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GCSE History Notes

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1 Woodrow Wilson's 14 Points

On 2th April 1917, the United States declared war on Germany.

In January 1918, the American President Woodrow Wilson issued his famous 14 POINTS. They were intended to be:

- A Declaration of the United States' war aims.
- A basis for peace when the war ended (assuming, of course, that the Allies were victorious)

The 14 Points were as follows:

1. The abolition of secret diplomacy (no more secret treaties).
2. Free navigation at sea for all nations in war and peace.
3. The removal of economic barriers between states (free trade).
4. An all-round reduction of armaments.
5. An impartial adjustment of colonial aims in the interest of the populations concerned.
6. German military evacuation of Russian territory.
7. German military evacuation of Belgium.
8. The restoration of Alsace-Lorraine to France (the Germans had occupied it since 1871 following the Franco-Prussian war).
9. Italy's frontiers should be readjusted along clear lines of nationality.
10. The peoples of the Austro-Hungarian Empire should be given self-determination.
11. Rumania, Serbia and Montenegro should be evacuated by the Germans and Serbia should be given access to the sea.
12. Self-government for the non-Turkish peoples of the Turkish empire and permanent opening of the Dardanelles.
13. An independent Poland to be recreated with secure access to the sea.
14. An international organization should be created to defend the independence of all states.

NOTE: Points 1–5 were designed to promote better international relations. Points 6–14 were designed to ensure freedom and self-determination for the nations and peoples (subject nationalities) of the world.

When Germany asked for peace in November 1928, she assumed that it would be constructed in line with Wilson's 14 Points (which Germany thought were fair).

The terms of the Armistice, however, were harsher than the 14 Points suggested they might have been.

At 8 a.m. on the morning of 8 November 1918, in a railway carriage at Rethondes in the forest of Compiegne, the Germans were offered the Allied terms for an Armistice.

They were:

1. Germany to evacuate all occupied territory.

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2. Germany to surrender her navy and merchant fleet to the Allies.
3. Germany to hand over all large armaments, lorries and railway rolling stock to the Allies.
4. The Allied blockade of German ports would continue until an Armistice was signed.

By this time, the Germans had to accept the terms, however harsh they may have been.

In Germany there was growing unrest caused by food shortages brought about by the Allied naval blockade. There were strikes, riots and a mutiny at the naval base in Kiel. Also, there were communist uprisings in many German cities, including Berlin.

On 9 November, a new German Republic was proclaimed with Friedrick Ebert, the leader of the moderately socialist Social Democratic party, as chancellor.

On 10 November Kaiser Wilhelm II was forced to abdicate and fled to the Netherlands, never to return again.

The new government had to impose order and bring stability quickly.

As A. J. P. Taylor puts it:

> "The new republican government in Berlin were too busy staving off revolution to waste time discussing the armistice terms. Erzberger [the German representative at Compiegne] received brief instructions to sign at once."
> [Taylor, *The First World War*, p. 248]

The Armistice was signed at 5 a.m. on the morning of 11 November and fighting stopped at 11 a.m.

The Great War was over.

2 The Paris Peace Conference & The Treaty of Versailles

As Josh Brooman notes:

> "When nations fight wars, they usually expect to win. More important, they expect to get something in return for winning — perhaps land or money or more power. The harder they right the more they suffer, so the more they expect to get."
> [Brooman, *The World Re-made: The Results of the First World War*, p. 2]

Indeed, the Great War had been the most devastating war in the history of mankind and the victorious powers had suffered greatly. Those who had suffered the most (in particular France) felt that Germany should now be made to pay heavily for the damage she had inflicted.

France had 1.4 million soldiers killed in action and another 2.5 million wounded. An area of France larger than Wales was totally ruined by the fighting (most of which took place on French soil). Over two million people had to flee from their homes and three-quarters of a million homes were destroyed. 23,000 French factories were also destroyed. Also, 5,600 kilometres if French railway lines and 48,000 kilometres of roads were totally wrecked. The French now expected the defeated Central Powers, particularly Germany, to pay for the damage.

Most of Belgium was occupied by the Germans for four years. As well as suffering extensive economic damage, over 50,000 Belgian soldiers were killed in action.

Britain had 750,000 soldiers killed and 1.5 million wounded. The war had cost the British government nine billion pounds. Over one billion pounds of this had been borrowed, mostly from America.

Italy joined the Allies in 1915 because the British and French promised them Austrian land once the fighting was over. The cost was tremendous. Three years of bitter fighting on Italian soil had left 600,000 soldiers dead and north-east Italy devastated.

Russia lost 1.7 million soldiers in the war on the Eastern Front. Many thousands of civilians died through starvation. Following the communist revolution of 1917, Russia surrendered to Germany. The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which the Russians were forced to sign, took away all Russia's western provinces. One-third of all Russians found themselves under German rule.

The United States of America suffered least of all nations (they did not enter the war until 1917). They had 116,000 men killed in action.

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All-in-all, the Allies (including the British Commonwealth) had lost roughly 6 million men.

It is little wonder, therefore, that the victorious Allies decided to make Germany pay.

The Central Powers, or course, also suffered greatly. Nearly two million German soldiers lost their lives and the country was exhausted due to the Allied blockade of German ports. The Germans were forced to surrender in order to prevent revolution amongst its people. Germany's allies also suffered greatly. Austria-Hungary lost 1.2 million men; Turkey lost 325,000 men; and Bulgaria lost over 100,000.

To make matters worse, the war-weary and hungry people of Europe were hit by an epidemic of Spanish influenza in mid 1918. It took the lives of more than 25 million people world-wide.

As we have seen, the First World War caused great suffering. The leaders of the victorious nations were determined that such a terrible war must never be allowed to happen again. It was with such a view in mind that the world's leaders met in Paris, in January 1919, to discuss how a lasting peace could be made.

2.1 The Paris Peace Conference (January 1919)

In January 1919, hundreds of politicians from thirty-two different countries met in Paris to try to formulate the basis of a lasting peace.

But, the defeated Central Powers were not represented and neither was communist Russia.

Three politicians soon began to dominate the proceedings. The 'Big Three', as they were known, were:

1. Georges Clemenceau (nick-named 'The Tiger'), the Prime Minister of France
2. Woodrow Wilson, the President of the United States
3. David Lloyd George, the Prime Minister of Britain

The 'Big Three', however, had very different ideas of what should be done. Let's examine them in detail:

Georges Clemenceau had twofold aims:

1. Germany must pay for the damage done to France in the war. The cost had been a massive 2×10^{11} gold francs.
2. Germany must be made so weak economically and militarily that she could never contemplate attacking France again. This would mean the confiscation of much of Germany's land, her industry and the enforced reduction of German armed forces.
   As we can see, Clemenceau favoured a very harsh treatment of Germany indeed.

Woodrow Wilson had very different ideas to Clemenceau. Instead of crushing Germany, Wilson felt that a fair peace was the best method of preventing further war. In other words, Wilson wanted a peace constructed around his 14 Points (see 5, Woodrow Wilson's 14 points). As we know, Wilson believed that a lasting peace was best built around the twin foundations of:

1. National self-determinaton
2. The formation of an international peace-keeping organisation, e. g. a League of Nations (see 13, The League of Nations)

Also, Wilson firmly believed that Germany should not be forced to pay the cost of war damage (as he believed that Germany was not the only nation to blame).

Wilson also believed that a Germany weakened economically would not be beneficial to world trade (especially in terms of purchasing American goods).

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David Lloyd George agreed with many of Wilson's 14 Points. He agreed with Wilson that if defeated nations were treated too harshly then they were likely to become angry and resentful. This could cause future problems and may actually provoke aggression and potential future war. He also felt that an economically strong Germany was good for European trade (particularly with Britain).

The British public, however, wanted Lloyd George to be harsh on Germany. Popular slogans such as 'Hand the Kaiser' and 'Make Germany Pay' appeared on posters. Newspaper owners and ambitious politicians also encouraged anti-German feelings in Britain.

During the peace negotiations Lloyd George received a telegram from 370 British MPs demanding that Germany should be forced to pay full compensation.

One British politician stated:

> "The Germans are going to pay every penny; they are going to be squezzed, as a lemon is squezzed, until the pips squeak."

Faced with this sort of opinion in Britain, it was going to be very difficult indeed for Lloyd George to act according to his own beliefs.

Orlando the Prime Minister of Italy, was more concerned about securing the promises of territory laid out in the secret Treaty of London.

By June 1919 the work of the politicians at the Paris Peace Conference was complete. They had devised a number of peace treaties to be imposed on the defeated Central Powers.

They were:

- The Treaty of Versailles (with Germany) (on this page, The Treaty of Versailles)
- The Treaty of Saint Germain (with Austria) (on page 11, The Treaty of Saint Germain)
- the Treary of Trianon (with Hungary) (on page 11, The Treaty of Trianon)
- the Treaty of Sèvres (with Turkey) (on page 11, The Treaty of Sèvres)
- The Treaty of Neuilly (with Bulgaria) (on page 12, The Treaty of Neuilly)

We must now examine each of these treaties in detail:

2.2 The Treaty of Versailles (with Germany, June 1919)

On 28th June 1919, in the Hall of Mirrors at the Palace of Versailles (16 kilometres from Paris), the Allied leaders forced the Germans to sign the Treaty of Versailles.

The Treaty of Versailles was over 200 pages long and contained more than 400 seperate clauses.

Here is a summary of the major conditions of the treaty:

1. A League of Nations was set up (see page 13, The League of Nations). The first 26 clauses of the Treaty of Versailles described how the League would operate. These rules were called the 'Covenant of the League of Nations'.
2. Germany had to lose territory in Europe. The following list denotes the major losses (see page 13 for a complete table):
   (a) Alsace and Lorraine (which the Germans had taken from France in 1871 following the Franco-Prussian war) was returned to France.
   (b) Eupen, Moresnet and Malmedy were given to Belgium.
   (c) North Schleswig was given to Denmark (following a plebiscite).

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(d) West Prussia and Posen were given to Poland. This gave Poland access to the Baltic Sea (the 'Polish corridor') and had the ridiculous effect of cutting off East Prussia from the rest if Germany. The German Baltic port of Danzig (the main port in West Prussia) did not go to Poland, however, but was to be a free city under the administration of the League of Nations (because its population was wholly German).

(e) Memel was given to Lithuania.

(f) The heavily industrialised Saar region was placed under the administration of the League of Nations for a period of 15 years (after which a plebiscite would be held to decide whether it should belong to France of Germany). In the meantime, France was to control its coal mines (see page 22, The Saar Commission).

(g) Upper Sileesia, with its heavy industry, was given to Poland.

(h) Hultschin was given to the newly formed Czechoslovakia.

3. All the land Germany had taken from Russia, under the terms of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, in 1918, was taken away. Some was returned to Russia, and some was used to create te new nations of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Some of it was given to reconstituted Poland.

4. The Rhineland, in the western part of Germany, was made into a demilitarised zone (DMZ). This meant that no German soldiers or weapons were allowed there. The DMZ included all land west of the River Rhine plus an area 50 kilometres deep to the east. Also, the Allies were to keep an army of occupation on the west bank of the Rhine for a period of 15 years.

5. All of Germany's overseas colonies were taken away and became 'mandates[1]' under Allied control. In Africa, Britain took control of German East Africa (which became Tanganyika/Tanzania); France took control over most of Togoland and most of the Cameroons; South Africa took over German South West Africa. In the southern hemisphere, New Zealand took control of Western Samoa.

6. Germany's armed forces were reduced to the bare minimum. The German army was limited to 100,000 men. The navy was limited to six battleships and was not allowed any submarines at all. No air force was allowed either.

7. Anschluss with Austria was forbidden. Germany was not allowed to unite with Austria into a sing German-speaking nation,

8. Germany was forced to accept complete blame for starting the Great War. This acceptance of guilt was embodied in Clause 231 (the famous War Guilt Clause).

9. Germany had to pay reparations. Because Germany was considered to be guilty of starting the war, she was forced to pay for the repairing of the war damage (mainly to France). The exact amount would be decided later by a special committee (it was fixed at £6,600 million in 1921).

It is clear from the above conditions that the Treaty of Versailles was a very harsh treaty indeed. It was much more harsh than Germany expected it to be (because they felt it would be much more in line to Woodrow Wilson's 14 Points which made no mention of a War Guilt clause or the payment of reparations).

There are several reasons why the Treaty of Versailles was a harder peace than the 14 Point's suggested it might have been. They are:

- Woodrow Wilson's attitude towards the Germans had hardened because of Germany's own harsh treatment of Russia in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (which was made after the publication of the 14 Points). He was, therefore, more willing to give way to Clemenceau's desires for harsh terms against Germany than he was previously. Wilson was also angered by the German destruction of mines, factories and public buildings as they retreated across Belgium and France in 1918.

- With the Paris Peace Conference taking place on French soil, the French Prime Minister Clemenceau had more sway than he would have had if it had been held elsewhere. He was able, therefore, to influence the delegates towards his point of view (which was the formulation of a very harsh treaty in which the Germans would be severely weakened financially and militarily).

- Lloyd George, who favoured Wilson's call for a fair peace, was pushed towards the Clemenceau line by hostile public opinion in Britain towards the Germans.

[1] An LEDC under the control of a MEDC to prepare it for independance.

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When the Germans were told of the harsh conditions of the treaty, just a few weeks before they were due to sign it, there was uproar in Germany.

Most Germans felt that the treaty was a 'Diktat' (a dictated peace) because Germany was not even represented at the Paris Peace Conference where the treaty was devised).

The government resigned and German naval captains sank their ships in protest in Scapa Flow (where they were being held by the British).

However, the German representatives had no choice but to sign the treaty.

The Allies threatened to invade if they refused!

Germany had lost much of her territory, 10% of her population (6 million people), and had been forced both to admit total guilt for starting the war and to make crippling reparations payments.

No wonder the Germans were outraged.

As Norman Lowe states:

> "The Treaty of Versailles in particular was one of the most controversial settlements ever signed and was criticised even in the Allied countries on the grounds that it was too harsh on the Germans who were bound to object so violently that another war was inevitable, sooner or later."
> [Lowe, *Mastering Modern World History*, 2nd edition, p. 38]

The English economist John Maynard Keynes argued that:

> "The policy of reducing Germany to servitude for a generation, of degrading the lives of millions of human beings, and of depriving a whole nation of happiness should be abhorrent and detestable ... Some preach it in the name of justice. In the great events of man's history ... justice is not so simple."

However, the majority of people in the Allied countries felt that it *was* justice for the Germans to suffer.

2.2.1 Did the Treaty of Versailles make another war inevitable?

Strictly speaking, nothing in history is inevitable. However, the harshness of the treaty did cause the kind of resentment and hatred in Germany that made another war more likely. As we shall se, Hitler and the Nazi party made it absolutely clear throughout the 1920s that they would smash the hated 'Diktat' of Versailles if they ever gained power. From 1933, when they did win power, they began bit-by-bit to break the conditions and restrictions of the treaty imposed at Versailles.

Moreover, although the treaty was harsh, it did not have the results that the French desired. Althpugh it weakened Germany, it did not weaken her enough to prevent another war. Germany still had the potential to be the strongest economic power in Europe.

As Norman Lowe points out:

> "The Germans did have some grounds for complaint, but it is worth poiting out that the treaty could have been even more harsh: if Clemenceau had had his way, the Rhineland would have become an independent state, and France would have annexed the Saar. However, Germany was still the strongest power in Europe economically, so that the unwise thing about Versailles was that it annoyted ther Germans yet did not render them too weak to retaliate."
> [Lowe, *Mastering Modern World History*, 2nd edition, p. 38]

The moral of the story is, of course, if you are going to annoy an enemy by weakening him then you must make certain that you weaken him sufficiently so that he cannot strike back at you.

Alternatively, you must make an honourable peace with you enemy so that he will not be annoyed and will not want to retaliate.

The Treaty of Versailles failed on both these counts.

Its harshness left the Germans seething with anger and resentment, but was not harsh enough to prevent that anger eventually spilling out in the form of aggressive foreign policy designed to smash the treaty.

This, of course, made another war very likely indeed. The resentment surrounding the treaty helped Adolf Hitler come to power and Hitler was not afraid to take the aggressive action necessary to restore German pride and undo the shackles of Versailles.

And, as we know, it took the Second World War to prevent Hitler achieving his ambitions of a Nazi dominated Europe.

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2.3 The Treaty of St. Germain (with Austria, 1919)

The Treaty of St. Germain formalised the break-up of the Habsburg Austro-Hungarian Empire (which had already begun to happen in the final stages of the war when several national minorities declared their independance).

The major features of the treaty were:

- Austria and Hungary were seperated and became independant republics.
- New independent states were created from former Austro-Hungarian lands as national self-determination was put into practice.

The terms of the treaty were as follows:

1. Czechoslovakia was created and received the former Austian territories of Bohemia and Moravia (wealthy undustrial provinces with a population of 10 million).
2. Yugoslavia was created out of Serbia and Montenegro and the former Astrian territories of Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Dalmatia.
3. Poland (which had been reconstituted under the Treaty of Versailles) received Galicia.
4. Italy was given the Austrian Tyrol, Trentino, Trieste and Istria. Italy felt much aggrieved because she wanted Dalmatia as well (but it was given to Yugoslavia).
5. Rumania received Bukovina. The former Russian territory of Bessarabia was also given to Rumania.

The population of Austria was reduced from 22 million to 6.5 million and the majority of Austrian industrial wealth was lost to Czechoslovakia and Poland.

Asutria was forced to pay reparations and had disarmament clauses similar to those imposed on Germany.

2.4 The Treaty of Trianon (with Hungary, 1920)

The signing of the Treaty of Trianon was delayed until 1920 because of a communist revolt (led by Bela Kun) in the Hungarian capital of Budapest. The communists were defeated in 1920 and the treaty could be signed.

Hungary lost the following territories:

1. Czechoslovakia was given Slovakia and Ruthenia.
2. Yugoslavia was given Croatia and Slovenia.
3. Rumania was given Banat of Temesvar and Transylvania.
4. The population of Hungary was reduced from 21 million to 7.5 million.
5. Hungary had lost two-thirds of her territory including much fertile agricultural land and half of her road and rail network.

2.5 The Treaty of Sèvres (with Turkey, 1920)

In the Treaty of Sèvres Turkey lost:

1. Eastern Thrace, Smyrna and some Aegean Islands to Greece.
2. Adalia and Rhodes to Italy.
3. Syria became a French mandate.
4. Palestine, Iraq and Transjordan became British mandates.

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2.6 The Treaty of Neuilly (with Bulgaria, 1919)

In the TREATY OF NEUILLY Bulgaria lost territory to Greece, Yugoslavia and Rumania. Se was deprived of her Aegean coastline and lost a million Bulgars to foreign rule.

The major changes were:

1. Four areas in Northern Macedonia went to Yugoslavia.
2. Dobrudja went to Romania.
3. Western Thrace went to Greece.

In addition, Bulgaria was forced to pay reparations amounting to almost half a million dollars and had to limit her army to 20,000 men.

As we have seen, the formation of new states caused great disruption to the map of Europe.

Remember:

1. CZECHOSLOVAKIA was formed by the gathering of:
   (a) BOHEMIA and MORAVIA (both from Austria)
   with
   (b) SLOVAKIA and RUTHENIA (both from Hungary).
2. YUGOSLAVIA was formed by the joining together of:
   (a) SERBIA and MONTENEGRO (independent states)
   with
   (b) BOSNIA, HERZEGOVINA and DALMATIA (all three from Austria)
   plus
   (c) CROATIA and SLOVENIA (both from Hungary)
   plus
   (d) A small section of BULGARIA (part of Northern Macedonia).

Country	Lost	To	Under Treaty of
Germany	Alsace and Lorraine	France	Versailles
	Eupen	Belgium	
	Moresnet	Belgium	
	Malmedy	Belgium	
	North Schleswig	Denmark	
	West Prussia	Poland	
	Posen	Poland	
	Danzig	League of Nations	
	Memel	Lithuania	
	Saar	League of Nations	
	Upper Silesia	Poland	
	Hultschin	Czechoslovakia	
	Rhineland	Demilitarised Zone	
German Colonies	German East Africa	Britain	Versailles
	Togoland	France	
	Cameroons	France	
	German South West Africa	South Africa	
	West Samoa	New Zealand	

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Country	Lost	To	Under Treaty of
Austria	Bohemia	Czechoslovakia	St. Germain
	Moravia	Czechoslovakia	
	Bosnia	Yugoslavia	
	Kerzegovina	Yugoslavia	
	Dalmatia	Yugoslavia	
	Galicia	Poland	
	Tyrol	Italy	
	Trentino	Italy	
	Trieste	Italy	
	Istria	Italy	
	Bukovina	Rumania	
Hungary	Slovakia	Czechoslovakia	Trianon
	Ruthenia	Czechoslovakia	
	Croatia	Yugoslavia	
	Slovenia	Yugoslavia	
	Banat	Rumania	
	Transylvania	Rumania	
Turkey	Thrace	Greece	Sèvres
	Smyrna	Greece	
	Aegean Islands	Greece	
	Adalia	Italy	
	Rhodes	Italy	
	Syria	French Mandate	
	Palestine	British Mandate	
	Iraq	British Mandate	
	Transjordan	British Mandate	

Table 1: Territory Losses after WWI

3 The League of Nations

The League of Nations formally came into being on 10th January 1920 (it first met in August 1920).

Its headquarters were situated at Geneva in Switzerland.

Although Woodrow Wilson, the President of the United States, had called for the formation of an international peace-keeping force in his 14 Points (point 14), other world statesmen had made similar suggestions (e. g. Lord Robert Cecil of Britain, Jan Smuts of South Africa, Leon Bourgeois of France, &c.)

Each member state was required to sign a Covenant (or promise) that it would abide by the rules of the League. The Covenant (which also laid out the aims and rules of the League) appeared as the preface, or an introductory preamble, to each of the Peace Treaties emanating from the Paris Peace Conference (the Treaties of Versailles, St. Germain, Trianon, Sèvres, and Neuilly).

3.1 The Objectives of the League

The League had two main aims:

1. To maintain peace through Collective Security. In other words, if one state attacked another, the member states of the League would act together, collectively, to restrain the aggressor (either by economic sanctions, or by joint military action).
   Collective Security would be provided by first trying to persuade quarreling countries not to go to war. They would be encouraged to bring their dispute to the attention of the League and to agree to a settlement of the dispute either by:

   (a) Arbitration (where a third and independent party decides the issue)

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Figure 1: German Territorial Losses Under the Treaty of Versailles

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Figure 2: A Cartoon about the Treaty of Versailles

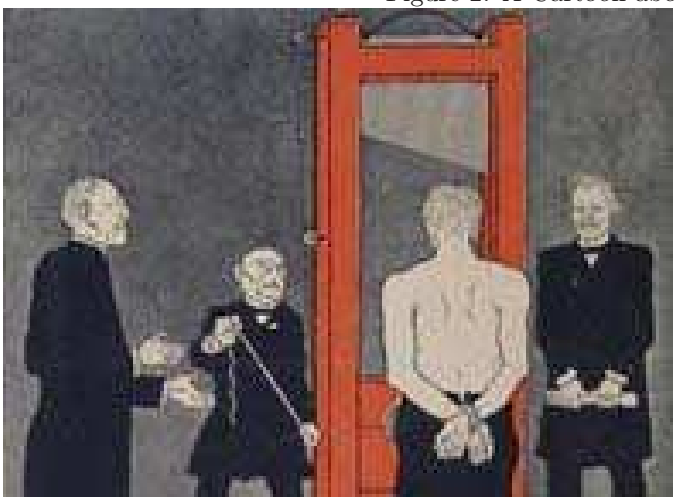

Figure 3: The Organisational Structure of the League of Nations

The Assembly
Every member of the League had one vote.
The assembly met once a year to:
- discuss anything raised by a member
- fix the League's budget
- admit new members
- elect non-permanent members of the Council

A unanimous vote was needed for a decision.

The Council
Consisted of four permanent members (Britain, France, Italy, Japan) and non-permanent members (at first three, later ten). It met to deal with emergencies. A unanimous vote was needed.

The Secretariat
An international civil service which prepared reports, kept records and translated documents.

The Permanent Court of International Justice
Set up in 1921 at The Hague, Holland. 15 judges gave a decision on disputes between countries – but only when the countries requested this.

Agencies and Commissions
A wide range of agencies set up to deal with various problems.

International Labour Organisation (ILO)
Tried to improve working conditions and wages.

Mandates Commission
The colonies of Germany and Turkey were given to 'caretaker' countries. The Commission kept an eye on the management of these colonies.

Minorities Commission
Helped protect people of one nationality forced to live under the rule of a different national group.

Other Agencies
Dealt with such problems as drug abuse, slavery, refugees . . . worked to improve world health and education.

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(b) Judicial Settlement (by the Court of International Justice)
If an aggressor nation could not be restrained by either of the above two processes, then it was the duty of each covenanted member country to impose economic sanctions; or, if that failed, to provide troops for collective military action against the aggressor.

2. To encourage international co-operation in order to solve economic and social problems.

3.2 The Organisation of the League

In the beginning there were 42 member states. By 1926 (when Germany joined), membership had risen to 55 member states.

The major organs of the League were:

3.2.1 The General Assembly

The General Assembly contained representatives (or delegates) of all the member states. Each country had one vote. The Assembly met annually; its function being to decide general policy. The Assembly also handled the finances of the League. Any decisions taken by the League had to have the unanimous support of all the member states.

3.2.2 The Council

The Council was a much smaller body than the Assembly. It was required to meet at least three times a year. The Council contained four permanent members and four elected members. The four permanent members were:

1. Britain
2. France
3. Italy
4. Japan

The United States would have been a permanent member if she had joined.

The four elected members were chosen by the General Assembly and served on the Council for a term of three years.

The number of non-permanent (elected) members had risen to nine by 1926.

The Council's function was to deal with specific political disputes as they arose. In other words, it was the Council's task to keep the peace between disputing nations.

The Council required unanimous support on all decisions (which was often difficult to get).

3.2.3 The Permanent Court of International Justice

This was the League's Court. It was based at the Hague, in Holland, and consisted of 15 judges of different nationalities. The Court of International Justice dealt with legal disputes between nations rather than political ones.

3.2.4 The Secretariat

This was the bureaucratic organ of the League. It handled all the paperwork, prepared agendas and reports, and was responsible for publicity. The first chairman of this body of civil servants was Sir Eric Drummond of Britain.

3.2.5 Various Commissions & Committees

1. The Mandates Commission kept watch on the German and Turkish colonies which had been put under the temporary rule of Britain and France (as mandates).
2. The Disarmament Commission worked to persuade the member nations to reduce the size of their armed forces and their stocks of weapons. Aggression was considered to be less likely to occur if member states did not have to means to make war.

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3. There were also COMMITTEES which dealt with:
   (a) International labour
   (b) Health
   (c) Economic and Financial organisation
   (d) Child welfare
   (e) Drug abuse
   (f) Women's rights

3.3 The Weaknesses of the League

3.3.1 The Absence of the USA

Although the President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, was one of the major advocates of a world peace-keeping organisation, the United States never became a member of the League. In March 1920, the US Senate rejected both the League and the Versailles settlement (by 49 votes to 35). It did so because Wilson's party (the Democratic Party) was no longer the dominant party in the House of Representatives and the Senate. The opposition party, the Republicans, had won a majority in the 2938 elections. Also, public opinion on America was against joining the League. Americans feared becoming h in another war. They wished to follow an isolationist policy.

Without the United States, the League would be less able to stand up to a powerful aggressor. The great political, financial, and military backing which America could have provided was lost to the League.

3.3.2 The Absence of Germany & Russia

In the beginning neither Germany nor Russia were asked to join the League. Germany and her allies (Austria, Hungary, Turkey, and Bulgaria) were excluded from the League as defeated powers. Germany eventually joined the League in 1926, but the damage had already been done. Germany's early exclusion was e to cause resentment among German nationalists. In 1933, Hitler pulled Germany out of the League.

Russia was also excluded from the League by the victorious Allies. Although Russia had been on the Allied side, she had withdrawn from the war following the Bolshevik (communist) revolution of 1917. A communist Russia was not considered trustworthy to be a member of the League by the capitalist west until 1934 (when Russia joined).

Clearly, the League of Nations could never hope to build a lasting peace with such great powers as Russia and Germany 'out in the cold'.

3.3.3 Domination of the League by Britain & France

With the United States, Russia, and Germany not being members of the League, Britain and France were the only 'Great' powers who were. This made the League appear to be an instrument of British and French foreign policy (especially designed for their benefit).

As the only two great powers in the League, Britain and France would have to take the lead, and perhaps military action, it it was to be successful. In reality, neither were prepared to do so (because they were frightened of provoking a major war).

Also, the League was too closely associated with the Treaty of Versailles (the harshness of which was largely the fault of France). The Treaty became increasingly criticised as being unfair, and began to be challenged more and more as time progressed. The League was forced to attempt to enforce the provisions of the Treaty, Even though many nations felt the League was in the wrong.

3.3.4 The League had No Army of its Own

This was a serious weakness. It meant that the League 'lacked teeth'. It could raise a force from troops contributed by member states, but in practice this would be slow and inefficient.

In 1923, as resolution was passed giving each member state the right to decide for itself whether to contribute troops in a crisis. This made a nonsense of the whole idea of Collective Security which depended on all members acting together.

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In 1924, Ramsay MacDonald, the Labour Prime Minister of Britain, and a great supporter of the League of Nations, put forward another resolution known as the Geneva Protocol. The Protocol attempted to pledge members to come to the military support of any nation who was the victim of unprovoked aggression by another Nation. However, the Conservative government which came to power in 1924 (and served until 1929) informed the League that it would have nothing to do with the Geneva Protocol (as did many other member states). The idea of collective security was dead.

3.3.5 The Need for Unanimous Decisions

The need for unanimous decisions in both the General Assembly and the Council meant that it was difficult to take decisive action.

3.3.6 The Conference of Ambassadors

The Conference Ambassadors was set up in 1919 to deal with any immediate problems of aggression which might occur before the League was functioning properly. However, the Conference of Ambassadors was allowed to linger on and undermined some of the League's decisions in the early 1920s. As we shall see, some of the decisions taken by the Ambassadors made it appear that aggression 'actually paid'.

3.4 Failures of the League of Nations

3.4.1 Vilna (1919–20)

The Disputants: Poland v. Lithuania In the medieval period, Vilna had been the capital of Lithuania. In 1919, when Lithuania became independent again (under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles), the Lithuanians claimed Vilna. However, only 2In 1920, Poland attempted to settle the matter by force and a Polish army seized Vilna.

The League: supported Lithuania's claim (which was against the spirit of 'self-determination' as Lithuanians in Vilna were in the minority). Protested against Polish aggression.

The Result: The Conference of Ambassadors overruled the League and awarded Vilna to Poland. This was a failure for the League. Its authority had been undermined by the Ambassadors. Although Poland perhaps had a better claim to Vilna, the decision made it appear that the use of force achieved positive results. Violence had succeeded.

3.4.2 Fiume (1920)

The Disputants: Italy v. Yugoslavia When Italy entered the war in 1925, she had been promised certain Austro-Hungarian territories as a reward (by the British and French in the Treaty of London). She had been promised Trentino, southern Tyro, Trieste, Istria and part of Dalmatia. Although Italy got most of these territories at the end of the war, Dalmatia and Fiume (and Adriatic port) went to the newly constituted nation of Yugoslavia. Although Italy had not been promised Fiume specifically, she had assumed that it would be made Italian because it contained a majority of Italian nationals. Italy felt cheated; she had only acheived a 'mutilated victory'. In 1919, Gabriele D'Annunzio, an Italian poet and adventurer, filled with nationalist zeal, marched with a small band of armed patriots and occupied Fiume. D'Annunzio occupied Fiume illegally for 15 months. He was eventually chased out by the Italian government who were prepared to stick by the post-war settlement. They then gave Fiume back to Yugoslavia.

The League: The Italian governernment intervened instead of the League, as it had no armed forces.

The Result: D'Annunzio had defied the Treaty of St. Germain. The League had been powerless to influence the matter. In 1923, Fiume was occupied again (this time by Mussolini, who had come to power in 1922). The following year Yugoslavia agreed that Fiume should stay Italian.

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3.4.3 The Grecian-Turkish War (1921)

The Disputants: Greece v. Turkey The Treaty of Sèvres, under which Turkey lost more than half of her territories, was hated by Turkish nationalists. In January 1921, Mustapha Kemal overthrew the Turkish Sultan and became the new ruler of Turkey. Following the Treaty of Sèvres, a large Greek army occupied Smyrna (formerly a part of Turkey but with over a million Greeks living there). The Greeks were not content with Smyrna and wished to conquer the whole of Turkey. Early in 1921, the Greek army set out for Turkey in order to smash Kemal's armies. After three weeks of bitter fighting at the Sakarya, the Greeks were finally pushed out of Turkey. The Turks now turned on the British who were based in the Turkish town of Chanak, guarding the Turkish Straits. The British commander, in order to save a massacre, promised Kemal that the Treaty of Sèvres would be scrapped, and replaced by a fairer one.

The League: replaced the hatred Treaty of Sèvres with the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923. It gave back to Turkey most of the land she had lost and ordered all foreign troops to leave Turkey. The Turkish Straits were put back under Turkish control, although all fortifications on the shores had to be destroyed. Finally, there were no restrictions on Turkey's armed forces and no reparations had to be paid.

The Result: The decisions taken at the Paris Peace Conference, and embodied in the Treaty of Sèvres, had been completely reversed by war.

3.4.4 The Port of Memel (1923)

The Disputants: Lithuania v. The League of Nations Memel was a former German Baltic port on the border with Lithuania. Most of its inhabitants were Lithuanian. The Treaty of Versailles gave Memel to Lithuania. The French and Polish delegates of the League, however, favoured an international presence in Memel (similar to that decided for Danzig). The transfer to Lithuania, therefore, became delayed awaiting a decision. In 1923, the Lithuanians became impatient and seized Memel by force.

The League: protested at Lithuanian aggression, but to no avail. The Conference of Ambassadors tried to settle the dispute, but Lithuania would not accept its decisions. The League intervened by giving Memel Lithuania.

The Result: The League had been defied and the use of force had been successful.

3.4.5 The Corfu Incident (1923)

The Disputants: Italy v. Greece Four Italian soldiers, including the General Tellini (who were part of an international boundary commission), were killed when fighting broke out across the border between Greece and Albania. Mussolini, the new Italian leader, blamed the Greeks and demanded 50 million lire in compensation. The Greeks refused to pay and so Mussolini occupied the Greek island of Corfu.

The League: were asked to investigate the dispute by the Greek government, but Mussolini refused to co-operate with the League and demanded that the Conference of Ambassadors should deal with the matter.

The Result: The Conference of Ambassadors ordered Greece to accept Mussolini's demands and pay the full amount of compensation. The Corfu Incident was the most serious failure of the League in the 1920s. The use of force had succeeded again. The authority of the League had been openly defied by Italy, a founder member of the League and a permanent member of the Council. The Conference of Ambassadors had undermined the authority of the League yet again.

3.4.6 The Chaco War (1932)

The Disputants: Bolivia v. Paraguay Bolivia and Paraguay both claimed the Chaco area which was situated on their frontiers. In 1921, full-scale war borke out.

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The League: sent out a commission to investigate the dispute and tried to arrange a cease-fire.

The Result: A failure. The war dragged on until 1935 and only ended when both sides were too exhausted financially and militarily to continue.

3.4.7 The Manchurian Incident (1931)

The Disputants: Japan v. China China attempted to squezze out Japanese trade and business interests in the Chinese province of Manchuria. Amidst the economic depression following the Wall Street Crash of October 1929, Japan could not afford to allow this to happen. In September 1931, Japanese army units invaded and occupied Manchuria.

The League: condemned the Japanese action and ordered her troops to be withdrawn. When Japan refused, the League appointed a commission under Lord Lytton which decided in 1932 that there were faults on both sides and suggested that Manchuria should be governed by the League.

The Result: Japan rejected the Lytton proposals and withdrew from the League in March 1933. They continued to occupy Manchuria, and once again, aggression appeared to pay. The question of economic sanctions, let alone military action against Japan, was not raised by the League. Britain and France feared war. The Manchurian incident was the most serious failure of the League to date.

3.4.8 The Invasion of Abyssinia (1935)

The Disputants: Italy v. Abyssinia In October 1935, Italy invaded Abyssinia. Italy was attempting to take her 'place in the sun' in order to find 'living space' for her people. Mussolini dreamed of the formation of a new 'Roman Empire'.

The League: condemned Italy and introduced limited economic sanctions which did not include a ban on exports to Italy of oil, coal and steel – the very commodities which could have stopped the Italian armies in their tracks. Italy was able to complete the invasion of Abyssinia by May 1936.

The Result: This was the most serious failure of the League. The British and the French had not wanted to antagonise Mussolini because they wanted to keep him as an ally against the real enemy in their eyes – Nazi Germany. However, Mussolini was so annoyed by the sanctions anyway that he moved closer and closer to an alliance with Hitler. **After 1935, the League was never taken seriously again.** Moreover, the weakness of the League, as shown by the Abyssinian fiasco, encouraged Hitler to break the conditions of the Treaty of Versailles.

3.5 Successes of the League of Nations

3.5.1 The Åland Islands (1920)

The Disputants: Finland v. Sweden The Åland islands belonged to Finland but Sweden disputed Finnish ownership as the majority of the islanders were Swedish.

The League: decided that the islands should remain part of Finland with the rights of the minority of Finnish islanders safeguarded by the League.

The Result: The League's ruling was accepted by Sweden.

3.5.2 Upper Silesia (1920)

The Disputants: Poland v. Germany Upper Silesia was claimed by both Poland and Germany. It was a valuable mining and industrial area. The Treaty of Versailles allowed the people of Upper Silesia to vote (by plebiscite) whether they wanted to be part of Germany or Poland. Over 700,000 voted for Germany and 500,000 for Poland. There was rioting and violence following the result.

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The League: was asked to settle the matter. After a six-week inquiry the League recommended that Upper Silesia be split between Poland and Germany.

The Result: The League's decision was accepted by both countries.

3.5.3 The Mosul Incident (1924)

The Disputants: Turkey v. Iraq Mosul had been part of Turkey but was awarded to Iraq (which became a British mandated territory) after the First World War. Turkey objected and claimed Mosul.

The League: decided that Mosul should remain a part of Iraq.

The Result: Turkey accepted the decision against them.

3.5.4 The Greek Invasion of Bulgaria (1925)

The Disputants: Greece v. Bulgaria A quarrel occurred between Greek and Bulgarian sentries who were patrolling the border separating their countries. Shooting broke out and a Greek sentry was killed. The Greek army then invaded Bulgaria in revenge. Bulgaria asked the League for help.

The League: ordered both armies to stop fighting and Greece to withdraw her forces from Bulgaria. The League sent experts to decide who was to blame. Greece was fined £45,000 in damages (which were awarded to Bulgaria).

The Result: Both nations accepted the League's rulings.

Important: Although the League had some successes in settling disputes in the 1920s, it had more failures than successes (particularly in the 1930s). Moreover, all of the successes in volved disputes between minor nations. When powerful nations such as Italy and Japan took aggressive actioin the League failed miserably to keep the peace.

In political terms, therefore, it can only be said that the League was **more of a failure than it was a success**.

In social, economic, and humanitarian terms, on the other hand, the League was **very successful indeed**.

3.6 Socio-economic Successes of the League of Nations

3.6.1 The Refugee Organisation

The Refugee Organisation was perhaps the most successful of the various commissions set up by the League. It was led by the Norwegian explorer Fridtjof Nansen. Its objectives were the repatriation of prisoners of war and the resttlement of refugees.

In Russia Thousands of prisoners of war were marooned in camps in Russia suffering from starvation and disease. The Refugee Organisation repatriated 500,000 prisoners of war and organised the improvement of living conditions and medical treatment within the camps.

In Turkey The refugee problem was particularly serious in Turkey following the war between Turkey and Greece in 1921. The Turkish army had driven 1.5 million Greek civilians from their homes in Smyrna. Four-fifths of these refugees were women and children, many of whom carried infectious diseases such as cholera and typhoid.

The Greek government did not have the necessary resources to deal with the flood of refugees into the country (by 1923, 20% of the Greek population were homeless refugees).

The League of Nations:

- Sent in medical teams from the Health Organisation
- Spent £10 million creating farms, villages and workshops
- Supplied cattle, seed, water supplies and machinery

By 1926, the League had provided homes and work for 600,000 people in Greece.

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3.6.2 The International Labour Organisation (ILO)

The aim of the ILO was to improve working conditions throughout the world by encouraging governments to:

- Fix the maximum working hours in a day
- Specify minimum wages
- Introduce sickness and unemployment benefits
- Improve the safety of workers and conditions of work
- Limit the employment of women and children

3.6.3 The Health Organisation

The Health Organisation provided medical care where it was most needed (in prisoner of war camps and refugee communities). It did valuable work in limiting the spread of infectious diseases (e. g. cholera and typhoid).

3.6.4 The Saar Commission

The Saar Commission undertook the very efficient administration of the German Saar Valley. In 1935 it organised a plebiscite (vote by the people) which led to the peaceful return of the Saar Valley to Germany.

3.6.5 Other Problems Tackled by the League

These included:

- The traffic in dangerous drugs
- The illegal sale of arms
- Slavery

Important: In an examination question which asks you to compare the successes and failures of the League, one would have to come to the conclusion that, in political terms (i.e. peace-keeping), the League was more of a failure than it was a success. Although there were some political successes (The Åland Islands, Upper Silesia, the Grecian/Bulgarian border dispute, Mosul, &c.), all of the successes onvolved only minor nations. When it came to controlling major powers, the League was an absolute failure. IT completely failed to halt the aggressive foreign policies of Japan and Italy (both of whom became allies to Hitler's Germany) in the 1930s. The Japanese invasion of Manchuria (1931) and the Italian invasion of Abyssinia (1935) were serious failures for the League (and it was never taken seriously again after 1935).

Indeed, the League failed to exert the slightest influence concerning the Nazi invasions of Czechoslovakia and Poland, which led to the Second World War in 1939.

After December 1939, the League never met again.

It was formally dissolved in 1946.

It had proved a total failure in the prevention of another major war: the very reason why it had been formed in 1920.

However, although the League had some spectacular failures in attempting to combat agression, it had some equally spectacular successes in social and economic areas. The Refugee Organisation, the Health Organisation, and the International Labour Organisation were all very successful in alleviating a great deal of poverty and misery in the post-war period.

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4 Italian Aggressive Foreign Policy (1919–39)

The Italians emerged from World War I with feelings that they had suffered a 'Mutilated Victory'.

Italy had entered the war in 1915 because the Allies promised her territorial gains in the event of the defeat of Austria-Hungary.

The secret TREATY OF LONDON (1915) promised Italy the Austro-Hungarian territories of IStria, Dalmatia and the Austrian Tyrol.

When the Austro-Hungarian Empire was broken up in 1919, however, the Italians were only given two of the promised territories (Tyrol and Istria).

Dalmatia went to Yugoslavia.

So did the town of Fiume; an Adriatic port which contained a majority Italian population.

The Italians had assumed that the Allies would give Fiume to them (remember Woodrow Wilson's 14 Points (see 5, WOODROW WILSON'S 14 POINTS): Point 9 – that Italy's frontiers should be restored along clear lines of nationality; and Point 10 – that the peoples of the Austro-Hungarian Empire should be allowed self-determination).

The Italians felt cheated.

They had 600,000 men killed; had 1 million wounded (450,000 of which were permanently disabled); and had 600,000 soldiers taken prisoner.

The had suffered all these casualties – and still hadn't got Fiume!

They had also failed to reiceive a share of German colonies in Africa and the Middle-East.

4.1 The Occupation of Fiume (September 1919)

In September 1919, within weeks of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, a group of armed Italian nationalists under the leadership of Gabriele d'Annunzio marched into Fiume and occupied it. The small international army of British, French and American troops defending the town surrendered without resistance.

As C. C. Bayne-Jardine tells us:

> "On the night of 11th September 1919 a motley band of men marched from Ronchi to Fiume. They were dressed in assorted uniforms but the black shirt of the Italian ARDITI (shock troops) was predominant.
>
> Leading this dark column through the night was a colourful figure, the poet d'Annunzio. Bald, one-eyed and virtually bankrupt, he still had a romantic charm. He had written some stirring war poems and had served Italy during the war in the cavalry, the infantry, the navy and finally the air service. In the latter he had won a reputation for daring which had cost him an eye. Like so many Italians after the war d'Annunzio had grown disillusioned and he felt that Italy had been betrayed by politicians. He attacked President Wilson of the USA and the members of the [Paris] peace conference in a series of articles, and chose as the symbol of Italian wrongs the port of Fiume"
>
> [Bayne-Jardine, *Mussolini and Italy*, p. 20]

As we have seen, Gabriele d'Annunzio was an ex-soldier, war hero, poet, dramatist and adventurer. Many of his band of 1000 armed men were war veterans filled with hatred and despair at the 'Mutilated Victory'.

D'Annunzio controlled Fiume for fifteen months.

Money to run d'Annunzio's tiny empire was got by hijacking passing ships and by raiding towns across the Yugoslav border.

The Fiume incident was an acute embarrassment to the Italian government; but the people were enthralled.

As Bayne-Jardine tells us:

> "Schoolboys ran away from home to join this hero of Fiume while his followers organised piracy to support their state. The whole venture has the appearance of comic opera and many of d'Annunzio's gestures were vulgar and futile. He flew over Rome and dropped a chamber pot full of carrots on the parliament buildings to show his feelings about the Italian government."
>
> [Bayne-Jardine, *Mussolini and Italy*, p. 21]

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By Christmas Eve 1920, the Italian government could stand the embarrassment no longer.

They began to shell Fiume.

After three weeks of heavy fighting d'Annunzio was finally forced to surrender and the Italian government handed Fiume over to Yugoslavia.

Although Fiume was a minor affair in terms of world importance, it demonstrated the intense nationalism experience in Italy at the time.

As James Joll notes:;

> "...the withdrawal from Fiume was regarded as a betrayal by many Italians and added to the general sense of frustration and humiliation."
> [Joll, *Europe Since 1870*, p. 265]

As we know, frustration + humiliation + intense nationalism spells aggression. The age of Benito Mussolini and Italian Fascism was not far away.

4.2 The Aggressive Foreign Policy of Benito Mussolini

We have already seen how Italian feelings of a 'mutilated victory' following the Treaty of Versailles led Gabriele d'Annunzio to occupy Fiume in September 1919.

The message behind d'Annunzio's fervent nationalism was not lost on the ambitious young Fascist politician Benito Mussolini – aggression brings glory; even if only temporarily.

Following Mussolini's coming to power in October 1922, Fiume again became a target of Italian nationalist aggression.

Fiume as occupied again in 1923 – and the following year the Yugoslavs agreed that it should remain Italian henceforth.

The fact that Fiume became isolated from its Yugoslav hinterland, and suffered consequent economic stagnation, did not lessen the ecstatic anthusiasm of Italian patriots for the 'redemption' of Fiume. They simply chose to ignore such uncomfortable details.

4.2.1 Major Aims of Mussolini

1. To create a "Second Roman Empire" in Africa.
2. To make the Mediterranean an "Italian Lake" (to diminish British and French influence in the Mediterranean)
3. To make the Balkans an Italian satellite (to replace French influence with Italian influence in the Balkans)

4.3 The Corfu Incident (1923)

The Corfu Incident of 1923 (see page 19 The Corfu Incident) gave the Fascist leader Mussolini another chance to display armed aggression in the pursuit of national glory.

Mussolini's chance arose from a dispute between Greece and Albania on the border between the two states.

An Italian General and tow other officers were killed in a cross-border shooting incident whilst working on an International boundary commission set up by the Conference of Ambassadors of the League of Nations.

Mussolini blamed Greece.

He demanded a full apology and compensation to the value of 50 million lire.

The Greeks refused and requested the League of Nations to investigate the incident.

The Italian navy then bombarded the Greek island of Corfu and Italian marines occupied the island.

Mussolini refused to recognise the competence of the League to deal with the matter and threatened to withdraw from te League if he did not get his way.

The Ambassadors then ordered Greece to pay the full amount of compensation required.

The Greeks had no real choice but to pay up and Mussolini withdrew his troops from Corfu.

Mussolini was triumphant. Italians were filled with nationalist pride.

Mussolini had shown that aggression can pay.

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4.4 Years of Caution (1924–35)

Although Mussolini had gained 50 million lire in compensation from the Greeks following the Corfu incident, he had come under intense pressure from Britain and France over the Italian occpation of Corfu.

Mussolini realised that Italy was not strong enough economically and militarily in the mid-1920s to argue with Britain and France.

For almost a decade, therefore, Mussolini trod more carefully.

He sought to strengthen Italy's position in Europe by maintaining good relations with Britain whilst attempting to undermine French influence in the Balkans and the Mediterranean.

Crucial to this strategy was his relationship with the British foreign secretary Austen Chamberlain – one of the many European conservatives who admired Mussolini's anti-coommunism and the imposition of internal order in Italy.

Chamberlain's benevolent attitude towards Mussolini, for example, assured British acquiescence in the establishment of an Italian protectorate over Albania in 1926 (Albania was virtually under Italian economic control).

For long periods Mussolini acted as his own Foreign Secretary. Even when he did not (e.g. between 1929–32 when Dino Grande was Foreign Secretary and after 1936 when his own son-in-law Galeazzo Ciano took the post) Mussolini's control persisted.

Generally speaking, from 1922–27 Italian foreign policy was muted by the power of Britain and France.

But by 1928, when Italy had gained in military and economic strength, Mussolini began to flex his muscles.

The Duce talked of the creation of an army of 5 million and an airforce containing so many aeroplanes that it would 'blot out the sun'.

But the Wall Street Crash of 1929 (and the economic depression which followed in its wake) led to another three years of cautious foreign policy.

Hitler's rise to power in 1933 brought new worries to Italy.

A possible German Anschluss with Austria would threaten the security of Italy's northern border with Austria.

When the Austrian Prime Minister Ebglebert Dollfuss was assassinated by Austrian Nazis in July 1934, Mussolini moved three Italian divisions up to the Austro-Italian border (at the Brenner Pass) in order to counter a possible German takeover of Austria.

The Germans took no further action.

> **NOTE:** Dollfuss was a fascist-like dictator who had been elped by Mussolini in his quest for power. At the time of his assassination, Dollfuss' wife was staying with Mrs. Mussolini as a house guest.

The fear of a German Anschluss with Austria (which was forbidden under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles) encouraged the formation of the Stresa Front (under which Britain, Italy and France agreed to act together to protect future Austrian independance).

> **NOTE:** The Stresa Front was to collapse in 1935 due to Britain signing the Anglo-German Naval Agreement with Hitler without prior consultation with Italy and France. Mussolini also blamed Britain and France for their part in the imposition of economic sanctions against Italy following the Italian invasion of Abyssinia in October 1935.

By 1935, Mussolini felt strong enough to use force against a smaller nation to win Italy's 'place in the sun'.

An overseas colonial empire would ease Italian gloom and despondence amidst the economic depression that now afflicted the whole of the commercial world.

The unfortunate target of Italian nationalist aggression would be the 'Third World' African nation of Abyssinia.

4.5 The Italian Invasion of Abyssinia (October 1935)

Towards the end of 1934 a large force of Abyssinians attacked an Italian outpost at Wal-Wal near the border of Italian Somaliland and Abyssinia. Mussolini saw this incident as the ideal opportunity to increase Italy's empire in Africa (which he had been planning to do for some time).

In October 1935 Italian troops poured into the East African kingdom of Abyssinia (or Ethiopia as we call it today).

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Abyssinia was the only remaining independant state in Africa (under the rule of the Emperor Haile Selassie).

A previous attempt to colonise Abyssinia in 1896 had ended in ignominious defeat for the Italians at Adowa.

Mussolini now sought to avenge that defeat.

Italy's existing colonies in East Africa – Eritrea and Somaliland (which both bordered Abyssinia) – were not paying their way.

Italy felt she needed Abyssinia for:

1. The provision of cheap raw materials ro supply her ailing industries.
2. To provide new living-space (Italian: "Spazio Vitale") for her expanding population.
3. For the 'glory' of conquest. Mussolini wanted to restore Italian nationalist pride by the founding of a second 'Roman Empire' overseas. Italy was in deep economic depression following the Wall Street Crash and the collapse of international trade. What better way to divert the minds of Italians from the poverty and unemployment at home by a glorious victory abroad?

Mussolini had been led to believe that Britain would not oppose his designs on Abyssinia.

There had been no mention of Abyssinia at the meeting of the Strese Front in April 1935 (and it was common knowledge that Italy felt that Abyssinia was the natural area for Italian expansion and was making obvious preparations for an invasion).

Mussolini took this silence as a sign of British consent

It was with a good deal of confidence, therefore, that Mussolini directed a massive army into Abyssinia on 3rd October 1935 (the largest modern army to operate in Africa hitherto).

Five regular divisions, five blackshirt divisions, two native divisions, and a substantial airforce was placed under the command of General de Bono.

The use of mustard gas bombs against Abyssinian forces and civilians alike brought stern condemnation from the League of Nations..

Adowa was occupied by the Italians on 6th October 1935.

Italy was condemned as the aggressor and economic sanctions were imposed by the LEague.

Ships were forbidden to carry arms to Italy and transport cargoes from Italian ports.

However, there was noembargo placed on oil, coal, iron and steel entering Italy (the very thing which would stop the Italian war machine in its tracks).

Even the Suez canal was left open to Italian warships and troop transporters.

Even though the sanctions were slight, Mussolini was furious with Britain and France for their part in their imposition.

Britain and France then attempted to appease Mussolini in secret negotiations.

Samuel Hoare, the British Foreign Secretary, and Laval, the French premier offered Mussolini a secret deal in which they promised him nearly two-thirds of Abyssinia (which was more than he had already captured) if the invasion was called off.

When news of the deal was leaked, public indignation in Britain caused Hoare to resign on 18th December 1935.

The Hoare-Laval pact was dead, the deal was off, and Mussolini was very angry indeed.

Meanwhile, the Italian invasion rolled on.

In April 1936, the Abyssinian army was finally defeated at the Battle of Lake Ashangi.

The emperor Haile Selassie fled and Marshal Badoglio (who had replaced de Bono) entered Addis Ababa at the head of the Italian army on 5th May 1936.

Mussolini had defied the League of Nations. Once again, aggression had triumphed.

From now on Italy was to move away from Britain and France and become closer to Hitler (who had not denounced the Italian invasion of Abyssinia and had refused to apply sanctions).

4.6 Italian Involvement in the Spanish Civil War (1936–38)

Encouraged by the military success in Abyssinia, Mussolini decided to help the Spanish nationalist rebels under General Franco in their fight against the Republican government forces in the Spanish Civil War.

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Mussolini sought a quick and glorious victory, but got drawn deeper into the Spanish struggle than he either wished or imagined.

Mussolini's policy of intervention in the SPANISH CIVIL WAR was encouraged by his son-in-law Ciano whom he had appointed minister of foreign affairs in the summer of 1936.

Italian victories, however, were neither quick nor very glorious and the Italian forces were not recalled until June 1938.

4.7 A Closer Relationship with Germany (1936–39)

From 1925 onwards, Italy began to move further and further away from Britain and France in international relations and grew increasingly closer to Nazi Germany.

In many ways, Hitler and Mussolini were natural allies. Both were ultra right0wing nationalist dictators who shared a hatred of Bolshevik communism.

This ideological link underpinned both Hitler's and Mussolini's decision to support the Spanish right-wing nationalist leader General Franco in his struggle against socialist republicanism in the Spanish Civil War.

Both Hitler and Mussolini saw militarism as the answer to economic depression in the 1930s.

Both dictators saw military conquest as the route to glory and the re-establishment of national pride following the disappointments of the First World War.

Hitler saw military strength and power as the surest way to release Germany from the schackles of the 'Diktat' of Versailles and Mussolini saw it as the surest way to restore national pride following the 'Mutilated Victory' of the First World War.

Mussolini grew disillusioned with the British and French following the collapse of the Stresa Front in 1935 and the attitude of Britain and France to the Italian ivasion of Abyssinia in 1935.

Hitler had not criticised Mussolini over the Abyssinian conflict (and Mussolini felt increasingly drawn towards a Fascist/Nazi alliance).

In October 1936, Hitler's and Mosilini's new-found friendship was formalised in the ROME-BERLIN AXIS.

The Rome-Berlin Axis was not a military alliance, but more of an 'understanding' that Italy and Germany sould operate closely together in foreign affairs.

In 1937 Italy joined the ANTI-COMINTERN PACT with Germany and Japan.

Hitler and Mussolini, who shared a mutual antipathy towards Marxist communism, were now pledged with Japan, whose great enemy was communist China, in a pact sworn to resist the advance of international communism.

Hitler's and Mussolini's growing friendship allowed Hitler to occupy Austria (in March 1938) without fear of Italian intervention.

In April 1939, Italy occupied Albania.

Albania was already under Italian economic control (and was therefore a largely pointless exercise).

The Italian occupation of Albania was but a pale imitation of Hitler's occupation of Czechoslovakia the previous month (March 1939).

Italy too must have its share of military glory!

But Mussolini's growing friendship with Nazi Germany was to have dire consequences for Italy.

Italy was nowehere near as powerful as Germany in terms of military strength.

Italy could not afford to be drawn into a full scale conflict with Britain and France.

On 21st May 1939, Germany and Italy forged the famous PACT OF STEEL.

The Pact of Steel pledged Italy and Germany to support each other on land, sea, and in the air, if attacked by hostile forces.

When Britain and France declared war on Germany following Hitler's invasion of Poland in September 1939, Hitler naturally expected Italy to enter the war on behalf of her Nazi allies.

But Italy stayed neutral because Mussolini felt she was too weak militarily to contemplate a major war.

In the speing of 1940, however, as the Nazi BLITZKRIEG swept across north-western Europe, Mussolini entered the war insupport of his German ally.

The Duce, encourage by the German success and feeling embarrassed by his own lack of heroism, now committed Italy to a war which was to prove disastrous to himself and the Italian nation.

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5 Hitler's Foreign Policy (1933–39)

Hitler's Foreign Policy had three major aims:

1. To Destroy the Impositions of the Hatred Treaty of Versailles
2. To Unite All Germans Into a Single Nation (Pan-Germanism)
3. To Gain 'Lebensraum' (or living space) for the German People in the east. For Hitler this meant an invasion of the Soviet Union (which would also facilitate the destruction of the Marxist/Jewish threat).

Let's examine each one of these aims in a little more detail. Once we understand the essential nature of each, we will be free to examine the major events of Hitler's foreign policy between 1933-39 in chronological order (and be able to place each event into one, or more, of the three categories mentioned above).

To Destroy the Impositions of the Hatred Treaty of Versailles Following the defeat of Germany in the First World War, her leaders were forced to sign the Treaty of Versailles. The German army was limited to 1000,000 men; a German airforce was strictly banend by the treaty; the navy was limited to a small number of surface sbattleships and was not allowed to possess any submarines at all. Germany was also forcibly deprived of much of her territory in Europe and all of her overseas colonies. With her European territorial losses, Germany also lost the right of government over many millions of Germans and her prime industrial areas. The defeated German leaders were also forced to accept total blame for the war (the War Guilt Clause 231) and were made to pay heavy reparations as compensation to the victors.

Hitler, along with many others, felt that the treaty was a 'diktat' imposed on a Germany who had never really been beaten in the field of battle and had not been represented at the Paris Peace Conference. Germany's surrender was viewed as a Jewish/Marxist conspiracy perpetrated by a gang of 'November Criminals' who became the leaders of the Weimar Republic. Hitler played on these myths in order to gain power. Once in power he was determined to undo the Treaty of Versailles, to restore lost German pride, and to make the Father land 'great' again.

To Unite All Germans Into a Single Nation (Pan-Germanism) Although Hitler was an Austrian rather than a German, as far as he was concerned Austria and Germany were one and the same, They shared a common language, a coommon 'Aryan' racial ancestry, and common historical and cultural roots. Although the unification of Germany and Austria (Anschluss) was forbidden under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, it was Hitler's fondest dream to bring te country of his birth into the German Reich where he felt it truly belonged.

There were also over 3 million 'Germans' licing in the new nation of Czechoslovakia following its creation in 1919. Also, many Germans now lived in Poland following the territorial changes imposed by Versailles. Indeed, a 'Polish Corridor' actually split Germany in two. Hitler's dream was 'ein volk, win Reich, ein Führer' ('one people, one state, one leader'). The fulfillment of Hitler's dream, or course, could only be acheived by an aggressive foreign policy.

To Gain 'Lebensraum' for the German People According to Hitler, Germany needed 'living-space' for her rising population. The acquisition of new land would be utilised for food production and would also bring raw materials and new industrial resources to expand the German economy. Also, vast numbers of foreign 'slaves' could be put to work for the benefit of the Third Reich.

The area best suited for German expansion was to the east – Poland and the Soviet Union.

As Hitler stated in Mein Kampf in 1924:

> "And so we National Socialists consciously draw a line beneath the foreign policy tendence of our pre-War period. We take up where we broke off six hundred years ago. We stop the endless German movement to the south and west, and turn out gaze towards the land in the east. At long last we break off te colonial and commercial policy of the pre-War period and shift to the soil policy of the future. If we speak of soil in Europe, we can primariloy have in mind only Russia and her vassal border states."
> [Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, D. Watt (ed.), (Hutchinson, 1977), p. 598]

Besides Lebensraum, the conquest of Soviet Russia would allow the final destruction of Marxist Communism and the eastern Jews in one strike.

As Ian Kershaw states:

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Table 2: Hitler's Foreign Policy (March 1933–39)

Year	Destruction of Treaty of Versailles	Pan-Germanism	Lebensraum	Treaties and Alliances
1933				Hitler withdraws Germany from the World Disarmament Conference and from the League of Nations.
1934	Hitler gives secret orders for the expansion of the armed forces			Ten Year Pact with Poland
1935	March — Hitler reintroduces conscription June — Anglo-German Naval Agreement			
1936	March — Hitler reoccupies the Rhineland			Hitler intervenes in Spanish Civil War October — Rome-Berlin Axis November — Hitler signs Anti-Comintern Pact with Japan
1937				Italy joins Anti-Comintern Pact with Germany and Japan.
1938	March — Anschluss with Austria	September — Munich Conference, Czech Sudetenland given to Germany		
1939			March — Hitler invades Czechoslovakia September — Germany invades Poland	May — Germany and Italy sign the Pact of Steel. August — Nazi-Soviet Pact

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> "By 1941 the vision of an ultimate showdown with Bolshevism as a twin 'crusade' to win 'living space' and to eradicate the Jews was grim reality."
> [Ian Kershaw, *Hitler*, (Longman, 1991), p. 143]

However, such 'living space' could only be acquired through war.

NOTE: All of the above aims are mentioed frequently by Hitler in his book Mein Kampf (written in 1924).

Let's now examine the major events of Hitler's foreign policy between 1933–39 whilst keeping the three broad categories of foreign policy aims firmly in mind.

5.1 German Rearmament

Hitler felt that the restrictions placed upon German military forcecs by the Treaty of Versailles were shameful and totally unfair.

In his book Mein Kampf he raged:

> "The Treaty of Versailles is engraved on the minds and hearts of the German people and burned into them. Sixty million people will find their souls aflame with a feeling of rage and shame. Then the people will join in a common cry: 'We will have arms again.' "

When Hitler came to power in 1933 he was deterined to rearm the Fatherland.

In October 1933, he withdrew Germany from the World Disarmament Conference and from the League of Nations on the grounds that France would not agree to German equality of armaments.

In 1934, just a year after coming to power, Hitler gave secret orders for the expansion of the armed forces. They were:

1. The German army was to be trebled in size from its limit of 100,000 men to 300,000.
2. The navy was to build two 'pocket battleships' and six submarines (submarines were not allowed under the terms of Versailles).
3. Hermann Göring was to create an air force and secretly train pilots (the Treaty of Versailles specifically forbade te existence of a German air force).

In March 1935, Hitler openly announced the reintroduction of conscription (enforced military service).

This was Hitler's 'public' breach of the Versailles treaty.

He announced to his generals, and the rest of the world, that he would build up the German army to 36 divisions (about 600,000 men).

No action was taken against Hitler. The League of Nations could do nothing without military intervention (which its member countries were not willing to countenance).

The Stresa Front (Britain, France and Italy) condemned Hitler's acctions, but did nothing. The Stresa Front first met in April 1935 (at Stresa, in Italy) to discuss their common interest in halting German designs on unification with Austria.

5.2 The Anglo-German Naval Agreement (18th June 1935)

Hitler now pulled a very shrewd master-stroke in getting Britain to agree to his illegal expansion of the German navy.

Hitler, realising how frail the Stresa Front was, 'dangled a carrot' in front of the British and so detached them from the Stresa Front.

Hitler offered to limit the strength of the German navy to 35% of that of the British.

The British eagerly accepted and the Anglo-German Naval Agreement was signed on 18th June 1935 (without Britain consulting her French and Italian allies).

The British felt that since the Germans were already breaking the Treaty of Versailles by guilding up a fleet, it might as well be limited.

But without consulting Italy and France, Britain and condoned German rearmament.

France was particularly horrified.

The Stresa Front soon collapsed and freed Hitler from the fear of encirclement.

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5.3 Escalation of German Rearmament (1935–39)

The reate of German rearmament quickly gathered momentum following the Anglo-German Naval Agreement.

By the end of 1938 the Germans had 21 large ships (including battleships, cruisers and destroyers) and many more under construction.

They could also boast the possession of 47 U-boats (submarines).

They also had a large air force of over 2000 aircraft and an army 15 division strong (about 800,000 men in total).

By 1938, German expenditure on rearmament hadreached 17.2 billion Reichmarks (1,710 million); more than twice that of Britain and France put together.

In 1938, arms expenditure accounted for 17% of the German GNP (Gross National Product). In the USA, in the same year, arms expenditure accounted for only 1% of the GNP; and 8% in Britain.

5.4 German Re-occupation of the Rhineland (7th March 1939)

The Treaty of Versailles had declared the German Rhineland a Demilitarised Zone.

No German troops were allowed within 50 kilometres of the River Rhine.

On 7th March 1936, in defiance of the treaty, German troops marched into the Rhineland.

This was an outright breach of both the Treaty of Versailles and the Locarno Treaty.

Hitler, however, justified his actions by declaring that a recent pact between France and Russia (signed in March 1935, but not ratified by the Franch Senate until 27th February 1936) broke the Locarno agreement.

Hitler took a wild gamble, and it paid off. No-one lifted a finger to stop him.

Hitler later commented:

> "The 48 hours after the march into the Rhineland were the most nerve-racking in my life. If the French had then marched into the Rhineland we would have had to withdraw with our tails between our legs, for the military resources at out disposal would have been wholly inadequate for even a moderate resistance."

But the French did nothing. The French government wanted to take military action, but the French High Command warned against it. They would have had to march alone – without British support – for the British felt that the Germans, in the words of Lord Lothian, were 'only going into their own back garden'.

The British had shied away from the risk of war, and the French would not contemplate action without British support.

5.5 A Year of Alliances (1936)

In 1936, Hitler made several important ALLIANCES. They were:

1. He sent help to right-wing nationalist leader General Franco in the SPANISH CIVIL WAR.
2. He made an agreement with the Italian Fascist dictator Mussolini; the ROME-BERLIN AXIS.
3. He made an alliance with Japan in the Anti-Comintern Pact.

Let's examine each one in more detail:

5.5.1 The Spanish Civil War (1936–38)

In 1931, King Alfonso XIII of Spain was overthrown and the country declared a Republic.

In july 1936, civil war broke out in Spain.

General Franco — an ultra-conservative nationalist, but not a Fascist — attacked the recently elected Spanish government; the Popular Front alliance of Communists, Socialists and Anarchists.

Hitler saw this as an ideal opportunity to both strike a blow against communism and to test his new weapons in a combat situation.

Hitler also hoped, if Franco was victorious, to gain him as an ally for a Nationalist/Fascist bloc comprised of Germany, Italy and Spain.

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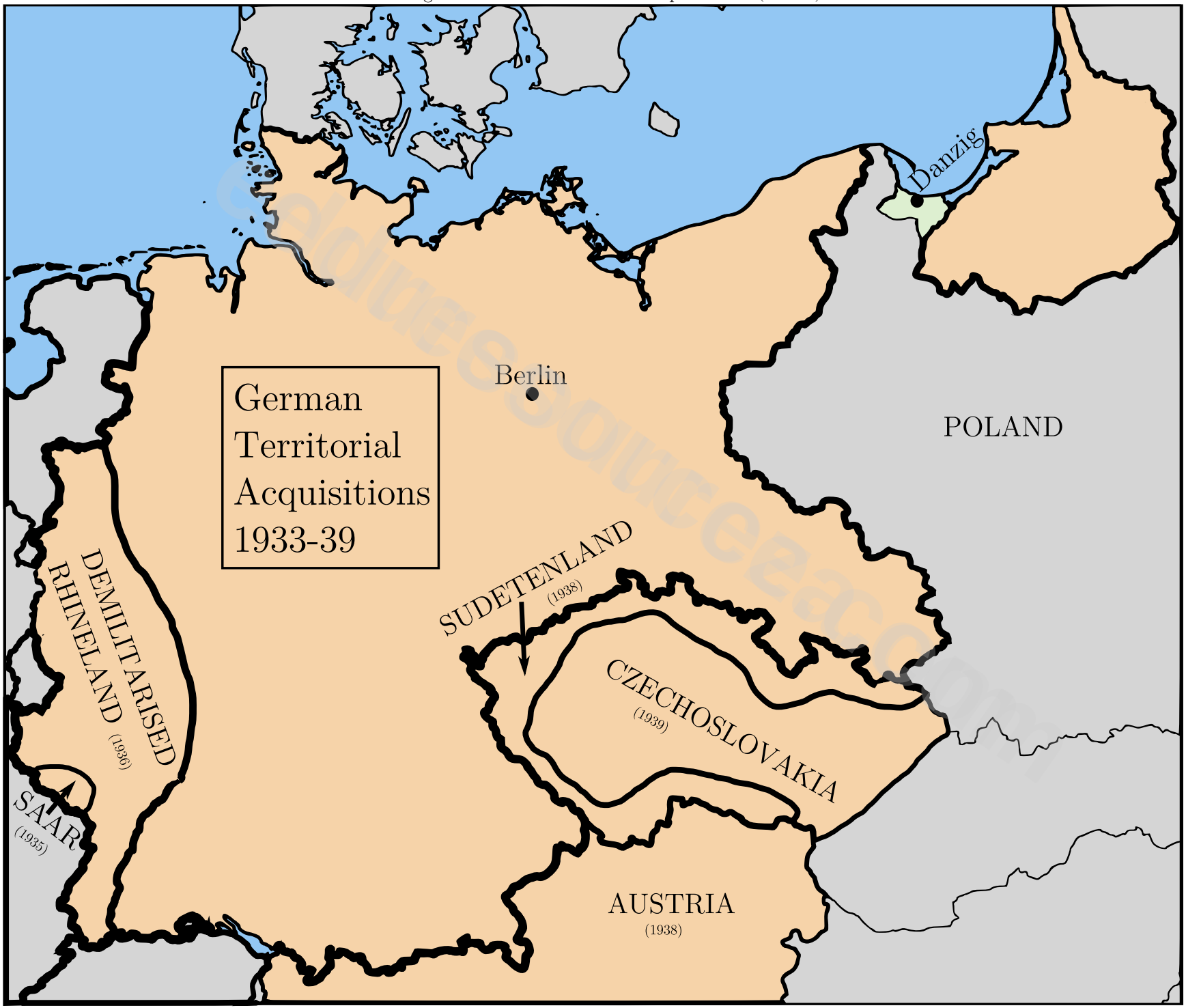
Figure 4: German Territorial Acquisitions (1933–39)



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He decided, therefore, to send military aid to support Franco's Nationalist rebels.

Hitler sent his best air force unit — the Condor Legion — to try out methods of bombing towns and cities from the air (the terrible destruction of the Basque town of Guernica in 1937 offers grisely proof that they soon mastered the technique.)

Hitler, of course, wanted Franco to win in the end; but his major concern was to prolong the conflict as lng as possible.

This would distract France and also help to draw the Italian dictator Mussolini (who was also supporting Franco's Nationalists with Italian soldiers) closer towards Germany.

Britain and France adopted a non-interventionist policy.

The French Prime Minister Leon Blum, although he supported the Spanish Republicans, felt unwilling to intervene in fear that French fascists would start a civil war in France.

The British government were worried that the conflict in Spain might escalate into a major European war. This was the last thing they wanted. They also believed that any British naval activity off the Spanish coast, in the western Mediterranean, might lead to clashes with Italian forces. Thsi would be a disaster as the British still clung to the faint hope of keeping good relations with Mussolini.

Hitler learned two vital lessons from his involvement in the Spanish Civil War. They were:

- That the Western democracies (particularly Britain and France) were not willing to oppose the aggressive tactics of Germany and Italy.
- That his air force could successfully terrorise civilian populations.

5.5.2 The Rome-Berlin Axis (October 1936)

Italy, who had been an ally of Britain and France against Germany in the First World War, began to grow cool in her relations with her former allies and began to be drawn closer to Hitler's Germany.

There were several reasons:

- Mussolini, who was at first wary of Hitler and his designs on Anschluss with Italy's neighbour Austria, was angered by Britain's undermining of the Stresa Front by her signing of the Anglo-German Naval Agreement, in June 1935, without consulting her Stresa allies.
- Mussolini was outraged by the British and French reaction to the Italian invasion of Abyssinia (or Ethiopia) in October 1935. The Italian dictator blamed Britain and France for their parts in the imposition of economic sanctions by the League of Nations in response to the Italian invasion. The credibility of Britain and France became even more strained in Mussolini's eyes over the affair of the Hoare-Laval Pact. The British Foreign secretary Hoare made a secret deal with the French Prime Minister Laval in which they promised Mussolini two-thirds of Abyssinia (a larger part than he had already captured) if he would call off the invasion. When news of the secret deal became public, the British and French were forced to withdraw their offer due to public outrage. Mussolini was extremely angered by the whole Abyssinian affair.
  Hitler, on the other hand, had not criticised the invasion of Abyssinia and refused to apply sanctions against Italy.
  No wonder Mussolini felt hostile towards Britain and France and warmer towards Nazi Germany.
- Mussolini and Hitler shared common ideological links. They were both right-wing nationalist/fascist dictators with a common hatred of Marxist communism. They each shared a mutual distrust of the French. Both of them were willing to engage in aggressive foreign policies in search of living space. Sooner or later they were bound to become allies. The actions of the British and French simply pushed them together sooner rather than later.

In October 1936, Hitler's and Mussolini's new-found friendship was formalised in the Rome-Berlin Axis.

The Rome-Berlin Axis was an 'understanding' that Germany and Italy should work closely together in foreign affairs. It was *not* a military treaty.

But a full military alliance was eventually to come.

On 21st May 1939, the Italian and German foreign ministers signewd the famous Pact of Steel.

The Pact of Steel committed the contracting parties to come to each others' aid, if attacked by outside hostile forces, 'with all its military forces on land, sea, and in the air.'

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5.5.3 The Anti-Comintern Pact (November 1936)

In November 1936, Hitler won a valuable ally in the east.

He signed the ANTI-COMINTERN PACT with Japan.

The Comintern (or Communist International) was an organisation set up by Lenin in 1919 with the aim of helping to set up communist parties in other countries outside Russia.

Japan, an enemy of Communism in China, saw Hitler's Germany as a natural ally against the spread of Marxist Communism.

Italy joined the Anti-Comintern Pact a year later in 1937.

5.6 Anschluss with Austria (March 1938)

A unification (or ANSCHLUSS) between Germany and Austria was strictly forbidden under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles.

Nevertheless, for Adolf Hitler — An Austrian by birth — ANSCHLUSS was one of his fondest dreams. The incorporatin of Austria into the German Reich was one part of Hitler's scheme for the creation of a Greater or Pan-Germany which sought to bring all German-speaking peopoles of Europe together under a single flag in one Fatherland.

The 7 million German-speaking Austrians were Hitler's first target.

In 1934, Austrian Nazis attempted to overthrow the government in Vienne and force a union with Germany.

The Austrian Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss, a right-wing dictator, was murdered by Austrian Nazis and left to bleed to death on his office floor.

But the Italian leader Mussolini, fearful of a German takeover in neighbouring Austria, sent troops to the southern frontier of Austria with Italy. at the Brenner Pass, as a warning to Hitler not to interfere.

There is no direct evidence that the attempted **coup d'etat** was orchestrated by the German government, but Hitler took note of Mussolini's warning and the Austrian Nazis' attempted take-over failed.

Following the assassination of Dollfuss, the Austrian chancellorship was taken over by Dr. Kurt von Schuschnigg under the protective eye of Mussolini.

In 1936, Hitler sent Franz von Papen to Vienna as German ambassador in order to plot the overthrow of the von Schuschnigg regime.

Throughout 1937, the Austrian Nazi party help massive propagandist parades, engaged in terrorist bomb attacks on public buildings, and engaged in the normal Nazi tactic of beating up all the opposition.

On 12th February 1938, Hitler summoned von Schuschnigg to meet him at Berchtesgaden (the Fuhrer's mountain retreat).

For two hours Hitler stormed, raved and threatened the Austrian Chancellor with invasion if he did not submit to German demands.

Hitler demanded:

- That the ban imposed on the Austrian Nazi party be lifted.
- That imprisoned party members be released.
- That three Austrian Nazis were to be given seats in the Austrian cabinet: Seyss-Inquart as Minister of the Interior; Glaise-Horstenau as minister of War; and Fischbok as Minister of Finance.
- Austria was to be tied closely both economically and militarily to Germany.

This was the first step towards total ANSCHLUSS as far as Hitler was concerned.

Schuschnigg reluctantly signed the Agreement put before him.

He then returned to Vienna and began to carry out Hitler's demands.

During the ensuing weeks the Austrian Nazis began to tighten their grip and it was clear that they would soon be in total cojntrol of the country.

Von Schuschnigg then took a brave but desperate gamble.

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On 8th March 1938 he ordered that a plebiscite was to be held asking the Austrian people whether they wished to remain independent or be united with Germany.

The plebiscite was scheduled for Sunday 13th March.

Von Schuschnigg believed that if the vote went against unification with Germany then Hitler would not dare to invade (and it would prove once and for all that the majority of Austrians did not want ANSCHLUSS).

Hitler was furious and threatened to invade immediately if the plebiscite was not called off.

Schuschnigg asked Britain, France and Italy for help but Italy was now an ally of Hitler's under the Rome-Berlin Axis and would not intervene. Britain and France dare not risk another war and did nothing.

Schuschnigg resigned and the Austrian Nazi puppet of Hitler's Seyss-Inquart became the new Chancellor of Austria.

Seyss-Inquart immediately sent a telegram to Hitler (on Hitler's instruction) asking the Germans to 'help restore order' and proclaimed the ANSCHLUSS.

During the night of 11th–12th March 1938, German troops marched into Austria and made a triumphant entry into Vienna (where Austrian Nazis welcomed them with joy).

By 13th March 1938, the day originally scheduled for Schuschnigg's fated plebiscite, the German-Austrian ANSCHLUSS was **fait accompli**.

Behind the army came the SS (Schutzstaffel, literally 'protection squad') and the GESTAPO (Geheime Staatspolizei or 'Secret State Police') who dealt with all opposition in the usual manner. A special concentration camp was set up at Mathausen and was soon full.

A month after the German invasion Hitler help his own plebiscite which resulted in a 99.75% vote in favour of the ANSCHLUSS.

But who would have dared to vote against it?

This was Hitler's greatest success so far. He had acheived his great desire of ANSHLUSS without opposition. Iindeed, he had made it look like the Austrian government welcomed the Nazi occupation and the plebiscite appeared to show the apporoval of the Austrian people. He had kicked a great big hole in the Treaty of Versailles, enhanced his own image as a successful decisive leader, and brought glory to the German nation in the process. All this and ANSCHLUSS too!

5.7 The Czech-Sudetenland Crisis

The new state of Czechoslovakia came into being in 1918 under the terms of the Paris Peace Treaties and contained about 14 million people.

3 million of these lived in the northern German-speaking Sudetenland area (once part of Austro-Hungary).

After the successful incorporation of Austria into the Reich, Hitler now cast greedy eyes on the Sudetenland and longed to free the Sudeten Germans from Czech rule.

He also hated the Czech and Slavik people whom he regarded as subhuman (Untermenschen).

The taking of Austria also make Czechoslovakia more vulnerable to attack from Hitler, and the Czech state was now surrounded on three sides by hostile Nazi forces.

But the greatest danger to the freedom of Czechoslovakia came from within — from the Sudeten Germans themselves.

They were inspired by the ANSCHLUSS wit hAustria and they too wanted to be part of the great German Reich.

Konrad Henlein, a physical education teacher and leader of the Sudeten Germans, said in 1936:

> "As Germans in the Sudeten provinces...we feel ourselves members of the great cultural community of Germans in the whole world."

Hitler, therefore, did not create the Sudeten crisis, but he did do his best to stir up tension between the Sudeten Germans and the Czechs (which was not too difficult to achieve as the Sudeten Germans felt they were discriminated against by the Czech people).

A Nazi propaganda campaign was launched against the Czechoslovakian President Dr. Benes. The Sudeten German Party, led by Konrad Henlein, was ordered to demand self-government for the German-speaking minority.

The situation grew tense.

On 12th September 1938, in a speech at Nuremburg, Hitler launched a venomous attack on the Czechs and demanded self-determination (self-rule) for the Sudeten Germans.

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Hitler's speech inspired a revolt in the Sudetenland which was only quelled after two days of savage fighting and the imposition of martial law.

Britain and France were extremely worried.

If Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia, Europe might be plunged into another war.

France had treaty obligations with Czechoslovakia (dating from Locarno in 1925) and would be morally bound to intervene if Hitler invaded.

The French cabinet were split over whether they should honour their obligation to the Czechs or no should the Germans attack.

The Czechs, who had a small but well-equiped army and good fortifications, were prepared to make a stand against Hitler with the support of France and Britain.

But Britain wanted to avoid war at almost any cost.

Britain had made it quite clear to the French Prime Minister Daladier as early as April 1938 that Britain would *not* support France in a war against Germany.

The French did not relish the idea of having to fight without British support.

The British and French, therefore, decided to try to appease Hitler.

This appeared a reasonable course of acton to many of the politicians involved as they felt that there was some justification for Hitler's demand for self-determination for the Sudetenlanders.

As the situation grew more tense, the French government sent a message to the British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain urging him to make the best deal he could with Hitler concerning the crisis in Czechoslovakia.

It was to this end that Chamberlain prepared for the first of his three historic flights to Germany (abd his first time ever in an aeroplane).

5.7.1 The Meeting at Berchtesgaden (15th September 1938)

Chamberlain met Hitler at Berchtesgaden on 15th September 1938.

Hitler insisted that nothing less than secession of the Sudetenland to Germany would suffice (based on the principle of self-determination).

Chamberlain replied taht he could agree to nothing without consulting the French and his own government; but 'personally' he recognised the principle of the detachment of the Sudetenland area.

Chamberlain then got Hitler to promise that Germany would refrain from military action until the two leaders had again conferred.

He then returned to Britain to consult his cabinet.

Speaking a day or two later, Chamberlain said of Hitler:

> "In spite of the hardness and ruthlessness I thought i saw in his face, I got the impression that here was a man who could be relied upon when he had given his word."

The British Prime Minister received his cabinet's approval to Hitler's plan (with the added benefit to Hitler that a plebiscite would not be necessary).

Chamberlain then persuaded the French government to agree to Hitler's demands.

The Czech government was then informed by Chamberlain that unless it accepted Hitler's proposals:

> "His Majesty's government will take no further interest in the fate of the country."

Deserted by his allies, Dr. Benes was forced to accept Hitler's demands.

Chamberlain was convinced that the situation had been settled.

5.7.2 The Meeting at Godesberg (22nd–23rd September 1938)

Chamberlain met Hitler for a second time at Bad Godesberg, in the Rhineland on 22nd September 1938.

Chamberlain was amazed to find that the Fuhrer had now increased his demands.

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Hitler now demanded the complete incorporation of the Sudetenland into the German Reich, and a military occupation of the area, by October 1st.

He stated that the Sudetenland would be his last etrritorial claim in Europe.

At another meeting between the two leaders, on the evening of 23rd September, Chamberlain was even more dismayed to find that Hitler confonted him with a new time limit for the Czech evacuation of the Sudetenland — to begin at 8 a.m. on 26th September (three days hence) and to be completed by 28th September.

Chamberlain could hardly believe Hitler's duplicity and flew back to London immediately — angry, shocked and bewildered.

But the British cabinet refused to yield to Hitler's increased demands.

The Czechs, too, would not tolerate a military occupation of the Sudetenland.

Europe looked poised upon the brink of war!

In a radio broadcast at this time Chamberlain lamented:

> "How horrible, fantastic, incredible it is that we should be digging trenches and trying on gas masks here because of a quarrle in a far away country between people of whom we know nothing."

5.7.3 The Munich Conference (29th September 1938)

Following Hitler's increased demands at Bad Godesberg, war seemed unavoidable.

Then a miracle happened.

On 28th September (the day that Hitler's ultimatum to the Czech government ran out), the Italian leader Mussolini intervened in a last ditch attempt to avert a war. At Chamberlain's request, Mussolini persuaded Hitler to agree to a 24 hour delay in mobilising his troops and suggested to Hitler that he should meet the leaders of Britain and France again in the hope of finding a last minute solution to the crisis.

Hitler agreed — as long as Mussolini (his ally) acted as mediator.

Consequently, the four leaders — Mussolini, Hitler, Daladier and Chamberlain — met in Munich on 29th September 1938.

This was the famous Munich Conference; held in the Fuhrerhaus in the Koenigsplatz.

Dr. Benes — the leader of Czechoslovakia — whose country's fate was hanging in the balance was not even invited to the conference.

Neither were the Russians, who had a co-agreement with the French regarding the defence of Czechoslovakia against German aggression.

Mussolini laid 'his' plan before the assembled meeting; a plan which had actually been concocted hastily by the Germans the day before.

After much discussion, Britain and France agreed with Hitler (and Mussolini) that the Sudetenland was to be handed over to Germany immediately.

Hitler had got exactly what he had been refused at Godesberg.

All four men present 'guaranteed' the future freedom of the rest of Czechoslovakia.

On 30th September 1938, Hitler and Chamberlain signed a 'piece of paper' promising never to go to war with one another again.

Chamberlain returned to Britain a hero. War had been averted.

Chamberlain talked of 'peace in ouur time'.

But the cost to poor Czechoslovakia was tremendous.

She lost 70% of her heavy industry and her best fortifications (as they were situated mainly in the borderland Sudeten area).

The Sudetenland contained coal and copper mines, power stations, factories (including the Skoda arms works, the largest in Europe) and much good farming land. The Sudetenland was also Czechoslovakia's most important area for defence. It was separated from Germany by the Bohemian Alps and a massive chain of fortresses.

Czechoslovakia was now even more vulnerable to German attack than she had been before.

To make matters worse, Poland took the opportunity to seize Teschen.

Poor little Czechoslovakia had been betrayed.

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Benes resigned.

But, appeasement appeared to have succeeded in averting war (and that was all the British and French really cared about).

However, the great tragedy of the Munich fiasco was that Germany had invaded the rest of Czechoslovakia within six months (as Hitler had always meant to do).

Chamberlain now realised that Hitler was impossible to appease and must be stopped by force.

5.8 Hitler Invades Czechoslovakia (March 1939)

Throughout the winter of 1938–9, Hitler made plans for the takeover and final destruction of the Czech state.

Apart from his racial hatred of the 'inferior' Czech people (who were also allies with Germany's enemies, Russia and France), Hitler cast greedy eyes on the gold and foreign currency reserves in Prague.

Czechoslovakia also represented the first step towards Lebensraum in the East.

The German propaganda machine invented stories of Czech atrocities against German minorities in Czechoslovakia.

Hitler assured Germany that such 'unfortunates' would not remain unprotected for long.

In the spring of 1939, Hitler began to amass troops on the Czecho border.

On 14th March 1939, Dr. Hacha (who had succeeded Benes as President) took a train to Berlin.

His object was to try to save his country from invasion.

Hacha, and his Foreign Minister, were kept waiting until 1.15 a.m. before being ushered into the presence of Hitler, Göring, and five others.

After a long speech from Hitler, Hacha was told that a German army would invade Czechoslovakia at 6 a.m. — less than four hours hence.

Göring then warned Hacha that if the Czech army resisted Prague would be bombed.

hacha fainted.

On revival, hacha telephoned his government and instructed them not to resist.

He then was forced to sign an agreement asking Hitler to 'protect' his people.

It read as follows:

> Berlin, March 15th, 1939
>
> At their request, the Führer today received the Czechslovak President, Dr. Hacha, and the Czechslovak Foreign minister, Dr Chvalkovsky, in Berlin in the presence of foreign Minister von Ribbentrop. At the meeting the serious situation created by the events of recent weeks in the present Czechoslovak territory was examined with complete franksness.
>
> The conviction was unanimously expressed on both sides that the aim of all efforts must be the safeguarding of calm, order and peace in this part of Central Europe. The Czechoslovak President declared that, in order to serve this object and to achieve ultimate pacification, he confidently placed the fate of the Czech people and country in the hands of the Führer of the German Reich. The Führer of the German Reich. The Führer accepted this declaration and expressed his intention of taking the Czech people underthe protection ofthe German Reich and of guaranteeing them an autonomous development of their ethnic life as suited to their character.

At 6 ṁ. on 15th March 1939, German troops poured into Bohemia and Moravia; in the western part of Czechoslovakia.

The following day, 16th March, Hitler extended his 'protection' over Slovakia.

With Hitler's permission, Hingary occupied Ruthenia (in the eastern tip of Czechoslovakia).

Poland took the rest.

Czechoslovakia had ceased to exist as an independant state.

Neither Britain nor France made the slightest move to save it, though at the Munich Conference they had solemnly guaranteed Czechoslovakia against future aggression.

But the British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain had learned a valuable lesson.

Hitler had assured Chamberlain that the Sudetenland would be his last territorial demand in Europe.

Now he had taken over 'non-German' Czechoslovakia.

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Hitler could not be trusted and appeasement had not worked.

In 12 months Hitler had taken both Austria and Czechoslovakia.

Who would be next?

Everyone knew that it would be Poland.

On 31st March 1939, just sixteen days after Hitler had entered Prague, the British Prime Minister told the House of Commons:

> "In the event of any action which clearly threatened Polish independence and which the Polish Government accordingly considered it vital to resist with their national forces, His Majesty's Government would feel themselves bound at once to lend the Polish Government all support in their power. They have given the Polish Government an assurance to this effect. I may add that the French Government have authorised me to make it plain that they stand in the same position in this matter."

Foolowing the invasion of Czechoslovakia, Hitler snatched the port of Memel fro mLithuania (which was another breach of the Treaty of Versailles).

Poland's turn was soon to come!

5.9 Poland's Turn Next

As William L. Shirer notes:

> "Even more than France, Poland was the hated and despised enemy in the minds of the Germans. To them the heinous crime of the Versailles peacemakers had been to separate East Prussia from the Reich by the Polish Corridr, to detach Danzig and to give to the Poles the province of Posen and part of Silesia," [Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, p. 212]

Not only would ann invasion of Poland bring back these lost territories to Germany, but it would also provide Lebensraum in the east, and a future stepping-stone into Soviet Russia.

It was rather a surprise, therefore, to the German people and evyerone else, when Hitler signed a Ten-Year Nonaggression Pact with Poland in January 1934.

The Ten-Year Nonaggression Pact, however, had several advantages to Hitler. They were:

1. It would draw Poland away from its traditional ally France.
2. Polish neutrality would make it easier fro Germany to make territorial claims in Europe in the future (particularly against Czechoslovakia).
3. It uited Hitler's purpose to make outward displays of peace whilst secretly planning to rearm; to 'talk peace' whilst planning war.

The Ten-Year Nonaggression Pact with Germany had bought Poland time.

But with the Nazi takeover of Czechoslovakia and Memel that time had run out.

Poland now found herself flanked by the German army; in the south along the Slovak border and in the north on the frontiers of Pomerania and East Prussia.

No wonder Poland was anxioius to look to Britain and France for protection.

In April 1939, in a speech to the Reichstag, Hitler told the assembly that reports that Germany intended to attack Poland were "mere inventions of the international press".

Yet, only three weeks before, itler had given written orders to his military commanders to prepare for the destruction of Poland by September 1st "at the latest".

Hitler also claimed (in the Reichstag speech of April 1939) that Poland had broken the Polish-German nonaggression pact in making its agreement with Britain (march 1939).

He told the Reichstag:

> "Therefore, I look upon the agreement. . .as having been unilaterally infringedby Poland and thereby no longer in existence."

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One major obstacle, however, still stood in the way of a German invasion of Poland — the might of Soviet Russia.

Russia was bound to view a German invasion of Poland as a threat to her own security.

Hitler knew, therefore, that if he invaded Poland he would probably have to fight Britain, France, and Russia simultaneously (a war on two fronts).

Russian neutralityu, however, (if it could be gained) would only mean the possibility of war on a single front.

Hitler, therefore, turned his attention towards negotiations with the Russians during the summer of 1939.

The British were also attempting at this ime to win the support of Russia in the event of a war with Germany.

The outcome shocked Europe.

On 22nd August 1939, much to the consternation of Britain and France, Hitler and Stalin announced the formation of the Nazi-Soviet Pact.

They promised not to go to war with each other for a period of 25 years.

They also secretly agreed to invade Poland jointly and divide it between them.

The Nazi-Soviet pact cleared the path for a German takeover of Poland.

Hitler had achieven a master-stroke.

He could now invade Poland with Russian approval and help instead of fearing Russian reprisals.

The Pact also had advantages for Stalin. They were:

1. Stalin had bought time for the Soviet Union to strengthen herself against the likelihood of a future German attack.
2. The annexation of Polish territory to Russia (which was to follow) would put extra distance between Germany and the Russian interior and so create a **buffer zone**. If the Germans had been allowed to take the whole of Polandthen the reverse would have been the case.
3. Stalin had the advantage that Britain and France would have to fight Germany first (and therefore weaken Germany before Russia had to face her).

5.10 The Nazi Invasion of Poland

At 4.45 a.m. on 1st September 1939 German tanks rolled into Poland.

At 11.15 a.m. on 3rd September 1939, Chamberlain broadcast to the British nation:

> "This morning the British Ambassador in Berlin handed the German Government a final note stating that unless we heard from them by eleven o'clock that they were prepared at once to withdraw their troops from Poland, a state of war would exist between us. I have to tell you now that no such understanding has been received and that consequently this country is at war with Germany."

The French declared war on Germany at 5 p.m. the same day.

Appeasement had failed.

Chamberlain told the House of Commons:

> "Everything that I have worked for, everything that I had hoped for, everything that I have believed in during my public life, has crashed in ruins."

6 Japanese Aggressive Foreign Policy (1931–41)

Japan emerged from the First World War in a very strong economic position indeed.

Between 1914–1918, she had:

1. Trebled (almost) her exports of cotton cloth
2. Doubled the tonnage of her merchant fleet

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During the Great War, the Japanese had supplied their allies with shipping and manufactured goods and had stepped in to supply orders in Asia which the Europeans could not fulfill.

Japan had a strong modern navy (and had actually beaten the Russians in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–5).

Everything in the Japanese garden looked 'rosy' in 1918; but not for long.

In 1925, all adult males in Japan were given the vote. Japan appeared to be following the west in terms of becoming a 'democracy'. But in the early 1930s the Japanese army assumed control of the government. What went wrong?

6.1 The Road to Military Dictatorship

1. Democracy was not popular with all groups in Japan. Right-wing conservatives in the Japanese upper house of parliament and in the Privy Council to the Emperor, as well as many army officers, wanted a dictatorship. Such men did all they could to discredit whichever government was in power. The army wanted to take action in China which was torn by civil war in the Warlord Era (1916–28).

2. Many Japanese politicians were corrupt. They regularly accepted bribes from Big Buseness. The regular outbreaks of violence in the Japanese parliament, as accusations of bribery and corruption were levelled, did little to inspire confidence in the democratic parliamentary system.[2]

3. The great trading 'boom' of the First World War years only lasted until 1921. By this time European industry began to revive and reclaimed its lost markets. Unemployment and industrial unrest followed. At the same time, a series of 'bumper' harvetss drastically reduced the price of rice and agricultural profits. When farmers and workers attempted to form themselves into a political party they were ruthlessly suppressed. This led to workers, as well as conservatives and army officers, becoming disaffected to a parliament which called itself democratic but wa so obviously taking bribes from big business and did not appear to support the working people.

4. The World Economic Depression following the Wall Street Crash in 1929 affected Japan severly. Japanese exports shrank disastrously as other nations either introduced or raised tarffs to protect their own industries. One of the worst affected Japanese exports was that of raw silk to the United States. American consumers could no longer afford luxury items during the Depression. Consequently, the price of raw silk in 1932 stood at only $\frac{1}{5}$ of the 1923 figure. This was a further blow to farmers (half of whom produced silk as well as rice). Desperate poverty followed and peasants and workers blamed the Government and Big Business.

6.2 The Invasion of Manchuria

On 18th September 1931, the Japanese occupied Manchuria, a province of China.

The situation had been brought to a head by Chinese attempts to squezze Japanese trade and business out of Manchuria.

The Japanese had invested millions of pounds in Manchuria. They owned mining interests, Soya bea plantations, the banking system, tailway networks, factoris and so forth. A loss of investment of this magnitude would hae proved a severe blow to the Japanese economy already hard hit by World economic depression.

In an attempt to protect their economic interests, the Japanese army (without permission from the Government) invaded and occupied Manchuria.

The army took action following the explosion of a bomb on the Japanese-owned railway line outside Mukden.

Although the Japanese army deliberately caused the explosion themselves, they blamed the Chinese. This gave the army the excuse to invade without waiting for permission from Emperor Hirohito's government.

When Foreign Minister Shidehara heard the news, he is said to have turned ashen grey.

At the League of Nations headquarters in Geneva, the Japanese delegate blamed 'military hotheads' for the Manchurian incident, but the troops were not recalled.

Manchuria was the first big test for the League of Nations, and its first big failure. Although the League demanded Japanese withdrawal from Manchuria, public opinion was so inflamed in Japan that the Imperial Government could not impose its authority on the army. Japan retained its 'spoils of war' and the province was renamed Manchukuo.

[2] Although reasons 1. & 2. were not enough to bring military dictatorship on themselves, when added to the powerful economic pressures following the Wall Street Crash in 1929, they helped bring it about.

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6.3 Military Dictatorship (1931-41)

Following Prime Minister Inukau's criticism of the extremist action of the Japanese army he was assassinated, in May 1932, by a group of army officers.

Inukai's successor felt obliged to support the army's actions and from now on the army more or less ran the country.;

The picture from now on was smilar to that in Italy and Germany.

There followed:

1. Ruthless suppression of Communists
2. Assassination of opponents
3. Tight control over education
4. A build-up of armaments
5. An aggressive foreign policy which aimed to capture territory in Asia as:
   (a) Markets for Japanese industrial products
   (b) As sources of raw materials
   (c) As 'living-space' for a growing and crowded population

Such an aggressive foreign policy led to the invasion of China in 1937 and the attack on Pearl Harbour in December 1941.

6.4 The Invasion of China (1937)

There were two main Japanese armies stationed on the Asiatic mainland in 1937. They were:

1. The Kwantung army (Kwantung was in Manchuria; and it was this army which had invaded the province in 1931)
2. A 7,000-strong garrison army at Fengtai, near Peking, just south of the Great Wall of China. The Japanese had occupied this area of China in 1936. I contained a railway network which the Japanese wished to develop.

Indeed, from 1933, the Japanese army began to spread from Manchuria into noth-eastern China. By 1935–6, a large are of China as far as Peking had fallen under Japanese political, commercial and economic control.

The Chinese were powerless to stop this Japanese encroachment because China was torn by civil war between Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang forces and the communists (led by Mao Tse-Tung).

Trouble flared in the Fengtai-Peking area in 1937 because some Chinese landowners refused to sell key plots of land to the Japanese railway developers.

In retaliation, the Japanese applied pressure in the form of frequent and noisy army manoeuvres.

On 7th July 1937, during night manoeuvres by the Japanese army near the Marco Polo bridge, to the south of Peking, fighting broke out between Japanese and Chinese troops.

The Japanese army then seized the opportunity provided by this incident to invade the rest of China.

By the Autumn of 1937, the Japanese had 150,000 troops in North China.

By the end of 1937, the Japanese had advanced up the Yangtze river to Nanking (the capital of Chiang Kai-shek's government).

By the Autumn of 1938, the Japanese had conquered Shanghai and Hankow..

They now extended their control in Southern China with the capture of Canton.

However, the Japanese never achieved complete victory on China.

The Chinese nationalist and communist forces began to co-operate with each other against the Japanese invaders.

On the eve of the Second World War, Japan controlled most of Eastern China and Chiang Kai-shek held the centre and the West.

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6.5 A Japanese Empire in the East

When Euorope became engulfed in war in 1939, the Japanese became concerned about the possible intentions of Hitler, their ally in the Anti-Comintern Pact.

What would Hitler do with the British, French, and Dutch colonies in South-east Asia (presuming he won the war)?

Japan, therefore, decided that she must lose no time in staking a claim to these colonies herself.

French Indo-China and British Malaya were rich in rice, rubber, coal and tin; and the Dutch East Indies hada rich supply of oil.

This is just what Japan needed to boost her ailing industries with cheap raw materials.

The Japanese occupation of Manchuria and China (thought Japan) could be extended to provide one immense trading empire in which Japan would be the controlling nation.

In 1941, no European nation could do much to stop Japan achieving this dream (as they were embroiled in World War II).

Only the United States of America had a fleet strong enough to challenge the Japanese.

In July 1941, Japan moved troops into French Indo CHina.

The threat to the rest of South-east Asia was now clear.

The United States Government immediately put a trade embargo on Japanese goods entering America and banned exports to Japan.

6.6 Pearl Harbour (December 1941)

The American trade embargo of 16th July 1941 was a crisis point in American-Japanese relations.

As a protest against Japanese aggression in China in 1937, the Americans denied aeroplanes, chemicals, iron, and aviation fuel to Japan.

Following the Japanese move into Indo-China in 1941, the Americans, British and Dutch ceased to supply Japan with oil.

Oil was the vital product of the embardo.

Japan imported 88% of her oil; 80% of which came from the United States.

The Japanese decided on drastic action.

On the morning of Sunday, 7th December 1941, Commander Itaya led the first formation of Japanese warplanes over the Hawaiian island of Oahu (where the American Pacific Fleet was harboured).

Itaya recorded:

> "Pearl Harbor is still asleep in the morning mist."

A few seconds before 7.55 a.m., the Japanese let loose their bombs on Pearl Harbor.

There were 94 American ships in the harbour.

One eye-witness observed:

> "Over this great fleet the forty Japanese torpedo-bombers broke like a storm just before eight o'clock. They came in from every direction, each pilot carefully briefed on the particular angle from which to launch his torpedo in order to get the best run and cause maximum confusion in the defence. Taking the gunners by complete surprise, they were almost impossible to hit; in a few moments the harbour was criss-crossed by the white wakes of their missiles, and tremendous explosions were leaping up against the steel sides of the battleships."

By 8.30 a.m., the **Oklahoma** had capsized. The **West Virginia** had been sunk, the **California** was beginning to sink and the **Arizona** had blown up (killing $\frac{4}{5}$ of its crew of 1500).

Another four battleships were severely damaged.

When the Americans counted the cost it was found that 90% of their air and sea power in the mid-Pacific had been destroyed or immobilised.

In a speech to the American Congress, President Roosevelt called 7th December 1941 "a day that will live in infamy".

The 'infamy', of course, was because Japan had attacked without a declaration of war.

However, there is evidence to suggest that the Americans were not completely without warning of the Japanese attack.

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1. As early as January 1941, J. C. Grew, the American Ambassador to Japan, warned Washington that an attack on Pearl Harbor was likely. U.S. Naval Intelligence received the message and recorded: "We have no credence [faith] in these rumours."

2. Two American privates manning a Radar station on the North shore of Oahu had twice reported seeing aircraft around 7 o'clock on 7th December. Their commanding officer took no action because he thought that they were American planes on routine exercises.
   Because of this error, 50 vital minutes for preventative action were lost.

> **NOTE:** It has been postulated that the American government expected the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, but did nothing to prevent it because they wanted the American public to be so outraged that the Roosevelt Government coulkd enter the War on the side of Britain without opposition.

The Japanese claimed a total victory at Pearl Harbor.

However, they missed two important targets:

1. They failed to search out and destroy several American aircraft carriers which were not far out of Pearl Harbor on routine exercises.

2. They neglected to bomb Pearl Harbor's oil-storage tanks and repair shops.

However, the damage was great enough to ensure that victory over Japan would not come quickly; and great enough to sway public opinion and give Roosevelt the chance to enter World War II.

7 The Weimar Republic (1918–33)

On the 9th November 1918, amidst naval mutinies and worker and soldier uprisings, Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany abdicated his throne and fled Germany to the Netherlands.

On the next day (10th November) the Socialist leader Friedrich Ebert became the new leader of the German Weimar Republic. He immediately signed an armistice with the Allies. The Great War was over.

In January 1919, free elections took place in Germany for the first time ever and Ebert became the President of the new Weimar Republic (so called because the governent first met in the small town of Weimar — dur to the fact that the capital, Berlin, was considered to be too violent and open to revolution). Philipp Scheidemann — President Ebert's colleague in the Social Democratic Party (SPD) — became the chancellor of the new Republic.

Before we examine the problems which faced the Weimar government in 1919, we need to be aware of the nature of the Weimar Constitution.

7.1 The Weimar Constitution

The following points need to be understood if we are to make sense of the history of Germany between 1919–1933.

- Before the Great War Germany was not a real democracy. The Kaiser was a virtual dictator.
- The Weimar Constitution introduced democracy to Germany.
- All Germans (both men and women) aged 20 and over could vote in elections (universal suffrage).
- Elections were contested un der the principle of Proportional Representation. If a particular party gained 10 per cent of the popular vote they received 10 per cent of the seats in the Reichstag (Parliament).
- The Chancellor (similar to a Prime Minister in the British system) was responsible for day-to-day government. Chancellors were appointed and dismissed by the President.
- The Head of State was the President (elected every seven years). He stayed out of day-to-day government, but in times of crisis (if a government could not be formed, for example), he could rule the country by decree, without reference to the Reichstag (under Article 48 of the Constitution).

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7.2 The Weaknesses of the Weimar Constitution & Republic

The Weimar Constitution and Republic – which was (in theory) as democratic as one could hope to be in many respects – had many weaknesses in other respects:

- From the outset, the Weimar Constitution, and the Republican system which formulated it, were associated in people's minds with defeat in the Great War, the hated 'diktat' of Versailles and the crippling burden of reparations. The myth grew in the minds of German nationalists that the Fatherland had been 'stabbed in the back' by a gang of 'Novemeber Criminals' (Communists, Socialists and Jews) who betrayed Germany for their own political ends.
- The Weimar Republican system of government would have to be impremented over time by some men who were neither democrats nor republicans. Many people in Germany were distrustful of democracy and some yearned for a return of strong monarchial government.
- The moderately-socialist first Weimar government coalition (headed by the Social Democrats) was hated by Germans on the extreme left– and on the extreme right– wings of German politics. The extreme left wanted a Communist republic similar to that which came into power in Russia in October 1917 under Lenin and the Bolshevik Party. The far right, on the other hand, wanted either a return to monarchial rule or else, like the Nazis, a nationalist republic. Such feelings were to lead to an attempted Communist coup d'etat by the Spartacus League in 1919, an attempted right-wing coup – the Kapp Putsch – in 1920, and an abortive 'Beer Hall Putsch', led by Adolf Hitler, leader of the Nazis, in November 1923.
- The system of proportional representation meant that no single party would ever hold a majority of seats in the Reichstag in the period 1919 to 1933. Due to the multiplicity of political parties in Germany at this time, coalition government (made up of a collection of several parties) would be the norm throughout the period. Whilst coalition governments often operated successfully when times were good, they usually split apart in times of crisis.
- Article 48 of the Constitution, which allowed the President to rule by decree (without the Reichstag) in times of emergency, made the Republic appear to be undemocratic. This argument would be used against the Republic by its enemies (as Hitler did from the summer of 1932 when the Nazi Party became the largest party in the Reichstag, but the President still refused to make him Chancellor and let him try to form a government). Article 48 appeared to be saying that even the makers of the constitution had little faith in democracy and that in times of emergency it was best that Germany should return to the rule of a strong individual.
- The Weimar Government was burdened by severe economic problems caused by the heavy reparations debt. The need to pay reparations put a heavy strain on the German economy which was struggling anyway to recover from the cost Great War.

7.3 Early Political Problems (1919–23)

The Weimar government was faced with a great deal of hatred, resentment and hostility in 1919. The far left wanted a communist republic and many on the right wanted a return to authoritarian government. There were frequent political assassinations and several uprisings during this period.

7.3.1 Political Assassinations

Accorsing to the GCSE textbook *Modern World History* (Cambridge University Press), there were 22 political murders committed by the extreme left and 354 committed by members of the extreme right. Of these, 10 left-wing murderers were executed against none on the extreme right.

Several important leaders of the Weimar government were assassinated in its early years.

Matthias Erzberger, for example, the delegate who had signed the German surrender in 1918 was shot and killed in 1921 whilst walking in the Black Forest.

Walter Rathenau, the Republic's Jewish Foreign Minister, was assassinated in the street, in Berlin, by nationalist, anti-semitic youths in June 1922.

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7.3.2 The Spartacist Revolt (January 1919)

The moderately socialist Weimar government (led by Friedrich Ebert, the leader of the Social Democratic Party (SPD)) was loathed by extremists on both the far Left and far Right of German politics. The extreme Right regarded the Weimar government as traitors to the Fatherland; a gang of 'November Criminals'. The extreme Left wanted the Weimar Republic to be replaced with a Communists republic similar to that which came to power in October 1917 in Russia following the Bolshevik Revolution.

On the night of 5th January 1919, the Spartacus League, led by the Communist leaders Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, attempted to seize power and create a Communist Germany.

The Spartacists captured the telegraph bureau and the government's newspaper ofices in Berlin bu failed to take any other buildings. The uprising was badly planned and did not receive the support of other left-wing groups. The Spartacist leaders only supported the uprising once it had already started.

Ebert had few troops with which to crush the revolt, but was helped by the Freikorps ('Free Corps'); a Right-wing paramilitary group of volunteer soldiers (many of them veterans of the Great War).

The Freikorps, of course, was no lover of Ebert's socialist government, but it hated the Communists even more.

As Ben Walsh tells us:

> "Early in 1919 the Spartacists launched their bid for power. Joined by rebel soldiers and sailors they set up soviets [councils] in many towns. Not all soldiers were oon the side of the Spartacists, however. Some anti-Communist ex-soldiers had formed themselves in to vigilante groups called 'Freikorps'. Ebert made an agreement with the leaders of the army and the Freikorps to put down the rebellion. Bitter street fighting followed between the Spartacists and the Freikorps. Both sides were heavily armed. Casualties were high. The Frekorps won. Liebknecht and Luxemburg were murdered."
> [Ben Walsh, *GCSE Modern World History*, p. 140]

Luxemburg and Liebknect were abducted in separate cars as they left their Berlin headquarters. Liebknecht was forced out of the car as it passed through the Tiergarten (a Berlin park) and shot for 'trying to escape'. Luxemburg was shot and her body was dumped in a canal (where it remained undiscovered until May).

Just four days after the Spartacist uprising was crushed a general election was held for the new National Assembly. The Social Democrats were the largest party and Ebert became the first president of the Weimar Republic. The Spartacist uprising had attempted to prevent this election from taking place.

7.3.3 The Kapp Putsch (March 1920)

By early 1920, the Allies had become concerned over the numbers of men in Germany serving in unofficial paramilitary groups such as the Freikorps. The Allies put pressure on the German government to disband them in order to comply with the limits placed on armed forces by the Treaty of Versailles.

In March 1920, when Ebert's government attempted to disband the Freikorps, units led by the right-wing Freikorps leader Dr. Wolfgang Kapp marched into Berlin and declared a new national government.

The army refused to fire on the Freikorps and the government fled Berlin.

But, as Nigel Kelly and Greg Lacey inform us:

> "Kapp was not popular with the people, who obeyed a government request for a general strike. Soon gas, water and electricity were cut off and Berlin came to a halt. Kapp was forced to flee to Sweden, the government returned and the Freikorps was disbanded."
> [Kelly and Lacey, *Modern World History*, p. 102]

The general strike was so successful that the Kapp Putsch collapsed within days. However, those who had participated in the revolt were never punished. Without the support of the army Ebert's government could do litle against them.

7.3.4 The Munich 'Beer Hall' Putsch (November 1923)

In November 1923 the Weimar government faced yet another revolt against it' this time at the hands of the National Socialist Party, led by Adolf Hitler.

Nigel Kelly and Greg Lacey tell us why:

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"By 1923 the German economy had been reduced to ruins by hyperinflation and the French occupation of the Ruhr. The leader of the Nazi Party, Adolf Hitler, believed that the Republic was on the verge of collapse and decided to try to seize power. On 8th November 1923, Hitler and his supporters broke up a meeting in a Munich beer-hall at which leaders of the Bavarian state government were speaking. Heforced leaders to agree ro take part in a putsch (rebellion) against the government. But he allowed them to leave the meeting, and, once free, the quickly changed their minds.

On 9th November, 3000 Nazis, led by Hitler and General Ludendorff, the First World War army hero, marched on Munich. Hitler thought the police and army would join his revolution. Instead the police opened fire on the marchers and sixteen Nazis were killed. Hitler and Ludendorff were arrested for conspiracy.

Hitler used his trial to make long speeches criticising the government and setting out his plans for the future of Germany. The publicity he received turned him into a national figure. At the end on the trial, Hitler was sentenced to just five months in prison and he was released after nine months. Ludendorff was found not guilty. There were two other important outcomes of the trial. First, Hitler now realised that power could best be acheived in Germany through the ballot box rather than an armed uprising. Secondly, during Hitler's time in prison he began work on his book 'Mein Kampf' ('My Struggle'). This book set out Hitler's main beliefs, although few people at the time can have thought that he would ever get the chance to put them into practice".
[Kelly and Lacey, *Modern World History*, p. 102]

7.4 The Economic Crisis of Hyperinflation (1923)

The German government paid its debts during the Great War of 1924–18 by simply printing more banknotes and the Weimar government continued to do the same after the war.

This led to a sharp rise in prices as workers demanded more wages to meet the rising cost of living.

The knowledge that the future prosperity of Germany would be sucked dry by heavy reparations payments (mostly to France and Belgium) as laid down in the Treaty of Versailles led to a loss of confidence in the German currency.

Towards the end of 1922, Germany failed to mak its reparations payment and French and Belgian troops occupied the Ruhr valley – the industrial heartland of Germany.

The French occupation of the Ruhr in January 1923 led to hyperinflation. Ther German government recommended a policy of 'passive resistance' to the German industrial workers in the Ruhr. Passive resistance cost the German government huge amounts of money (as they had to support the striking workers) and they had lost the valuable industrial resources of the Ruhr into the bargain. The Weimar government simply printed more money to meet its bills and massive inflation ensued. Inflation, of course, is caused by too much money chasing too few goods. As prices rose beyond all belief, the government simply printed moremoney to meet the rising wages that employers were forced to pay.

As Lacey and Shephard inform us:

"The real losers of the Great Inflation were not the poor who had little to lose anyway, or the rich who found ways to protect their wealth [they owned land, valuable possessions and foreign currency]. The real losers were the middle classes who saw their savings and businesses destroyed."
[Lacey and Shephard, *Germany 1918–1945*, p. 24]

The economic crisis of 1923 deepened the hatred felt by many Germans towards the 'November Criminals' of 1918.

In September 1923 the German Chancellor, Gustav Stresemann, ended the policy of passive resistance in the Ruhr. This was seen as a betrayal by many Right-wing extremists and in November 1923 the Nazis launced the Beer Hall Putsch.

7.5 Political Problems (1918–29)

The political system in Germany (elections based on proportional representation) caused much instability in Germany between 1918 and 1933.

As Lacey and Shephard inform us:

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> "During the ears of the Weimar Republic no single party ever won a majority of seats in the Reichstag. Up to 1930 the Social Democrats always won the most votes. but never enough to govern on their own. So governments had to be formed from coalitions of parties working together. Sometimes these coalitions did not work well, and the governments were therefore unstable. There were twenty-five separate governments in fourteen years. Some governments onyl lasted a few weeks. Stresemann hoped that successes in foreign policy [Locarno in 1925 and the German entry to the League of Nations in 1926] would make it easier for the political parties to work together. This did not happen.
>
> Many nationalists opposed Stresemann's policies as being too cautios. They wanted to reject the Versailles Treaty completely. not just have it revised. All the centre and Right-wing parties were suspicious of the Social Democrats. Parties such as the Communists and the Nazis made no secret of their wish to overthrow the Weimar Republic entirely.
>
> In 1925 Hindenburg was elected President. He had been one of Germany's war leaders under the Kaiser and was a prominent critic of the Weimar Republic. This showed how weak support for the Republic was amongst the German people. Hindenburg represented old Germany. Before he took up the post of President, he actually asked the permission of the ex-Kaiser Wilhelm!"
> [Lacey and Shephard, *Germany 1918-1945*, pp. 26–27]

The period 1924–29 saw more stable governments than had been the norm between 1918–23 (due to Stresemann's stabilisation of the German curreny) but the Wall Street Crash of 1929 brought a return to instability as uunemployment reached 6 million by 1932.

7.6 The Depression (1929–33)

The Wall Street Crash of October 1929 resulted in the United States recalling all of their short-term foreign loans in order to protect their own economy. The US government also omposed punitive trade tariffs to protect their domestic market.

This led to the collapse of German industry which had been propped-up btween 1924–29 by loads from the United States of America. Mass unemployment was the result.

Whilst the Nazi vote had been weak during the era of Stresemann prosperity, the Depression was to change matters completely.

In the general election of 1928, for example, the Nazis won just 12 seats in the Reichstag and were onyl the eighth largest party. By 1930, however, they had won 107 Reichstag seats (the largest party in the history of the Weimar Republic).

7.7 Political Crisis (1930–33)

The Collapse of the US stock market in October 1929 led to a world-wide Depression which severely destabilised politics in Germany.

As Kelly and Lacey inform us:

> "In 1929 the government was a coalition led by Hermann Muller of the Social Democratic Party. His coalition could not agree on how to deal with the effects of the Depression and in March 1930 he resigned as Chancellor. Muller was succeeded by Heinrich Bruning of the Centre Party. He did not have a majority in the Reichstag and had to rely on President Hindenburg, using Article 48 of the constitution to get his measures adopted [i.e. by decree]. Between 1930 and 1932 the Reichstag met less and less frequently, and Hindenburg issued over a hundred presidential decrees."
> [Kelly and Lacey, *Modern World History*, p. 110]

8 International Relations Between the Wars

International relations between World Wars I and II can be divided into three general periods. They are:

1. 1919-23 (a period of tension)
2. 1924-29 (an improvement in international relations)

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3. 1930-39 (a worsening of relations)

Let's examine each period in closer detail:

8.1 A Period of Tension (1919–23)

Follwing the First World War and the harsh conditions imposed on the losers by the treaties drawn up at the Paris Peace Conference, international relations in Europe grew tense.

Both Turkey and Italy defied the League of Nations in the early aftermath of the Great War.

In 1922, Turkey (who had lost Smyrna to Greece uunder the Treaty of Sevres) rejected the League's settlement and chased the Greeks out of Smyrna. In order to avert a nassacre of the British garrison at Chanak, the commander there promosed the Turks a fairer deal. The League eventually replaced the hated Treaty of Sevres with the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923.

Turkey was the first nation to successfully challenge the decisions made at the Paris Peace Conference (and the message that violence can pay dividends was not lost on other nations).

The problem of German reparations caused great tension between France and Germany. Germany simply could not afford to pay.

Lloyd George attempted to reconcile France and Germany at the Genoa Conference in 1922.

8.1.1 The Genoa Conference (1922)

The Genoa Conference was the idea of the British Prime Minister, David Lloyd George.

The Germans were threatening to stop paying reparations payments.

The Conference was called in an attempt to:

- Ease the strain in Franco-German relations over reparations.
- Discuss the state of European war debts to the United States.
- Discuss the possible resumption of diplomatic links with Soviet Russia.

Unfortunately the Conference failed.

The French refused to compromise over the question of reparations.

The Americans refused to attend.

The Germans and Russians withdrew and signed a mutial agreement at Rapallo (1922).

> **NOTE:** The Russians, who were exhausted economically during the Civil War of 1918–21, were anxious to re-establish diplomatic and trade links with the West. Following the Treaty of Rapallo, schools were set up in Russia to train German troops in the use of forbidden weaponry (heavy artillery, tanks, aeroplanes, poisonous gas, etc.).

When the amount to be paid by Germany in reparations became fixed at £6,600 million in 1921, the German economy began to suffer.

The knowledge that hundreds of millions of pounds worth of German wealth would be sucked out of the country for many years ahead undermined the German currency.

Ther German Mark, which had steadily been losing value against other currencies since 1914, slid into an even steeper decline following the announcement of the amount of reparations to be paid.

For example, there were 4.2 marks to one US dollar in 1914, and 18,000 marks to onne US dollar in Januuary 1923.

As the mark dropped in value, ther Germans were unable to meet the foreign equivalents in reparations payments.

The German government printed more and more money to help meet their debts.

This, of course, fuelled inflation even more.

When the Germans could not pay their reparations in January 1923, the French occupied the German Ruhr (her industrial heartland) and took the goods for themselves.

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In November 1923, there were $4,200,000,000,000$ (4.2 billion, or 4.2×10^{12}) marks to one US dollar.

As paper money dropped in value, the Weimar government had 300 paper-mills and 2,000 printing works working 24 hour shifts in order to supply their needs.

The French occupation of the Ruhr was followed by strikes, riots and the sabotage of trains carrying coal to France.

The French replied with arrests and executions.

A position of deadlock had been reached; the Germans could not pay and the French would not leave German soil until they were sure they would get their money.

It was in order to break this deadlock that the Dawes Plan was drawn up in London in 1924. The Dawes Plan allowed Germany to pay annually only what she could reasonably afford.

8.1.2 The Washington Conferences (1921–2)

The Washington Conferences were an attempt to improve relations between the USA and Japan.

The USA became increasingly worried by gorwing Japanese power in the Far-East and her influence in China.

During the First World War Japan had seized Kiaochow and all the German island colonies in the Pacific.

Japan agreed at Washington to:

- Limit the size of her navy to $\frac{3}{5}$ of the size of the British and American navies.
- Withdraw from Kiaochow and the Shanting province of China (which she had occupied since 1924).

In return, Japan:

- Was allowed to keep the former German Pacific islands as mandates.
- Received the promise of the western powers not to build any new naval bases within striking distancec of Japan.

In addition, the USA, Japan, Britain and France agreed to:

- Respect the neutrality of China.
- Repect wach others possessions in the Far East.

At the time, the agreements were considered to be a great success, and relations between the USA and Japan were improved.

In reality, though, Japan soon became the supreme power in the Far East.

She had the world's third largest navy (which she could concentrate in the Far East).

Although Britain and America had larger navies, they were spread far more widely around the world.

The Japanese build-up of power was to have dire consequences for China in the 1930s.

Japan invaded the Chinese province of Manchuria in 1931 and later China herself (in 1937).

8.2 The Tensions Ease under Streseman & Briand (1924–29)

The period 1924–29 saw a general improvement in the international atmosphere in Europe.

It was brought about partly by changes in political leadership; particularly by Edouard Herriot and Aristide Briand in France and Gustav Streseman in Germany.

Ramsey MacDonald, the new British Prime Minister, was also keen for reconciliation.

It was MacDonald, Herriot and Streseman who attended the Conference in London in 1924 at which the Dawes Plan was worked out.

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8.2.1 The Locarno Treaties (1925)

The Locarno treaties were a number of different agreements involving Germany, France, Britain, Italy, Belgium, Poland and Czechoslovakia.

The Treaties appeared to herald the dawn of peaceful relations in Europe.

Germany, France, and Belgium agreed to stay within the confines of their own boundaries, and to respect those of each other.

They were given the added security that if one of them broke this agreement, Britain and Italy would aid the nation being attacked.

Germany also signed agreements with Poland and Czechoslovakia promising arbitration over possible future disputes (but Germany refused to guarantee her frontiers with Poland and Czechoslovakia).

France agreed to help Poland and Czechoslovakia in the event of a German attack.

The Locarno treaties were greeted with great enthusiasm in Europe as they seemed to guarantee peace.

Locarno had a central weakness though:

No guarantess were given by either Britain or Germany concerning the eastern frontiers of Germany with Poland or Czechoslovakia.

Britain gave the impression that she might not act if Germany attacked Poland or Czechoslovakia; an impression that was not lost on Hitler in 1938–9.

For the time being though, everything looked rosy in the European garden.

The Locarno Treaties appeared to offer a real prospect for peace and the German and French leaders Streseman and Briand (French Foreign Minister from 1925–32) met regularly on friendly terms.

German industry had recovered under the provisions of the Dawes Plan and France was receiving her reparations payments.

Germany was admitted to the League of Nations in 1926 and Europe appeared to be on a more peaceful footing.

This new-found friendliness led to further peace-keeping moves. The 'spirit of Locarno' was behind the Kellogg–Briand Pact of 1928.

8.2.2 The Kellogg-Briand Pact (1928)

The Kellogg-Briand Pact originated from the mind of the French Foreign Minister Briand.

Briand proposed that France and the United States should each renounce war as an instrument of national policy.

Frank B. Kellogg, the American Secretary of State, proposed that the 'whole world' should be involved.

Eventually, 65 different nations signed the Pact.

However, the Pact made no mention of sanctions against any nation which broke its pledge.

It relied solely on the goodwill of the nations involved.

Japan, for example, signed the Pact, but it did not prevent her from invading Manchuria just three years later (in 1931).

From then on, the World slipped further and further towards global conflict.

8.3 The Decade of German, Italian & Japanese Aggression (1930–39)

The German recovery of the mid-1920s ended with the Wall Street Crash of October 1929 and the World economic depression which followed in its wake.

In order to combat depression, America called in its short-term loans (most of which had gone to prop-up German industry).

As a result, German industry collapsed.

World export markets shrank as recession set in, and unemployment became a feature of all European industrial economies based on export trade.

A massive rise in German unemployment allowed the Nazi Party to gain votes between 1930–33. There were 6 million unemployed in Germany in 1933.

Hitler blamed Germany's ills on the 'November criminals' who had signed the 'diktat' of Versailles.

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In January 1933, Hitler came to power as the leader of the largest party in the German Reichstag.

Within months, Hitler had created a one-party totalitarian state.

In 1933, Hitler withdrew Germany from the League of Nations.

From 1935 onwards, Hitler openly defied the Treaty of Versailles by announcing German rearmament.

As we well see later (in great detail) Hitler adopted an aggressive militaristic foreign policy which eventually led to World War II in 1939.

Italy and Japan — who became Germany's natural allies in the combat of international Marxist communism – also pursued aggressive foreign policies.

Fascist Italy invaded Abyssinia in 1935 (and from then on drew closer and closer to Nazi Germany and moved further away from Britain and France).

Japan — who sought an economic empire in the east to combat depression — invaded the Chinese province of Manchuria in 1931 and China herself in 1937.

The Japanese then began to cast hungry eyes on the British, French and Dutch colonies in the Far East.

These colonies were rich in raw materials (oil, rubber and tin); and from 1939 their owners were too involved in the war in Europe to be able to defend them properly.

In 1941, Japan occupied French Indo China (where they set up military bases).

The resulting American oil embargo, placed on Japan in order to combar Japanese aggression in the east, led the Japanese to attack the American Pacific fleet at Pearly Harbour, in Hawaii, on 7th December 1941.

The World was now engulfed in a global conflict of gigantic and terrifying proportions.

9 The Streseman Years (1923–29)

In late 1923, Gustav Streseman became Chancellor of Germany (and them Foreign Secretary from 1924–29).

Following the hyper–inflation of 1923, the Weimar government reformed the German currency, in an attempt to stabilise it (November 1923).

NOTE: There were 4.2 marks to one US dollar in 1914; and 4.2 billion marks to the dollar by November 1923.

The banks called in all the old notes, and issued a new currency — the Rentenmark.

People gradually began to trust money again, and inflation began to fall.

Between 1924–29, foreign loans (mostly from America) poured into German industry.

9.1 The Dawes Plan (1924)

It was the Dawes Plan of 1924 which really saved the German economy.

The Dawes Plan came into being as the result of a special conference in London chaired by the American representative Geeral Dawes. Ramsey MacDonald (Britain), Edouard Herriot (France), and Gustav Streseman (Germany) were the other major representatives and were eager for reconciliation.

The Dawes okan provided an immediate loan to Germany, from the USA, of the equivalent of £40 million.

It also relaxed the fixed reparations payments Germany had to pay. In effect it allowed Germany to pay what she could afford each year.

French troops withdrew from the Ruhr once they knew that they would get their precious reparations.

With the currency reformed and stabilised, the Ruhr back in Ger

9.2 The Young Plan (1929)

The Young Plan of 1929 sought to settle the remaining problems concerning reparations.

The Dawes Plan of 1924 had eased the reparations burden for Germany, but had left uncertain the total amount Germany was expected to pay.

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Table 3: Nazi & Communist seats in the Reichstag in the 1920s and 30s

	Seats in the Reichstag		Unemployment in Millions
	Nazis	Communists	
May 1924	32	62	0.5
Dec 1924	14	45	0.5
1928	13	54	2.5
1930	107	77	4.0
Jul 1932	230	89	6.2
Nov 1932	196	120	6.0
Mar 1933	288	81	5.8

A committee chaired by the American banker Owen Young reduced the burden even further.

The Young Plan reduced reparations from £6,600 million to only £2,000 million. The new amount was to be paid on a graded scale over a 59 year period (payments were expected to be made until 1988).

But before the Plan could be put into operation, the world economy was thrown into chaos by the collapse of the American stock market (the famous Wall Street Crash of October 1929).

9.3 The End of German Recovery (1929)

Although the Streseman years were a period of German economic recovery, Streseman knew that the new-found prosperity depended solely on loans from abroad, mostly from the United States (which could be recalled at any time).

In 1929, Streseman warned his fellow countrymen that 'Germany is dancing on a volcano'.

The volcano erupted in October 1929 when the America Wall Street Crash rocked the world economy.

The affects if the crash were felt across the world, but Germany was wirst hit because she depended more on American loans than the other major industrial nations.

When the Americans called in all short-term loans, German industry collapsed.

By 1932, over 6 million people were unemployed (nearly one in three of all German workers).

9.4 The Fall of the Weimar Republic & the Rise of Hitler

Unfortunately for the German Weimar republic, Gustav Streseman, its most able politician – and the man best equipped to deal with the problems which were to follow the Wall Street Crash of Occtober 1929 – died that same month.

As the German economy worsened, and unemployment rose, the Nazi party grew in strength.

Hitler told the German people that he was the man to save the Fatherland from total ruin – and millions believed him.

The following table shows the increase in Nazi seats in the Reichstag in relation to rising unemployment.

> **NOTE:** In May 1924, the Nazis had 32 seats in the German Parliament. Following the influence of Gustav Streseman, the Dawes Plan, and German economic recovery, both the Nazis and the Communists lost votes and seats. By 1928, the Nazis held only 13 seats. Following the Wall Street Crash (1929), and the Great Depression which followed, the Nazi vote rose consistently in line with rising unemployment. By July 1932, they were the largest single party in the Reichstag with 230 seats. Although the Nazi Party had been purposefully kept out of power by President Hindenburg since July 1932, the ageing President was eventually forced to recognise Hitler as Chancellor of Germany in January 1933.

The loss of votes sustained by the National Socialists in the election of November 1932 can be explained by the existence of a slight improvement on the economic front by the summer of 1932. It was not enough, however, to stop the Nazi climb to power.

In the election of 5th March 1933, with Hitler in power and able to use all the apparatus of state in order to gain votes (e. g. press and radio), the Nazis increased their seats to 288 (out of 608 in the Reichstag in total). This was still not

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an overall majority; but the Nazis overcame this deficiency by getting the Reichstag to grant emergency powers to the new Chancellor, Hitler. Hitler then used these emergency powers to crush all political opposition — making an overall majority non-essential. Within months, Hitler created a one-party state.

10 Hitler and the Third Reich

Adolf Hitler was not a German. He was born at Braunau am Inn, in Austria (across the border from Bavaria) on 20th April 1889.

He was te third son of the third marriage of a minor Austrian customs official, Alois Hitler.

Hitler, however, always regarded himself as being German.

As Hitler wrote in the 1920s, in his book *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle):

> Today it seems to me providential that fate should have chosed Braunau am Inn as my birthplace. For this little town lies on the boundary between two German states which we of the younger generation at least have made it our life-work to reunite by every means at out disposal...This little city on the border seems to me the symbol of a great mission."

The Hitler family moved home frequently during Adolf's childhood.

By the time Hitler was 15, he had lived at seven different addresses and attended five different schools.

The constant changing of schools may have contributed to the fact that Hitler did not do very well academically.

Hitler blamed his teachers. On four separate occasions in 1942, Hitler said as follows:

> "When I think of the men who were my teachers, I realise that most of them were slightly mad. The men who could be regarded as good teachers were exceptional. It's tragic to think that such people have the power to bar a young man's way."
> [3rd March 1942]

> "I have the most unpleasant recollections of the teachers who taught me. Their external appearance exuded uncleanliness; their collars were unkempt...They were the product of a proletariat denuded of all personal independence of thought, distinguished by unparalleled ignorance and most admirably fitted to become pillars of an effete system of government which, thank God, is now a thing of the past."
> [12th April 1942]

> "When I recall my teachers at school, I realise that half of them were abnormal...We pupils of old Austria were brought up to respect old people and women. But on our professors we had no mercy; they were our natural enemies. The majority of them were somewhat mentally deranged, and quite a few of them ended their days ass honest-to-God lunatics!...I wasin particular bad odour with the teachers. I should not the slightest aptitude for foreign languages — though I might have, had not the teacher been a congenital idiot. I could not bear the sight of him."
> [29th August 1942]

> "Our teachers were absolute tyrants. They had no sympathy with youth; their one object was to stuff our brains and turn us into erudite apes like themselves. If any pupil showed the slightest trace of originality, they persecuted him relentlessly, and the only model pupils whom I ever got to know have all been failures in after-life."
> [7th September 1942]

Hitler's dislike of educated people remained with him all his life.

However, there was one teacher who inspired him — Dr. Leopold Poetsch, his history teacher.

Said Hitler, in *Mein Kampf*:

> "An old gentleman, kind ut at the same tiem firm, he was able not only to hold our attention by his dazzling eloquence but to caryy us away with him. Even today I think back with genuine emotion on this grey-haired old man who, by the fire of his words, sometimes made us forget the present; who, as if by magic, transported us into times past and, out of the millenium mists of time, transformed dry historical facts into vivid reality. There we sat, often aflame with enthusiasm, sometimes even moved to tears...he

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> used our budding national fanaticism as a means of educating us, frequently appealing to our sense of national honour. This teacher made history my favourite subject. And indeed, though he had no such intention, it was then that I became a young revolutionary."

Clearly, Dr. Poetsch asserted an early and deep influence on Hitler's nationalist fervour.

At the age of eleven, Adolf fell out with his father over his father's intention that the young Hitler should become a civil servant.

Hitler told his father that he wanted to become an artist.

Hitler later claimed that, as a consequence of his father's demand for him to become a civi servant, he stopped studying at school.

> "I thought, said Hitler, "that once my father saw how little progress I was making at high school he would let me devote myself to my dream, whether he liked it or not."

Indeed, his dream to become an artist dominated Hitler;s teens and early manhood. But by this time other factorsif Hitler's future ideology had already formed.

As William L. Shirer notes:

> "Although Hitler was determined to become an artist, prefarably a painter or at least an architect, he was already obsessed with politics at the age of sixteen. By then he had developed a violent hatred for the Habsburg monarchy and all the non-German races in the multinationalAustro-Hungarian Empire over which it ruled, and an equally violent love for everything German. At sixteen he had become what he was to remain until his dying breath: a fanatical German nationalist."
> [Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of The Third Reich*, p. 15]

In 1906, just after Hitler's seventeenth birthday, his now widowed mother provided him with the funds to spend a two-month stay in Vienna.

Whilst there, he enquired about entering the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts.

The following year, aged 18, he took the Academy's entrance examination and failed.

The following year, his preliminary drawings were considered to be so poor that he was not admitted to the examination.

A few days before Christmas 1908, the nineteen year old Hitler's mother died.

Hitler, who had never done a day's work in his life, was now facced with having to make a living for himself.

Accordingly, he set off for Vienna.

As Hitler told it:

> "With a suitcase full of clothes and underwear in my hand and an indomitable will in my heart, I set out for Vienna. I too hoped to wrest from fate what my father had accomplished fifty years before; I too hoped to become 'something' — but in no case a civil servant."

10.1 Hitler in Vienna

The years 1909–13 were oens of utter misery and destitution for the young Adolf. He called it 'the saddest period of his life'.

Said Hitler (in *Mein Kampf*):

> "Hinger was then my faithful bodyguard; he never left me for a moment and partook of all I had. . .My life was a continual struggle with this pitiless friend."

Hunger never forced Hitler to get a permanent job though!

He preferred to take occasional jobs when necessity arose.

He sometimes shovelled snow, beat carpets, carried bags outside railway stations, and worked as a building labourer.

Hitler also utilised his artstic talents by painting scenes of Vienna.

As William L. Shirer notes:

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> "Probably hundreds of these pitiful pieces were sold by Hitler to the petty traders to ornament a wall, to dealers who used them to fill empty picture frames on display and to furniture makers who sometimes tacked them to the backs of cheap sofas and chairrs after a fashion in Vienna in those days. Hitler could also be more commercial. He often drew posters for shopkeepers advertising such products as Teddy's Perspiration Powser, and there was one, perhaps turned out to make a little money at Christmas time, depicting Santa Claus selling brightly-coloured candles, and another showing St. Stephen's Hothic spire...rising out of a mountain of soap cakes."
> [Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of The Third Reich*, p. 19]

But Hitler did not reapply to the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts; nor to the Vienna School of Architecture.

Nevertheless, all his life Hitler considered himself to be an artist.

According to Hitler, he spent all his free time reading.

Said Hitler (in *Mein Kampf*):

> "Vienna was and remained for me the hardest, though most thorough, school of my life...In this period there took shape within me a world picture an a philosophy which became the granite foundation of all my acts. In addition to what I then created, I have had to learn little; and I have had to alter nothing."

What then did Hitler learn in Vienna?

10.1.1 The Political Influences on Hitler in Vienna

Although Hitler played no direct part in Austrian politics, he took an avid interest in the fortunes of Austria's three main political parties. They were:

1. The Social Democrats
2. The Christian Socialists
3. The Pan-German Nationalists

Let's examine them in closer detail:

1. **The Social Democrats**
   Hitler hated the Social Democrats, but he learnt from them. He detested their hostility towards the unification of Austria and Germany. He hated the party's "disgraceful courting of the Slavic 'comrade"'. Hitler hated the 'non-German' Austrians; particularly the Slavs and Czechs. However, he admired their techniques; especially their use of mass marches and propaganda. Both were to become essential elements of the future Nazi party.
2. **The Christian Socialists**
   Hitler admired the leader of the Chirstian Socialists, Dr. Karl Lueger — the burgomaster (mayor) of Vienna. For Hitler, Lueger knew just how to build a mass party centred on te lower middle classes. Like Hitler, Lueger understood the power of oratory (public speaking) in winning mass support and the importance of propaganda. However, Hitler did not like Lueger's loyalty to the Habsburg monarchy, his disinterest in a unified Greater Germany (which would include Austria), his Roman Catholicism, and his failure to adopt 'hard-line' anti-Semitism (hatred of the Jews).
3. **The Pan-German Nationalists**
   Most of all, Hitler admired the Pan-German Nationalist Party founded by Georg Ritter von Schoenerer. It was violently naitonalist, anti-Habsburg, anti-Semitic, anti-socialist, anti-church, and wanted a Greater or Pan-Germany to be created. Indeed, the Pan-German Nationalist Party favoured most of the things which Hitler's National Socialist Party wuld in the future. However, its central weakness, according to hitler, was that it failed to appreciate the 'importance of the social problem'.

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10.1.2 The Making of an Anti-Semite

According to Hitler, it was during his stay in Vienna (1909–13) that he grew to hate the Jews.

In Linz, Hitler's home town, there was not a large Jewish population.

Said Hitler in *Main Kampf*:

> "At home I do not remember having heard the word ['Jew'] during my father's lifetime."

There was a Jewish boy at Linz High School, "but we didn't give the matter any thought...I even took them for Germans."

"Then", says Hitler, "I came to Vienna."

One day, recounts Hitler, whilst strolling through the inner city:

> "I suddenly encountered an apparition in a black caftan and black sidelocks. 'Is this a Jew?' was my first thought. For, to be sure, they had not looked like that in Linz. I observed the man furtively and cautiously, but the longer I stared at this foreign face, scrutinising feature for feature, the more my first question assumed a new form: 'Is this a German?"'

Hitler then began to read the masses of anti-Semitic literature which abounded in Vienna at that time.

NOTE: Vienna was very much a cosmopolitan city (made up of many races). In addition to Czechs, Poles, Slavs, and so forth, Vienna contained a 9% Jewish population. In itself, this was not large. But popular hostility towards the Jews was not eased by the fact that they monopolised 27.5% of university places.

Hitler began to notice the Jews more and more.

> "Wherever I went", said Hitler, "I began to see Jews, and the more I sawm the more sharply they became distinguished in my eyes from the rest of humanity...Later, I often grew sick to the stomach, from the smell of these caftan-wearers."

Apart from his physical dislike of the Jews, Hitler soon discovered a 'moral stain' on this 'chosen people'.

> "Was there any form of filth", asked Hitler, "without at least one Jew onvolved in it? If you cut even cautiously into such an abscess, you found, like a maggot in a rotting body, often dazzled by the sudden light — a kike!"

Hitler held that the Jews in Vienna were responsible for the city's prostitution and the white slave traffic.

> "When for the first time", relates Hitler, "I recognised the Jew as the cold-hearted, shameless and calculating director of this revolting vice traffic in the scum of the big city, a cold shudder ran down my back."

Mein Kampf is sprinkled with lurid allusions to the sexual violation of young christian girls by uncouth Jewish seducers.

Hitler talks of the "nightmare vision of the seduction of hundreds of thousands of girls by repulsive, crooked-legged Jew bastards".

Indeed, Hitler cited the Jewish problem as one of the factors which made him leave Vienna.

> "My inner revulsion towards the Hapsburg State steadily gre...I was repelled by the conglomeration of races which te capital showed me, repelled by this whole mixture of Czechs, Poles, Hungarians, Ruthenians, Serbs, and Croats, and everywhere the eternal mushroom of humaity — Jews, and more Jews. To me the giant city seemed the embodiment of racial desecration...The longer I lived in this city the more my hatred grew for the foreign mixture of peoples which had begun to corrode this old site of German culture...For all these reasons a longing rose stronger and stronger in me to go at last whither since my childhood secret desires and secret love had drawn me."
> [*Mein Kampf*]

At some time after May 1913 Hitler left Vienna for Munich in southern Germany (Bavaria).

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NOTE: August Kubizeck, a boyhood friend of Hitler's in Linz, casts doubt upon the truth of Hitler's statements regarding the role of Vienna in turning the future Nazi leader into an anti-Semite. Said Kubizek:

> "His anti-Semitism was already pronounced...Hitler was already a confirmed anti-Semite whe he went to Vienna. And although his experiences in Vienna might have deepened this feeling, they certainly did not give birth to it."
> [Kubizek, *The Young Hitler I Knew*, p. 50]

10.2 Hitler and the Great War

When Hitler arrived in Germany, from Austria, In 1913, he arrived in a country that was only 42 years old (Germany was not formed into a single political nation until 1871).

During these 42 years, Germany had been transformed from a 'jigsaw collection' of small independent states into a modern industrial nation. She had overtaken Britain in the production of iron and steel and had one of the finest armies in the world (over a million men).

Some fifteen months after Hitler arrived in Munich war broke out.

When war was declared on 1st August 1914, Hitler was elated.

As he said in *Mein Kampf*:

> "Even today I am not ashamed to say that, overpowered by stormy enthusiasm, I fell down on my knees andthanked Heaven from an aoverflowing heart."

On 3rd August 1914 Hitler joined the army.

He arrived at the front in October 1914, after scarcely 3 month's basic training.

Hitler was a brave soldier. He was twice decorated for bravery. He was awarded the Iron Cross (Second Class) in December 1914 and the Iron Cross (First Class) in August 1918.

In October 1916, Hitler was wounded in the leg at the Battle of the Somme.

He was hospitalised in Germany and returned to action in March 1917.

He fought in the Battle of Arras and the third Battle of Ypres that summer.

His regiment was in the thick of the fighting in the last desparate German offensive of spring and summer of 1918.

On the night of 13th October 1918, he was caught in a British gas attack during the last Battle of Ypres.

Hitler was blinded.

It was whilst recovering from this attack at a military hospital in Pasewalk, a small Pomeranian town North-east of Berlin, that Corporal Hitler heard the news that Germany was to sign the armistice.

He was heartbroken.

Said Hitler:

> Everything went black again before my eyes; I tottered and groped my way back to the ward, threw myself on my bunk, and dug my burning head into my blanket and pillow...So it had all been in vain. In vain all the sacrifices and privations;...in vain the hours in which, with mortal fear clutching our hearts, we nevertheless did our duuty; in vain the death of two millions who died...had they died for this?...Did all this happen only so that a gang of wretched criminals could lay hands on the Fatherland?"
> [*Mein Kampf*]
>
> When Hitler later became a politician he did much to create the myth that Germany need not have surrendered; that Germany had been betrayed by these 'November criminals'. According to Hitler, Germany had been 'stabbed-in-the-back'. It was all part of a Jewish/Communist conspiracy, said Hitler.
>
> And many people believed him.

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10.3 The Formation of the Nazi Party

10.4 Hitler takes over the DAP

10.5 The 25 Points

1. The very first point demanded the creation of a greater or pan-Germany, It stated: "We demand the union of all Germans, on the basis of the right of the self-determination of peoples, to form a Great Germany."
2. "We demand equality of rights for the German People in its dealing with other nations, and **abolition of the Peace Treaties of Versailles and St. Germain**."
3. "We demand land and territory (colonies) for the nourishment of our people and for settling out surplus population". In other words, the Nazis wanted Lebensraum (or 'living-space').
4. "None but members of the nation may be citizens of the State. None but those of German blood, whatever their creed, may be members of the nation. No Jew, therefore, may be a member of the nation."
5. "Anyone who is not a citizen of the State may live in Germany only as a guest and must be regarded as being subject to he Alien laws."
6. Point six stated that the right of voting on the leadership and legislation of the nation was to be enjoyed only by members of the nation.
7. "We demand that the State shall make its frst duty to promote the industry and livelihood of the citizens of the State. If it is not possible to nourish the entire population of the State, foreign naitonals (non-citizens of the State) must be excluded from the Reich."
8. "All furter non-German immigration must be prevented. We demand that all non-Germans who entered German subsequently to 2nd August 1914 shall be required forthwith to depart from the Reich."
9. "All citizens of the State shall possess equal rights and duties."
10. It must be the first duty of every citizen of the State to eprform mental or physical work. The activities of the individual must not clash with the intersts of the whole, but must proceed within the framework of the community and must be for the general good."
11. Point 11 demanded the abolition of incomes 'unearned by work' (through interest).
12. "...personal enrichment through war must be regarded as a crime against the nation. We demand therefore the ruthless confiscation of all war profits."
13. "We demand the nationalisation of all businesses which have (hitherto) been amalgamated (into Trusts)."
14. "We demand that there shall be profit sharing in the great industries."
15. "We demand a generous development of provision for old age."
16. "We demand the creation and maintenance of a healthy middle class, immediate communalisation of wholsale warehouses, and their lease at a low rate to small traders, and that te most careful consideration shall be shown to all small purveyers to the State, the provinces, or smaller communities."
17. "We demand a land-reform suitable to out national requirements, the passing of a law for the confiscation without compensation of land for communal purposes, the abolition of interest on mortgages, and the prohibition of all speculation in land."
18. "We demand ruthless war upon all those whose activities are injurious to the common interest. Common criminals against the nation, usurers, profiteers, &c., must be punished by death, whatever their creed or race."
19. "We demand that the Roman Law, which serves the materialistic world order, shall be replaced by a German common law."
20. Point 20 demanded educational reform. "Directly the mind begins to develop the schools must aim at teaching the pupil to understand the idea of the State" (State sociology).

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21. "The State must apply itself to raising the standard of health in the nation. . . and increasing bodily efficiency by legally obligatory gymnastics and sports, and by extensive support of clubs engaged in the physical training of the young."

22. "We demand the abolition of mercenary troops and the formation of a national army."

23. "We demand legal warfare against conscious political lies and their dissemination in the press". In order to create a 'German' national press, the Nazis demanded:

    (a) That all editors and contributors to newspapers who used the German language be 'members of the nation'.

    (b) That special permission from the State be granted before non-German-language newspapers be allowed to appear.

    (c) That non-Germans should be prohibited by law fro mparticipating financially (or influencing) German newspapers. The Nazis also demanded in Point 23 "the legal prosecution of all tendencies in art and literature of a kind likely to disintegrate out life as a nation".

    (d) Point 24 called for the toleration of religion as long as it did not "militate against the morality and moral sense of the German race."

    (e) Point 25 demanded the "creation of a strong central power of the Reich. Unconditional autority of the politically central Parliament over the entire Reich."

As we have seen, the 25 Points were a curious mixture of nationalist, 'socialist', and anti-Semitic aims. The Nazis promised to help the middle classes who felt in danger of becoming 'proletarianised' by a Marxist Communist takeover. Another necessary condition was the Nazi insistence of the subordination of the individual to the Nationalist Socialist State.

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10.6 Fundamental Programme of the National Socialist German Workers Party — Grundsätzliches Programm der naitonalsozialistischen Deutschen Arbeiter-Partei

Translation

Fundamental Programme
of the national socialist
German Workers Party.

The German Workers Party Programme is an unalterable programme. Having achieved the aims put forward in the Programme, the leaders refuse to draw up new ones merely to facilitate the continuation of the Party by artificially heightening the discontent of the masses.

1. We demand the unification of all Germans in a greater German Reich on the basis of the peoples' right to self-determination.

2. We demand equal rights for the German people vis à vis other nations and the abolition of the Peace Treaties made in Versailles and St. Germain.

3. We demand land and soil (colonies) for the feeding of our people and the settlement of our surplus population.

4. Only racial comrades may be German citizens. Only those of German blood may be racial comrades, regardless of religous denomination. **So no Jew can become a racial comrade.**...

7. We demand that the state should commit itself first and foremost to protect the ability of the citizen to survive and earn an income. If it becomes impossible to feed the entire population, then foreign nationals (non-citizens) should be deported from the Reich.

8. Any further immigration of non-Germans is to be avoided. We demand that all non-Germans who have resided in Germany since 2nd Auust 1914, and who are therefore immigrants, be compelled to leave the Reich immediately...

10. The first duty of every citizen must be to work, either intellectually or physically...

That is why we demand:

11. The abolition of unearned income.

The Breaking of Interest-Slavery.

12. Because of the dreadful sacrifice of blood and wealth that every war demands of the people, self-agrandisement from war must be regarded as a crime against the people. Therefore we demand **the confiscation of all war-profits.**

13. We demand taht the state takes over all those businesses (Trusts) that are under workers' control.

14. We demand profit-sharing in large concerns.

15. We demand a generous increase in old age pensions.

16. We demand the creation and preservation of a healthy middle class (Mittelstand). Immediate **municipalisation of the large department stores** and the renting out of their premises to small traders, who must be given prime consideration in contracts for supplying central, regional and local government...

18. We demand a ruthless fight against all those who harm the interests of the general public through their activities. Common thieves, **usurers, black-marketeers** &c. are to be **punished with the death sentence**, regardless of religious denomination of race...

24. We demand the freedom of religious worship... The Party as such, represents the viewpoint of a positive Christianity... It fights against the spirit of Jewish materialism **within** and **outside of** us...

The leaders of the Party promise that they will totally commit themselves to carry out the above points, if necessary, at the risk of their own lives.

Munich 24th February 1920

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Original

Grundsätzliches Programm
der nationalsozialistischen
Deutschen Arbeiter-Partei.

Das Programm der Deutschen Arbeiter-Partei ist ein Zeit-Programm. Die Führer lehnen es ab, nach Erreichung der im Programm aufgestellten Ziele neue aufzustellen, nur zu dem Zweck, um durch künstlich gesteigerte Unzufriedenheit der Massen das Fortbestehen der Partei zu ermöglichen.

1. Wir fordern den Zusammenschluß aller Deutschen auf Grund des Selbstbestimmungsrechtes der Völker zu einem Groß-Deutschland.

2. Wir fordern die Gleichberechtigung des deutschen Volkes gegenüber den anderen Nationen, Aufhebung der Friedensverträge in Versailles und St. Germain.

3. Wir fordern Land u. Boden (Kolonien) zur Ernährung unseres Volkes u. Ansiedlung unseres Bevölkerungs-Ueberschusses.

4. Staatsbürger kann nur sein, wer Volksgenosse ist. Volksgenosse kann nur sein, wer deutschen Blutes ist, ohne Rücksichtnahme auf Konfession. Kein Jude kann daher Volksgenosse sein.

5. Wer nicht Staatsbürger ist, soll nur als Gast in Deutschland leben können u. muß unter Fremdengesetzgebung stehen.

6. Das Recht, über Führung u. Gesetze des Staates zu bestimmen, darf nur dem Staatsbürger zustehen. Daher fordern wir, daß jedes öffentliche Amt, gleichgiltig welcher Art, gleich ob im Reich, Land oder Gemeinde nur durch Staatsbürger bekleidet werden darf. — Wir bekämpfen die korrumpierende Parlamentswirtschaft einer Stellenbesetzung nur nach Parteigesichtspunkten ohne Rücksichten auf Charakter und Fähigkeiten.

7. Wir fordern, daß sich der Staat verpflichtet, in erster Linie für die Erwerbs u. Lebensmöglichkeit der Staatsbürger zu sorgen. Wenn es nicht möglich ist, die Gesamtbevölkerung des Staates zu ernähren, so sind die Angehörigen fremder Nationen (Nicht-Staatsbürger) aus dem Reiche auszuweisen.

8. Jede weitere Einwanderung Nicht-Deutscher ist zu verhindern. Wir fordern, daß alle Nicht-Deutschen, die seit 2. August 1914 in Deutschland eingewandert sind, sofort zum Verlassen des Reiches gezwungen werden.

9. Alle Staatsbürger müssen gleiche Rechte u. Pflichten besitzen.

10. Erste Pflicht jedes Staatsbürgers muß sein, geistig oder körperlich zu schaffen. Die Tätigkeit des Einzelnen darf nicht gegen die Interessen der Allgemeinheit verstoßen, sondern muß im Rahmen des Gesamten u. zum Nutzen Aller erfolgen.

Daher fordern wir:

11. Abschaffung des arbeits- und mühelosen Einkommens.

Brechung der Zinsknechtschaft.

12. Im Hinblick auf die ungeheuren Opfer an Gut und Blut, die jeder Krieg vom Volke fordert, muß die persönliche Bereicherung durch den Krieg als Verbrechen am Volke bezeichnet werden. Wir fordern daher restlose Einziehung aller Kriegsgewinne.

13. Wir fordern die Verstaatlichung aller bisher bereits vergesellschafteten (Trust's) Betriebe.

14. Wir fordern Gewinnbeteiligung an Großbetrieben.

15. Wir fordern einen großzügigen Ausbau der Alters-Versorgung.

16. Wir fordern die Schaffung eines gesunden Mittelstands und seine Erhaltung. Sofortige Kommunalisierung der Groß-Warenhäuser und ihre Vermietung zu billigen Preisen an kleine Gewerbetreibende, schärfste Berücksichtigung aller kleinen Gewerbetreibenden bei Lieferung an den Staat, die Länder oder Gemeinden.

17. Wir fordern eine unseren nationalen Bedürfnissen angepaßte Bodenreform, Schaffung eines Gesetzes zur unentgeltlichen Enteignung von Boden für gemeinnützige Zwecke. Abschaffung des Bodenzinses und Verhinderung jeder Bodenspekulation.

18. Wir fordern den rücksichtslosen Kampf gegen diejenigen, die durch ihre Tätigkeit das Gemein-Interesse schädigen. Gemeine Volksverbrecher, Wucherer, Schieber usw. sind mit dem Tode zu bestrafen, ohne Rücksichtnahme auf Konfession und Rasse.

19. Wir fordern Ersatz für das der materialistischen Weltordnung dienende römische Recht durch ein Deutsches Gemein-Recht.

20. Um jedem fähigen und fleissigen Deutschen das Erreichen höherer Bildung und damit das Einrücken in führende Stellungen zu ermöglichen, hat der Staat für einen gründlichen Ausbau unseres gesamten Volksbildungswesens Sorge zu tragen. Die Lehrpläne aller Bildungsanstalten sind den Erfordernissen des praktischen Lebens anzupassen. Das Erfassen des Staatsgedankens muß bereits mit Beginn des Verständnisses durch die Schule (Staatsbürgerkunde) erzielt werden. Wir fordern die Ausbildung geistig besonders veranlagter Kinder armer Eltern ohne Rücksicht auf deren Stand oder Berufs auf Staatskosten.

21. Der Staat hat für die Hebung der Volksgesundheit zu sorgen, durch den Schutz der Mutter und des Kindes, durch Verbot der Jugendarbeit, durch Herbeiführung der körperlichen Ertüchtigung mittels gesetzlicher Festlegung einer Turn- und Sportpflicht, durch größte Unterstützung aller sich mit körperlicher Jugend-Ausbildung beschäftigenden Vereine.

22. Wir fordern die Abschaffung der Söldnertruppen und die Bildung eines Volksheeres.

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23. Wir fordern den gesetzlichen Kampf gegen die bewußte politische Lüge und ihre Verbreitung durch die Presse. Um die Schaffung einer deutschen Presse zu ermöglichen, fordern wir, daß:

(a) Sämtliche Schriftleiter und Mitarbeiter von Zeitungen, die in Deutscher Sprache erscheinen, Volksgenossen sein müssen.

(b) Nichtdeutsche Zeitungen zu ihrem Erscheinen der ausdrücklichen Genehmigung des Staates bedürfen. Sie dürfen nicht in deutscher Sprache gedruckt werden.

(c) Jede finanzielle Beteiligung an Deutschen Zeitungen oder deren Beeinflussung durch Nichtdeutsche gesetzlich verboten wird, u. fordern als Strafe für Uebertretungen die Schließung einer solchen Zeitung, so wie die sofortige Ausweisung der daran beteiligten Nichtdeutschen aus dem Reich. Zeitungen, die gegen das Gemeinwohl verstoßen, sind zu verbieten. Wir fordern den gesetzlichen Kampf gegen ein Kunst- u. Literatur-Richtung, die einen zersetzenden Einfluß auf unser Volksleben ausübt u. die Schließung von Veranstaltungen, die gegen vorstehende Forderungen verstoßen.

24. Wir fordern die Freiheit aller religiösen Bekenntnisse im Staat, soweit sie nicht dessen Bestand gefährden oder gegen das Sittlichkeits- u. Moralgefühl der germanischen Rasse verstoßen. Die Partei als solche vertritt den Standpunkt eines positiven Christentums, ohne sich konfessionell an ein bestimmtes Bekenntnis zu binden. Sie bekämpft den jüdisch-materialistischen Geist in und außer uns und ist überzeugt, daß eine dauernde Genesung unseres Volkes nur erfolgen kann von innen heraus auf der Grundlage:

Gemeinnutz vor Eigennutz.

25. Zur Durchführung alles dessen fordern wir die Schaffung einer starken Zentralgewalt des Reiches. Unbedingte Autorität des politischen Zentralparlaments über das gesamte Reich u. seine Organisationen im allgemeinen. Die Bildung von Stände- und Berufskammern zur Durchführung der vom Reich erlassenen Rahmengesetze in den einzelnen Bundesstaaten.

Die Führer der Partei versprechen, wenn nötig unter Einsatz des eigenen Lebens, für die Durchführung der vorstehenden Punkte rücksichtslos einzutreten.

München, den 24. Februar 1920.

Für den Partei-Ausschuß: Anton Drexler

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11 The Formation of the Nazi Totalitarian State (1933–39)

Nitler became Chancellor on 30th January 1933.

The Nazi party, however, did not have total control of the government. Only 3 members of the cabinet of 11 were Nazis; the rest were members of various nationalist and conservative parties.

The Nazis did not even have a majority of seats in the Reichstag. Although they were the largest single party with 230 seats won in the July 1932 election, they did not have an overall majority.

How then did Hitler find himself elevated to the position of Chancellor of the mighty German Reich?

The simple answer is that the German President Hindenburg had little choice but to appoint Hitler Chancellor in January 1933 because no-one else could form an effective government without him.

11.1 Hitler's Attempts to Become President

By 1932, the aged Field Marshal Hindenburg had been President of Germany for seven years, and the time for the new Presidential election had arrived.

Hitler decided to stand against Hindenburg in the Presidential election.

The results of the election, held on 13th March 1932, were as follows:

Hindenburg	18,651,497	49.6%
Hitler	11,339,446	30.1%
Thaelman	4,983,341	13.2%
Duesterberg	2,557,729	6.8%

NOTE: Thaelmann was leader of the Communist Party and Duesterberg was a member of the Nationalist Party.

Although Hindenburg had won the most votes, he still did not have an overall majority.

A second election was therefore required.

The results of this elections, held on 10th April 1932, were:

Hindenburg	19,359,983	53.0%
Hitler	13,418,547	36.8%
Thaelman	3,706,759	10.2%

Hindenburg now had a clear an absolute majority.

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11.2 Weimar Germany's Struggle to find a Chancellor

11.3 Von Papen Persuades Hindenburg to Make Hitler Chancellor

11.4 The Nazi Chancellor

11.5 The Reichstag Fire

11.6 The Emergency Decree for the Protection of the People and the State

11.7 The 'Enabling Act'

11.8 'Gleichschaltung': The Enforced 'Co-ordination' of the Reich

11.8.1 The Suppression of the Trade Unions

11.8.2 The Suppression of the Independent Youth Organisation

11.8.3 Nazi Control of the Independent State Parliaments

11.8.4 Indoctrination under the Educational System

11.8.5 The Control of Communications

11.8.6 The Nazi Control of Religion

The Roman Catholic Church

The Protestant Churches

11.9 The 'Night of the Long Knives'

11.10 Hitler Becomes Fuhrer

11.11 The Nazi 'Volkgemeinschaft'

12 The Hitler Youth

12.1 The Formation of the Hitler Youth

13 Women in the Third Reich

13.1 The Nazi View of Women

13.2 A Conflict of Interest

13.3 The Glorification of Motherhood

13.4 The Views of Nazi Women

13.5 Conclusion

14 Nazi Propaganda

In 1933 the Ministry for People's Enlightenment and Propaganda was established un der the leadership of Dr. Joseph Goebbels.
Goebbels saw his duty as twofold:

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- To instill the Nazi message in the minds of the people (indoctrination)
- To suppress any view hostile or contradictory to the Nazi view (censorship)

All films, plays, literature, music and art had to conform to the Nazi ideal. In such ways, 'Jewish' and 'Communist' culture could be kept from the German public. Jazz, seen by the Nazis to be 'Black' music, was also prohibited. Important propaganda measures are listed below:

- In May 1933, a PUBLIC BOOK BURNING took place in Berlin.
- POSTERS AND PHOTOGRAPHS of Hitler, together with swastika flags, were displayed across Germany.
- The NUREMBERG RALLIES, enormous public displays of Nazi support, took place every September in the medieval city of Nurember. Also, mass torchlight processions every 30 January ('THE DAY OF SEIZING OF POWER').
- The Berlin OLYMPIC GAMES of 1936 promoted German technical efficiency and Aryan racial supremacy. The Germans won more medals than any other country: 33 gold, 26 silver and 30 bronze. However, Aryan athletes were upstaged by the black Americaqn athlete Jesse Owens (4 gold medals, 11 world records).
- The National Socialist publishing house EHER VERLAG gradually extended its ownership or control of the German PRESS. The Nazi ownership of the media grew from 3% of circulation in 1933 to 82% by 1944. Newspaper content was rigorously controlled and it was deemed treason to spread false news and rumours.
- RADIO became one of the most powerful tools for indoctrination. The Nazis produced subsidised 'PEOPLE'S RECEIVERS'. In 1935 there were 7 million sets; by 1943 there were 16 million. By 1939, 70% of all German households owned a radio. Communal loudspeakers were also set up in factories and public places
- FILM provided a perfect medium for propaganda and was exploited to the full by the Minister of Propaganda. Goebbels was wary about overtly political propaganda films because he felt that people needed to be entertained. For Goebbels, therefore, propaganda was best conveyed covertly, or in a more subtle way, through feature films. The anti-semitic film *Jud Suss* (1940) is a good example of the subtle approach. It told the story of an 18th Century Jew in Württemberg who seduced an Aryan maiden and was then hanged. The Jews were then expelled frin Württemberg. This contrasted with the explicit anti-Semitic documentary film *Der Ewige Jude* (*The Eternal Jew*) in which Jews are portrayed as the human equivalents of sewer rats. Many female cinema-goers fainted and the film was a box office disaster. The most accomplished overt propaganda film producer was a woman, LENI RIEFENSTAHL. Her best films were *Triumph of the Will* (1935), about the 1934 Nuremberg Rally, and *Olympia* (1938) about the 1936 Berlin Olympics.

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15 Nazi Anti-Semitism & the Final Solution of the Jewish Problem

15.1 The Ideological Antecedents of Nazi Anti-Semitism

15.1.1 Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814)

15.1.2 Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844–1900)

15.1.3 Richard Wagner (1813–83)

15.1.4 Count Joseph Arthur Gobineau (1816–82)

15.1.5 Houston Stewart Chamberlain (1855–1927)

15.2 Early Anti-Semitism

15.3 Anti-Semitism – From *Mein Kampf* to Munich

15.4 The Nuremberg Laws (September & November 1935)

15.5 The 'Aryanisation' of Jewish Property (1937–39)

15.6 'Krystallnacht' (November 1938)

15.7 The Final Solution

15.8 The Wannsee Conference (20th January 1942)

15.9 Medical Experiments

15.10 Did Hitler Order the 'Final Solution'?

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