most likely last a mere two days at most. Now you can get things done only with billions. ... The bread ration card has been done away with, and a normal loaf of bread now costs 540 million; tomorrow surely twice as much. The streetcar fare is 20 million; tomorrow it'll be 50 million. ... If throughout the world there is such little understanding of our plight, how can we expect that anyone will come to our aid? It seems inevitable that we will lose the Rhine and the Ruhr, that Bavaria will break away and that Germany will once again fall apart into miniscule petty states.

Source C Franz von Papen, the German Chancellor and conservative politician, in a speech to the Lausanne Conference (Summer 1932). This conference temporarily ended the payment of German reparations.

Nothing can prove more clearly the catastrophic upheaval that has occurred during this period than a comparison between the world as it was in 1929 and the situation today. In those days there existed a system of international credit that appeared to function without friction and an active and fruitful exchange of capital from one country to another. ... Every country was ready to welcome the goods of other countries in well-ordered exchanges. Industry worked at a profit. ... These were the characteristic features of the period during which the Young Plan was conceived.

What an abyss between the glowing optimism of those days and the pessimism and despair of today! In Germany this state of things has most strongly shaken the confidence of the masses in the good functioning of the capitalist system. ... What is particularly fatal is that an ever-growing number of young people have no possibility and no hope of finding employment. Despair and the political radicalisation of the youth of the population are the consequences of this state of things.

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Historians have made different interpretations about **domestic and foreign policy developments 1924–1929**. Analyse and evaluate the two interpretations together with your understanding of the historical debate to answer the following question:

How valid is the view that the period from 1924 to 1929 was a Golden Age for the Weimar Republic? [30]

Interpretation 1

JAS Grenville, in this extract from his book *A World History of the Twentieth Century – Volume 1: 1900–1945* (1980), presents an interpretation that suggests the period from 1924 to 1929 was a “Golden Age” for the Weimar Republic.

Stresemann was realistic and accepted limits to German power. His Germany would be one of Europe’s great powers, not the *only* great power, and as such he determined to recover his country’s position and prestige. He succeeded in doing so until his untimely death in 1929. Despite the nationalistic patriotic clamour against the French and the diktat of Versailles, he recognised that Germany was only ruining her economic recovery at home and her reputation abroad. His policy was that of sweet reasonableness, a policy of ‘fulfilment’.

At home, too, this was a brief golden period for the Republic. The currency was stabilised and exports flourished. These were the brief years of prosperity and, had they continued, the German people might well have come to value more their new republican democracy.

Interpretation 2

William Carr, in this extract from his book *A History of Germany 1815–1990* (1991), presents an interpretation that suggests the description “Golden Age” is an exaggeration.

Although Stresemann succeeded in removing all foreign troops from German soil, the demilitarised Rhineland remained as a reminder that Germany had not yet regained complete sovereignty over her own territory. ... It is sometimes said that Weimar Germany experienced boom conditions between 1924 and 1929 ... [but] the extent of the boom has been greatly exaggerated. Capital investment was already falling by 1929; unemployment ... was never less than 1.3 million and reached 3 million by February 1929. Contrasting sharply with the spectacular growth of heavy industry was the poor performance of agriculture and small industry, both starved of capital. ... The true position was disguised by the massive inflow of foreign capital and the extensive welfare system.

END OF PAPER