

new society, new ideals



SAMPLE

# Chapter Overview

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The First World War changed everything. Some historians, such as Eric Hobsbawm, believed that it marked a fundamental break with the past and that, 'the great edifice of nineteenth century civilisation crumpled in the flames of world war, as its pillars collapsed.'<sup>1</sup> At the end of the First World War three ideologies can be seen to have emerged in the place of the authoritarian and imperial models that had dominated Europe and the globe at the start of the twentieth century. Articulated in Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points and endorsed by the victorious powers, liberal democracy appeared to be in the ascendancy. Drawing on the legacies of the American and French revolutions and the British model of constitutional monarchy, liberal democratic governments emerged in central and eastern Europe. The German Weimar Republic, declared at the moment of Germany's defeat, embodied such aspirations.

In opposition to the rise of liberal democracy two other ideologies emerged as challengers – communism and fascism. The first, communism, took form in Russia before the First World War had ended. Proclaimed in the name of the working classes, the Bolshevik movement seized the opportunity provided by a revolutionary crisis. In November 1917 this movement displaced the democratic system emerging from the initial phase of the Russian Revolution. Under Lenin, and then Stalin, there emerged a 'dictatorship of the proletariat' that endeavoured to create a new socialist society. This Soviet model would inspire others in Europe and beyond to explore the possibilities of a establishing a new utopia based on the ideas of Marx and Lenin.

Arguably fascism was a product of the war itself. Taking its first form in Italy, where the Italian Fascist Party gained power in 1922, similar movements emerged throughout Europe and by the decade's end fascist parties existed in several European countries. In 1932 the German variety, Adolf Hitler's National Socialist Party, gained power. Rejecting both democracy and communism, fascism proposed a new social mode. For fascists the nation, rather than the people or a class, was the ideological priority.

Out of such new faiths emerged a certainty that the future belonged to those who would seize it. Like the ancient myth of Prometheus who stole fire from the gods, new leaders would emerge to claim their right. This set in motion unprecedented social experiments that promised nothing less than the redemption of the world or its apocalypse. Such visions, bold and single-minded about the future, could not depend on the fragility of the democratic process but demanded a totalitarian political application. It was, as Modris Eksteins put it, a moment in history that swept all the past away and gave meaning to the rise of totalitarian systems of government – utopian visions coupled with modern industrial efficiency. This was especially true in Germany as people of all political persuasions gravitated to the extremes of left and right for they dared not believe that the loss of the war was in vain.<sup>2</sup>

So began the most momentous decades of the twentieth century; a time when three political ideologies contested for the hearts and souls of Europe, when the new ideas and imagined utopias of communism and fascism challenged the foundations of liberal democracy. Indeed by the late 1930s it looked as if the age of democracy in Europe had ended.

# Timeline 1905–1939

<b>1905</b>		Revolutionary crisis begins in Russia 'Bloody Sunday' massacre in St Petersburg Tsar's October Manifesto – limited reforms promised
<b>1906</b>	April- July	First Russian Duma
<b>1914</b>		First World War begins
<b>1917</b>		'February' Revolution in Russia – Tsar abdicates Kerensky becomes Prime Minister of Provisional Government in Petrograd 'October' Revolution – Bolsheviks seize power
	December	Russian Civil War begins
<b>1918</b>	3 March	Treaty of Brest-Litovsk between Russia and Central Powers
	November	German Revolution
	11 November	First World War ends
<b>1919</b>		Weimar Republic formed in Germany Paris Peace Conference
<b>1920</b>	October	Russian Civil War ends
<b>1921</b>		Hitler assumes control of the Nazi Party
<b>1922</b>		Mussolini forms Fascist government in Italy
<b>1923</b>	November	Munich Beer Hall Putsch fails

<b>1924</b>	January	Lenin dies
<b>1928</b>		First of Stalin's Five Year Plans, USSR
<b>1929</b>	October	Wall Street Crash and the Great Depression commences
<b>1930</b>		Nazis make big gains in the German national elections
<b>1932</b>		Stalin's second Five Year Plan begins Nazis become the largest party in the <i>Reichstag</i> elections
<b>1933</b>	30 January	Hitler appointed German Chancellor
		<i>Reichstag</i> fire blamed on Jews and Bolsheviks
	14 March	Enabling Act passed
		First Nazi concentration camps established
<b>1934</b>	30 June	Night of the Long Knives
	August	Death of President Hindenburg
		Soviet purges commence
<b>1936</b>		Spanish Civil War begins
	7 March	German troops occupy the Rhineland
		Hitler and Mussolini proclaim the Rome-Berlin Axis
		Nazi Germany's Four Year Plan commences
<b>1939</b>		Spanish Civil War ends
	1 September	Germany invades Poland



# The USSR: From the Bolshevik Revolution to Stalinist Rule

## Communism as a New Idea

The modern idea of communism originated with Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels but it has a long history. In essence it is a political movement that sets as its primary goal the establishment of a future classless society based upon a common ownership of the means of production. It seeks the abolition of private property in favour of a society where all goods are shared equally in common. Communism is also very clearly dependent on the notion that humanity has evolved through various stages of economic and social development.

In Marx's great books, *The German Ideology* (1845), *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) and *Das Kapital* (1867), came a blueprint that awaited its moment when the aspirations of a people and a political movement would coincide to produce a revolution that would seek to create a new world from the ruins of the old. Marx had hoped that the revolution would begin in his native Germany but it was Russia that provided the spark to ignite the revolutionary fires. It was here that one man, Lenin (born Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (1870–1924)) laid down in his major work *What is to be Done?* and *Other Writings* (1902), the principles upon which the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 would be made. As a successful strategist of revolution Lenin is unmatched in history. He not only understood the essential economic and social theories described by Marx and Engels but, most importantly, Lenin grasped the *psychology* of revolution. Marx had argued that the working classes (the proletariat) were being exploited because they did not own the means of production and thus did not share in the profit from their labours. Consequently they would rise up from their oppressed position and overthrow their oppressors, the bourgeoisie, as revolution ushered in a new social order.

Lenin took this a step further, however. In order for a successful revolutionary consciousness to be formed, the proletariat needed to be led. Only a 'revolutionary vanguard' of intellectual elites within the Communist Party could provide the disciplined organisation necessary to ensure that the revolution proceeded to successful ends. Out of this idea was born the Bolshevik faction within the Communist Party. Lenin was convinced that after the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism a period of strong leadership was required. He called this the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'.



Karl Marx looking for all the world like a biblical prophet.

## Background to Revolution

Despite the enormous difficulties Tsarist Russia faced in order to modernise its economy, the sheer size of the country and the perceived political strength and wealth of Nicholas II gave the impression to the outside world that it was a major world power. All this was to be shaken to the core with Russia's defeat by Japan in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05. The blow this caused to the Russian psyche cannot be doubted. The moment had arrived for the radical elements of society to push Russia to the brink of revolution. As Leon Trotsky (1879–1940), leading Bolshevik intellectual and historian of the Russian Revolution put it, 'A revolution takes place only when there is no other way out.'<sup>3</sup>

### THE RUSSIAN CALENDAR SYSTEM

Until February 1918 Russia used a different calendar system, the Julian calendar, while western Europe used the Gregorian calendar. This difference in systems meant that dates according to the Russian calendar were thirteen days behind the dates used in the West. Therefore it is not uncommon for the Bolshevik Revolution to be described as either the October (according to the Russian calendar) or the November Revolution (using the western calendar). The Bolshevik Government adopted the Gregorian calendar in 1918, issuing a decree that declared 1 February (Julian) to be 14 February (Gregorian/Western).

In this text, in keeping with general practice, the dates before February 1918 are based on the Russian calendar system.

The year 1905 began with a series of strikes and demonstrations in the streets. As dawn broke on Sunday 9 January a protest march in St Petersburg was led by a priest, Father Gapon, and his workers' organisation 'Assembly of Russian Factory and Plant Workers'. The plan was to march peacefully to the Winter Palace to present petitions to the Tsar, although he was not in St Petersburg. Some 200 000 marchers turned up and the military became apprehensive. Before the day was through about 1 000 protestors lay dead as the panicked armed forces opened fire on the crowds. Many more were seriously injured and the day would forever be known as 'Bloody Sunday'.

Anger spread throughout Russia with many more strikes and protest marches planned and carried out. There was a peasant revolt in the Samara region where participants even formed their own 'republic' for a short time. In March all the universities were shut down by radical students and did not open for the rest of the year. In July sailors on the battleship *Potemkin* mutinied in Odessa on the Black Sea. When some dissident sailors were about to be shot for protesting about their working conditions, the firing squad turned on the officers and seized the ship. The people of Odessa turned out in support of the sailors



As a successful strategist of revolution, Lenin is unmatched in history.

and many were massacred on the steps that led down to the wharf as once again panicked soldiers fired indiscriminately into the crowd. In St Petersburg Leon Trotsky set up a Soviet Workers' Council to organise the opposition to the Tsar. Trotsky and his supporters soon found themselves in jail. The spirit of revolution was in the air, but just as Lenin shrewdly had predicted, it lacked the necessary central organisation and coordination for a complete revolutionary overthrow of the government.

Lenin was in Geneva when he got news of 'Bloody Sunday'. He returned to Russia briefly after the limited reforms of 1905 when a political amnesty was granted, but left again for Finland in 1906 when the Tsarist regime organised yet another crack down on dissidents. He was not to return again until 1917.

Nicholas II realised that he needed to head off a revolution. He promised to allow the creation of a state Duma or assembly. The proposed Duma limitations led to further protests. In October 1905 a general strike was called. Reluctantly the Tsar then had drafted the 'October Manifesto', a series of proposed reform measures that granted civil rights, the freedom to form political parties, universal voting provisions and the establishment of the Duma as the central legislative body. There was a collective sense of relief throughout Russia that the political tensions were over. But repression continued. Any unrest was met with a brutal response and, in a disturbing trend, anti-Semitic pogroms increased. In Odessa up to five hundred Jews were killed in a single day. Even Nicholas II claimed that most of the revolutionaries were Jews.

## 1917 - The Year of Revolutions

Russia's involvement in the First World War was disastrous. In 1915 Germany successfully launched attacks on the Eastern Front. Being better trained and with supply lines well established, the German army steadily rolled over the weaker, ill-equipped Russian forces. By the end of 1916 Russian casualties were staggering. Nearly two million Russian soldiers were dead, about the same number captured as prisoners of war and another million or so missing, either presumed dead or having deserted and disappeared into the Russian heartland. The fact that the soldiers had lacked adequate ammunition, food and clothing became critical in the cold winter of that year.

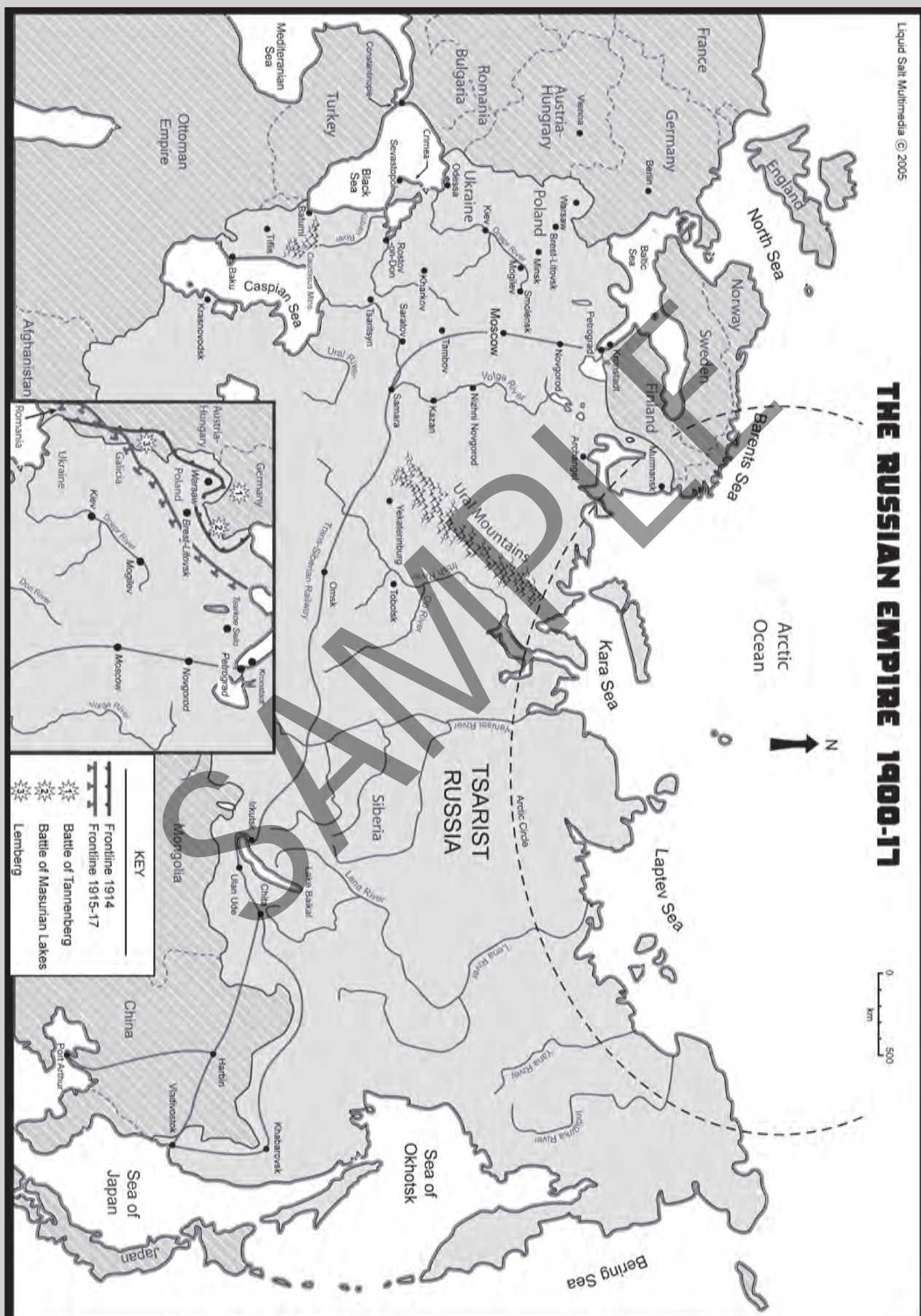
Tactically Nicholas II made a critical error. Fed up with the poor leadership of the war effort he assumed complete control of the army. People soon began to blame the Tsar quite openly for the demoralising losses that continued to mount. Ordinary Russians had to put up with enormous deprivations of food and the economy was in serious trouble with inflation rates at record levels. The Duma had warned the Tsar that a state of unrest was emerging within the Russian state itself and that it was imperative that constitutional change be brought into being to save the monarchy, if not its dignity. In typical fashion Nicholas II refused to act on this advice. Things soon came to a head.

The February Revolution was a truly spontaneous popular uprising. Indeed the key revolutionary players were missing from Petrograd during the events of February 1917. People in the capital of Petrograd began protesting against the war and food shortages. Soon the liberal and leftist political elements began working together to coordinate the opposition. There were a series of riots and violent clashes with police. Once again, as in 1905, a general strike of Russian workers was called. When the bulk of the Russian soldiers in Petrograd joined the protesters and occupied key installations in the city, the game was up. Tsar Nicholas II had no option but to abdicate if any sort of peaceful transition was to be possible.



Liquid Salt Multimedia © 2005

## THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE 1900-17



A Provisional Government was established in the Duma on 28 February along with the Petrograd Soviet. This new workers' council was seen to have the support of the people. It soon became clear that governmental authority was going to be split between these two bodies of political power, thus casting Russia into a short period of political instability. The Duma succeeded in getting the Tsar to sign the papers of abdication on 2 March. From late February to April both the Duma and the Petrograd Soviet worked together in a cooperative way. The charismatic politician, Alexander Kerensky, became Minister for War but failed to see that his continued support of the war effort was seriously undermining the credibility of the government. So far the liberals and Mensheviks had directed the Provisional Government but their's had been a cautious revolution and an improvement in workers' conditions had hardly materialised.

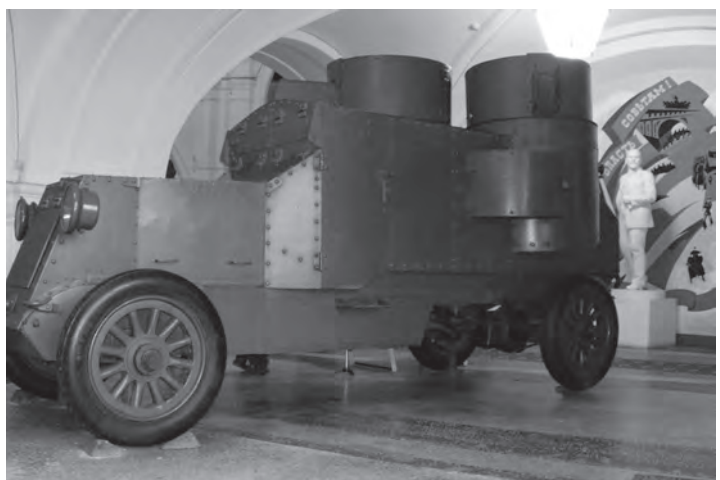
On 3 April things were about to change, rapidly. From his European exile in Switzerland Lenin arrived in Petrograd. True to his Bolshevik philosophy Lenin immediately called for the overthrow of the Provisional Government and an immediate end to the war. His demands destabilised the Petrograd Soviet and seriously weakened its support for the Provisional Government. He claimed now that a 'dictatorship of the proletariat' rather than the supposed democracy of the Duma was necessary to secure real change in Russian society.

Recognising Lenin as a real threat, Kerensky and the Duma accused him of being a German agent. In July a major workers' uprising was put down by troops loyal to the Provisional Government and Lenin was forced to flee the country. Trotsky and other Bolshevik leaders stayed and faced imprisonment. With Lenin hiding out in Finland and the Bolsheviks in disarray two things were clear: whilst the Provisional Government enjoyed the support of the military and the Petrograd Soviet was divided between its various factions, a Bolshevik revolution seemed unlikely. Alexander Kerensky was appointed Prime Minister.

Then fate stepped in. In August General Lavr Kornilov, the new Russian army commander, feared that an attack on Petrograd was imminent and began to march his army towards the capital to ready its defences. The Provisional Government seriously misread the situation. Kerensky assumed that Kornilov wanted to mount a military coup and panicked. He accused the General of being a Tsarist sympathiser and immediately ordered the release of the Bolshevik prisoners. Trotsky was entrusted



Alexander Kerensky.



Lenin's armoured car from which he delivered his 'April Thesis.'



with the task of organising and training a 'Red Army' to defend the revolution against the supposed threat from General Kornilov. Thus occurred one of the great ironies of history, as Kerensky ordered the arming of the very Bolsheviks who would soon use those weapons to overthrow the Provisional Government.

Bolshevik support soon grew rapidly. The most influential Soviets of Petrograd and Moscow were soon under the control of a Bolshevik majority. In the All Russian Congress of Soviets in October the Bolsheviks gained a clear majority. Trotsky was elected Chairman of the Petrograd Soviet. In the cold streets of Petrograd and Moscow most people went about their business with a new sense of anticipation.

source box

**John Reed, Introduction to *Ten Days that Shook the World***

*September and October are the worst months of the Russian year—especially the Petrograd year... Week by week food became scarcer. The daily allowance of bread fell from a pound and a half to a pound, then three quarters, half, and a quarter-pound. Toward the end there was a week without any bread at all. Sugar one was entitled to at the rate of two pounds a month—if one could get it at all, which was seldom. A bar of chocolate or a pound of tasteless candy cost anywhere from seven to ten rubles—at least a dollar. There was milk for about half the babies in the city; most hotels and private houses never saw it for months. In the fruit season apples and pears sold for a little less than a ruble apiece on the street-corner... As in all such times, the petty conventional life of the city went on, ignoring the Revolution as much as possible.*

*All around them great Russia was in travail, bearing a new world... In the new Russia every man and woman could vote; there were working-class newspapers, saying new and startling things; there were the Soviets; and there were the Unions... The waiters and hotel servants were organised, and refused tips. On the walls of restaurants they put up signs which read, 'No tips taken here—' or, 'Just because a man has to make his living waiting on tables is no reason to insult him by offering him a tip!'...*

*All Russia was learning to read, and reading — politics, economics, history — because the people wanted to know... In every city, in most towns, along the Front, each political faction had its newspaper—sometimes several. Hundreds of thousands of pamphlets were distributed by thousands of organisations, and poured into the armies, the villages, the factories, the streets. The thirst for education, so long thwarted, burst with the Revolution into a frenzy of expression...*

*... Meetings in the trenches at the Front, in village squares, factories... For months in Petrograd, and all over Russia, every street-corner was a public tribune. In railway trains, street-cars, always the spurring up of impromptu debate, everywhere ... It was against this background of a whole nation in ferment and disintegration that the pageant of the Rising of the Russian Masses unrolled...*

**Questions**

1. Why were September and October the worst months of the Russian year?
2. Why were so many so eager to know about politics, economics and history?
3. What can we learn about the mood of Russians in 1917 from Reed's account?

source box

Meanwhile Lenin had used his time in Finland wisely. A prolific writer, he had written letters to key figures in the revolutionary movement urging an immediate Bolshevik takeover. He returned to Petrograd in secret on 7 October and maintained that a revolution was necessary before the planned November elections for the Constituent Assembly. If these elections were to go ahead they would legitimise the Provisional Government and restrict the Bolsheviks from employing their radical communist ideals. Word of Lenin's secret plans got out, however, and on 23 October Kerensky ordered the immediate and 'permanent liquidation' of Bolshevik interests.

Lenin and Trotsky knew they must act immediately and so on the night of 24 October the Bolshevik Revolution began. The Cossacks guarding the Winter Palace, the seat of the Provisional Government, deserted when faced with the determined Red Guards. Other forces surrendered quickly. The Bolshevik Revolution had started at 9.40 p.m. and was over by 2.00 a.m. Very little blood had been spilt and even Kerensky was able to get away safely.

Later that morning the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets was convened as planned in Petrograd. Although members of the Revolutionary Socialist Party and the Mensheviks walked out of proceedings (they had supported the Provisional Government), the overwhelming majority of delegates



This dramatic painting illustrates the nature of the Bolshevik Revolution. Lenin addresses a crowd of revolutionaries, workers, soldiers and peasants in the great hall of the Winter Palace. Behind Lenin are Stalin and Trotsky.



The Winter Palace as it is today.



elected Lenin as Chairman. Lenin immediately issued a telegram, 'To the citizens of Russia':

The Provisional Government has been overthrown. State power has passed into the hands of the organ of the Petrograd Soviet Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, the Military Revolutionary Committee, which stands as the head of the Petrograd Soviet and garrison. The cause for which the people have struggled – the immediate proposal of a democratic peace, the elimination of landlord estates, workers' control over production, the creation of a soviet government – the triumph of this cause has been assured. Long live the workers', soldiers', and peasants' revolution!

## EISENSTEIN AND THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION IN FILM

The greatest Russian film-maker of the twentieth century was Sergei Mikhailovich Eisenstein (1898–1948). A Latvian, he joined the Red Army during the Civil War (1918–22) and then began to apply his idealism to making films that dramatised the success of the revolution. His silent films were aesthetically revolutionary in the techniques he employed to make them. Eisenstein had watched hundreds of short films from the United States and wanted to mix social realism with modernist expressionism to tell the story of the Russian Revolution. This was to lead him into conflict with more culturally conservative members of the Stalinist regime. Outside the Soviet Union though his work was championed by luminaries such as Charlie Chaplin and the American socialist author Upton Sinclair.

Eisenstein's three greatest films are *Strike* (1925), *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) and *October* (1927). *Strike* focuses on one of the key events in the lead-up to the 1905 Revolution. The film deals with events surrounding 'Bloody Sunday,' 9 January 1905. The Tsarist police shot dead up to 200 strikers and seriously wounded another 800. In a series of montages Eisenstein contrasts images of slaughtered cattle with the dead strikers. It makes a powerful ideological point. In *Battleship Potemkin*, regarded as his greatest work, Eisenstein documents the 1905 Revolution as part of the twentieth anniversary celebrations in Russia. He deliberately employed a 'newsreel' effect with the film divided into five 'acts' whereby the specific events surrounding

the Potemkin come to stand as metaphors for the entire revolution. Eisenstein's use of close-ups to generate an emotional response from the audience and the climactic scene of the massacre on the Odessa Steps ensured that *Battleship Potemkin* will remain one of the greatest political films of the twentieth century. October follows the events surrounding the Bolshevik Revolution and the overthrow of Kerensky in 1917. When released in the United States in 1928 it was re-titled *Ten Days That Shook the World* since the film's narrative structure was derived largely from John Reed's famous account in the book of the same name.



## Lenin's Regime

After years of dreaming about the revolution Lenin was now in charge of the Soviet State of Russia. His mind was filled with plans to educate the people and turn this backward land into a shining example of communist modernity. Consolidating the power of Bolshevik rule would prove more difficult than Lenin could have imagined, however. Elections for the Russian Constituent Assembly went ahead as planned but the Bolsheviks did not do well. When the first session of the new Assembly met on 19 January, Lenin – with the support of the majority of workers' groups in Petrograd and Moscow – decided to act and shut it down. The Bolsheviks organised an alternative forum, the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets, following Lenin's argument that the only way forward in this transitional period was a 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. Democracy at such a stage was a counter-revolutionary instrument of the bourgeoisie. The signs were ominous.

Meanwhile something had to be done about the war. The Germans posed a real threat of invasion especially given Russia's delicate political state and the disarray in which much of its armed forces found itself. Some Bolsheviks believed that Russia should intensify her war efforts in an attempt to stir up a revolution in Germany. But Lenin, always the realist, believed that a peace treaty would be a better proposition. In the first months of 1918 Germany made significant inroads into a large portion of Russia's western territory. It was proving that Lenin's option of a peace negotiation was the only way forward. On 3 March 1918 Russia withdrew from the First World War after signing the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. As part of the agreement Russia had lost a fair amount of territory in Europe.<sup>4</sup> For many Russians this was a bitter pill to swallow and it galvanised elements of opposition to the Bolsheviks especially amongst the military hierarchy.

Political parties who opposed the Bolsheviks, including the Socialist Revolutionaries, began actively working to overthrow Lenin's regime. It was clear that the Bolsheviks could depend on electoral support of the workers only in Petrograd and Moscow. In provincial elections anti-Bolshevik forces were in control. The revolution was seriously in danger of falling at the first hurdle. An assassination attempt was even made on Lenin's car in Petrograd, but he was made of stern stuff indeed. Lenin's vision had always been that the Bolsheviks would be the revolutionary elite to lead the vanguard of a new communist society. Such a society depended on the centralisation of economic and administrative powers. By the time of the Fifth All-Russian Congress of Soviets in July 1918 it was clear that the Bolsheviks could only hold on to power by actively suppressing any form of public dissent.

The 1918 Constitution made it very clear what the Bolsheviks stood for. This meant absolute centralisation of all economic means, including the confiscation of all private property and the nationalisation of banking, finance and industry.

## THE CHEKA

The Bolsheviks had ordered the creation of a secret police force, the 'Cheka', whose primary responsibility was to protect the revolution from its opponents. Political opponents were sometimes rounded up and sent to labour camps and the number of executions of 'counter-revolutionary traitors' increased. In many ways Lenin was only using political methods that had long been established in Russia under the Tsars. But what is clear from the historical record is that from the very outset, the Gulags (the network of Russian concentration camps for political prisoners) were not merely an invention of a reactionary Stalin, but existed well and truly from the beginning of Lenin's regime.<sup>5</sup>

For the next three years a state of civil war existed throughout Russia. As already mentioned Trotsky had reorganised the Red Army, but its opponents were to become known as the White Armies. The White Armies represented a coalition of loosely associated anti-Bolshevik forces from the full spectrum of Russian society including the military and political spheres. Given the anti-Bolshevik sentiment in the provinces, the White Army managed to control large areas of the country during the war. The White Armies were also supported by external powers; British, French, Japanese and American troops intervened in the civil war in support of the counter-revolutionary cause. Lenin had been surprised by this opposition at first and clearly underestimated its potential. This obviously contributed to the protracted nature of the conflict.

Meanwhile two events in Russia during August 1918 illustrated the growing paranoia of the times. In the first case, the Bolsheviks had hoped to try the Tsar for crimes against the Russian people. Nicholas II and his family were being held in Yekaterinburg but as the White Army advanced on this city there were genuine fears in the regime that if the Tsar was liberated by the opposition forces, the monarchy might be re-established. It was decided to execute the former royal family immediately. In the second case, another attempt was made on Lenin's life. This time it was more serious as Lenin was struck by two bullets. Although he recovered it is generally believed that Lenin's health declined from this time on and it may well have contributed to the series of strokes which would eventually end his life.

The Bolsheviks responded with what has now been called the 'Red Terror'. Tens of thousands of perceived enemies of the state were put on trial, sentenced to the Gulags, or executed. Lenin justified these measures on the grounds that at such a transitional stage 'war communism' was necessary for the development of a truly communist society. Meanwhile civil war raged on, leading to the deaths of many more Russian citizens on both sides. Former partners in the Triple Entente – Britain and France – along with the United States and the old enemy Japan provided military and material support to the White Armies.

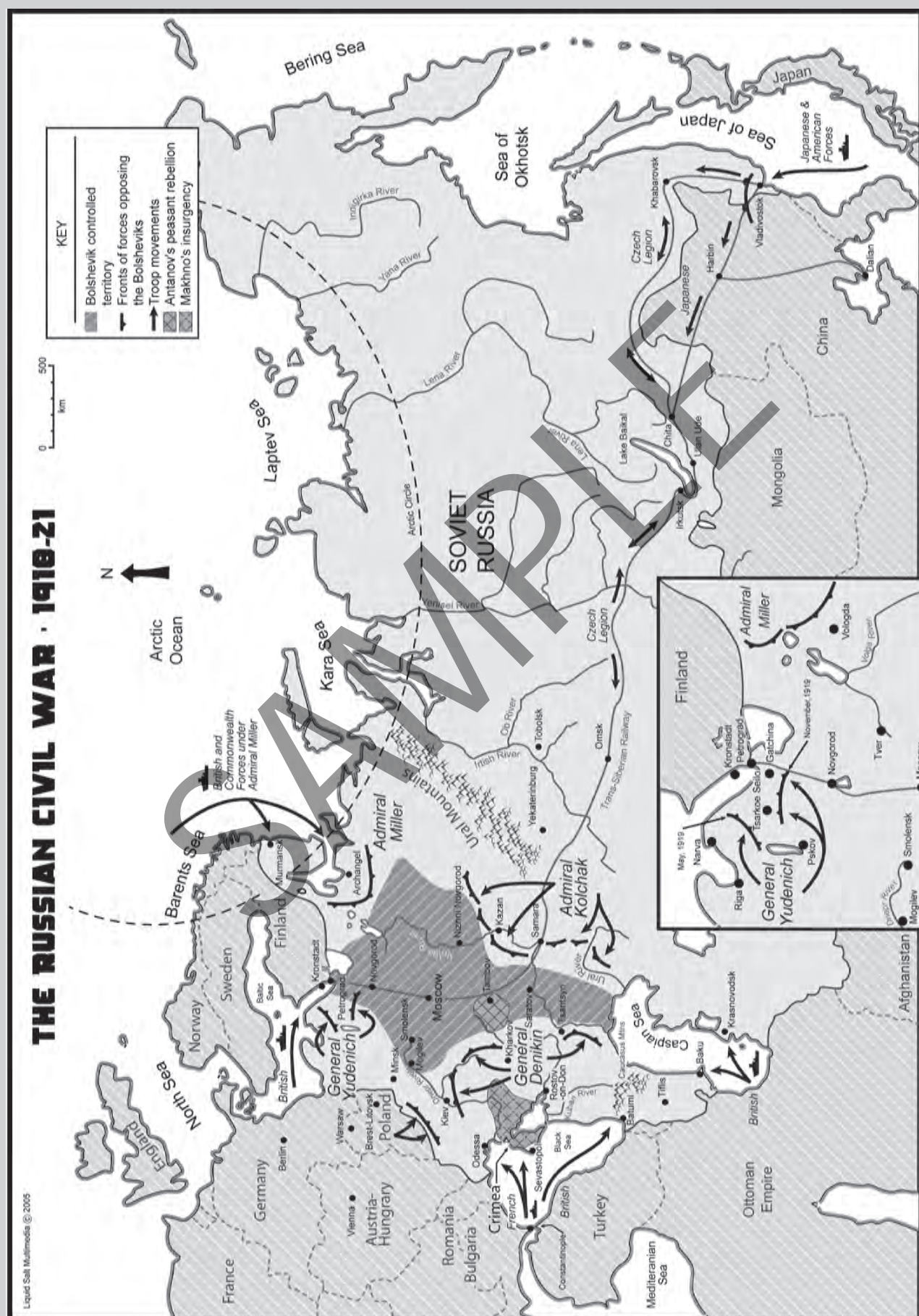
In March 1919 Lenin met with revolutionary socialists from around the world and established the Communist International. The Bolsheviks adopted the title of the Russian Communist Party. Lenin now openly supported the idea that communist Russia's best chance of survival depended on spreading revolution in western Europe. Clearly it seemed that postwar Germany offered a real opportunity. Meanwhile much of Russia lay in ruins.

By 1921 the Red Armies had achieved a victory but at tremendous cost to the nation. Because the White Armies had been a coalition of diverse groups, differences of ideology had made consistent objectives a difficulty. Moreover many of the communities that were suspicious of the Bolsheviks were equally concerned that a victory to the White Armies would thrust Russia back into its feudal past. However the greatest weakness possessed by the Whites was a clear lack of a cohesive vision for the Russian future. The coalition was *only* united in its opposition to Bolshevism and no obvious plan existed for the future.

Conversely the Red Army did have very clear ideological perspectives and were already enacting their vision of the future. There was the common fear of a return to Tsarist rule. Moreover they held the industrial heartland of Russia giving them access to infrastructure that the Whites did not possess. The large population of these areas also provided ample supplies of conscripts. Above all however, the Red Army had Lenin and Trotsky. Lenin was the intellectual progenitor of the Russian communists and Trotsky was the organiser *par excellence*.



**THE RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR · 1918-21**





## THE WORLD REVOLUTION?

The model of the Bolshevik Revolution and the ideological appeal of communism immediately after the First World War created an environment of opportunity for the emergence of similar movements throughout Europe. In 1918–19 it seemed plausible that a ‘world revolution’ may well take place. The Comintern was an umbrella organisation established by Lenin to guide and support this revolutionary movement.

In Germany the *Spartakusbund* became the Communist Party in December 1918 and pushed for a more radical and far reaching Bolshevik-styled revolution. A Soviet-styled republic, the *Räterepublik*, was also established in the Bavarian capital of Munich in April 1919. Within less than a month *Freikorps* forces had suppressed the republic. While they failed to achieve their revolutionary goal the German Communist Party became the largest communist party outside the Soviet Union and played a significant role in German politics throughout the Weimar years. The attempted Bolshevik-styled revolution also made many middle class and anti-communist Germans fearful of communism.

In March 1919 a short-lived Soviet Republic was established in Hungary under the leadership of Bela Kun. The first act of this government was to nationalise most of the land in Hungary, a step that alienated the majority of peasants. Kun’s attempts to spread the international workers’ revolution culminated in an invasion of Czechoslovakia. Hungarian anti-communist forces and Romanian troops overthrew the Hungarian Soviet Republic in early August 1919.

Other short-lived Soviet republics were declared in Finland, January to April 1919; Alsace, November 1918; Slovakia, 16 June to 17 July, 1919; Limerick in Ireland, April 1919; Persia, June 1920 to September 1921.



Dr. Karl Liebknecht.

In Italy the strikes and demonstrations during 1919 and 1920 organised by the Communist Party contributed to the political instability that the Italian Fascist Party was able to capitalise on in the lead-up to the ‘March on Rome’.

In China the events of the Russian Revolution inspired the formation of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921.

The rise of Stalin and the policy of ‘Socialism in One Country’ marked the end of the Soviet Union’s support of ‘world revolution’. The Comintern however continued to exert considerable influence over communist parties around the world. From that time communist parties active in Britain, France, Ireland, the United States, Australia, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain and other countries tended to participate in parliamentary politics.

Victory in the civil war saved the revolution but it almost destroyed the country. Some fifteen million lives were lost not only in battle but as a result of politically motivated massacres, starvation and outbreaks of disease. Droughts and famine in 1920–21 had only made the situation worse. Pogroms against the Jews were conducted in the Ukraine and some regions of southern Russia. Lenin, to his credit, was firmly opposed to anti-Semitism and threatened reprisals against the perpetrators, but the damage had been done. The ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ had been brought to its knees but it was far from over. Lenin and Trotsky remained firmly in control. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) had been established, but there was one more blow to come.

In May 1922 Lenin suffered the first of a series of strokes leaving him partially paralysed on his right side. Having survived the second assassination attempt with a bullet still lodged in his neck and suffering the incredible strain that the civil war effort had brought, Lenin's body appeared to collapse. By December there was another stroke and on doctor's orders Lenin resigned. A third stroke in March 1923 confined him to bed and left him unable to speak. The voice of the great orator of the revolution was now silenced forever though he continued to write expressing his will for the Party. What is clear is that he feared that the shadowy figure of Joseph Stalin was making a move to take over the communists at the next Party Congress in May 1924. Lenin did not live to see the outcome, dying at home on 21 January 1924.



Lenin and Trotsky posing with triumphant members of the Red Army in Petrograd at the conclusion of the Russian Civil War.

There was genuine sorrow amongst the masses at Lenin's death. Three days into the official period of mourning Petrograd was renamed Leningrad in his honour. On 27 January 1924 Lenin's embalmed body was placed on permanent display in the Lenin Mausoleum in Moscow, where it still can be seen even today.

## The Rise of Stalin

Stalin ran the Soviet Union like a personal fiefdom so it is not surprising that his most recent biographer, Simon Sebag Montefiore, describes him as 'The Red Tsar'. Montefiore succinctly sums up everything about the man's character and partly explains why he had come to embody the Russian Revolution within his own iconic self. In the opening pages of this biography Montefiore challenges the characterisation of Stalin as a bland bureaucrat, highlighting a series of contradictions and talents that



Stalin – as shadowy understudy – with Lenin and Trotsky in 1919.



many ignore. Stalin, according to Montefiore, was 'an energetic and vainglorious melodramatist who was exceptional in every way'. He was ambitious yet revelled in drama, 'a fidgety hypochondriac' and 'nervy intellectual', 'highly sensitive yet cold and calculating'. He was also highly intelligent. As Montefiore concludes, 'Stalin's success was not an accident. No one alive was more suited to the conspiratorial intrigues, theoretical runes, murderous dogmatism and inhuman sternness of Lenin's Party. It is hard to find a better synthesis between a man and a movement than the ideal marriage between Stalin and Bolshevism – he was a mirror of its virtues and faults.'<sup>6</sup>



Soviet hagiography from Khristolyubov's 1951 painting, *Leaders of October*: Stalin is at Lenin's right hand, but where is Trotsky? Trotsky is nowhere to be seen in this piece of propaganda.

From Georgia, Stalin, meaning 'Man of Steel' a name he took in 1913, supported the Bolsheviks from their inception. He cut his political teeth on daring underground raids in Siberia and even robbed banks in order to generate funds for his revolutionary cell. Stalin was elected to the Central Committee of the Communist Party in 1917 but according to most accounts only played a minor role in the October Revolution. His rivalry with Trotsky undoubtedly extends from this time. In 1924 during Stalin's campaign to succeed Lenin he created the myth that he had been central to all the planning of the October Revolution. He had indeed served as a Commissar in the Red Army during the civil war but Trotsky had actually commanded it.

As Lenin's health deteriorated Stalin began to build support behind the scenes. He was jokingly referred to in some quarters of the Party as 'Comrade Card-Index' for the contact details he kept on many people of influence who might assist him to the top. On 3 April 1922 he obtained some success when elected General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party. Stalin turned this position into the most powerful in the country. When Lenin died, Stalin was ready.

At Lenin's funeral Stalin claimed to be the true heir of the master's legacy despite the fact that Lenin had expressed concern about Stalin's capacity in his final political testament. Stalin's claim that he was the most worthy of being blessed with such an honour of leading the continuing revolution would form the basis of the Stalin Myth. This myth would legitimise Stalin's claim to power until his death in 1953.

While myth clearly shaped the propaganda of Stalin's place as the leader, the reality was far more brutal and gradual. Through the 1920s Stalin, in a series of strategic moves, consolidated his hold on power by systematically isolating and marginalising political opponents and former allies. Initially Stalin cooperated with two other prominent party members – Kamenev and Zinoviev – who, like Stalin, saw Trotsky as their main threat. Stalin's sharing of power with Kamenev and Zinoviev, a period

referred to as the Triumvirate, was based on continuing Lenin's economic program while Trotsky was calling for more radical economic transformation. Because of this Trotsky was increasingly marginalised and eventually exiled in 1929. Stalinist agents eventually traced Trotsky to Mexico and murdered him with an icepick in 1940.

Between 1925 and 1927 Stalin then repositioned himself in a move that would set himself against the two other members of the Triumvirate who, along with Trotsky, were expelled from the Politburo in 1927. During this time Stalin aligned himself with more moderate 'right wing' elements in the Party such as Bukharin. Not surprisingly Stalin's loyalty to these 'right wing' allies in the Communist Party was not long-lived. As the 1920s progressed Stalin's economic ideas had formulated into a policy of 'Socialism in One Country' – a policy that called for the total transformation of industry at the expense of the peasants and a downplaying of spreading the revolution into the rest of Europe. In pursuit of this policy Stalin began to take steps against the wealthier peasants. These steps were strongly opposed by the likes of Bukharin who was more supportive of the peasants. Stalin then accused Bukharin and others on the 'right' of plotting against the Party's agreed plans and forced them to resign from the Politburo and their positions in the government.

By 1929 Stalin had consolidated his place as head of the Communist Party and the apparatus of government in the Soviet Union. Stalin was successful because he could pass himself off as a moderate, as a legitimate heir to Lenin, and perhaps most importantly because as Party General Secretary he controlled appointments within the Party and was able to ensure that his own supporters increased their influence at the expense of his opponents.

## Socialism in one Country

The Russian economy in the mid 1920s was still reeling from the consequences of the civil war. Stalin was not much interested in the outside world. He gave lip-service to the concept of the Communist International preferring to concentrate on building Soviet nationalism in a program that has come to be known as 'Socialism in One Country'. If the Russian economy was to be successful and productive then, according to Stalin and his chief advisors, the Soviets would have to increase the process of modernisation through applying a rapid process of forced industrialisation and agricultural collectivisation.

In November 1927 Stalin launched what would become his defining characteristic as a Soviet leader – he was to take Lenin's ideas of centralisation and collectivisation and make them an absolute rule in a 'revolution from above'. Stalin chose the concept of a Five Year Plan as a means of forcing economic and productive goals on the Soviet Union. The Party adopted the first plan in 1928 with its strong emphasis on building the capacity for heavy industry and to socialise the economy. It aimed for a 250 per cent increase in overall industrial development. The first Five Year Plan was launched with much fanfare and the propaganda extended even to the realm of children's books.

In reality the Five Year Plans caused a great deal of hardship especially in the rural regions where forced agricultural collectivisation would lead to famine and the deaths of millions. Collectivisation of the peasant agricultural communities was instigated primarily to maintain greater levels of control. It entailed forcing peasants to give up their traditional lifestyle and move on to collective farms, large scale agricultural 'factories'. The peasants, especially the slightly better off Kulaks, were harshly treated by the Party organisers. The 'poor' peasants however resisted the moves to collectivisation. They slaughtered their animals and destroyed their tools before they entered these new farms and, once they got to the new farms, they refused to work. Such a policy



and the peasants' response led to crisis. Food rationing was introduced in 1931. The greatest cost however was in human terms. It is estimated that between five to ten million Russians died of starvation, mainly in the Ukraine, as the Soviet regime exported grain to raise desperately needed foreign currency.

In the cities there were often shortages of food and consumer goods as investment had been put into heavy industry rather than the production of domestic goods. Inflation was rising rapidly. It has been said that in Moscow at this time, if people saw any queue forming they would join it in the hope of obtaining some items to alleviate their shortages. By the 1930s other consequences of the Five Year Plans included the transforming of trade unions from workers' advocates into organisations to increase labour outputs. Stalin also authorised greater levels of differentiation in wages between skilled and unskilled workers despite the fact that Party ideologues questioned whether this was consistent with socialist values.



Men and women in Rostov-on-Don in the Soviet Union work building agricultural equipment.

Under Stalin's rule many of the 'socialising' initiatives of the early revolutionary government were reversed. Under Lenin traditional family structures had been regarded as bourgeois and counter-revolutionary and as a result divorce and abortion became more readily available. Under Stalin the primacy of the family as a unit of socialisation and authority was reinstated, divorce and abortion were restricted and a conservative official moral attitude towards pre-marital sex was proclaimed. Similarly education underwent a return to older models. During the early 1920s Soviet education theory had favoured relaxed discipline and group activities. Stalin reversed these developments by reintroducing a very formal education system based around the full authority of the teacher, examinations and grading. Stalin also undid the earlier policy of favouring the education of the proletariat in higher education by reverting to selecting candidates on solely academic grounds.

Against this background the Five Year Plans had a monumental impact on Soviet economic growth. New industries were created and new industrial centres were built in the Ural Mountains and in Siberia. Overall Soviet industrial production rose by 250 per cent at a time when the capitalist world was going through the Great Depression. Between 1928 and 1941 steel and coal manufacturing increased four and fivefold respectively. By 1937 the Soviet Union had become the second largest manufacturer of heavy vehicles. Part of this industrial development was an increased emphasis on defence industries and defence spending. Defence spending devoured more and more resources. It was 3.4 per cent of the total budget in 1933 and rose to 16.5 per cent in 1937 and 32.6 per cent in 1940. Soviet figures for the period claim economic growth of 20 per cent each year while western estimates are of about 14 per cent.

## The First Five Year Plan



This Soviet propaganda poster from the 1930s celebrates the achievements of the First Five Year Plan.

### Questions

1. What does the top-hatted figure represent?
2. What achievement does the poster claim?
3. Why would this make the top-hatted figure cry?

source box

## The Purges

While Stalin's control of the Party and state was largely complete by 1929, during the era of the Five Year Plans he took steps to eliminate all potential centres of real and imagined challenge to his rule. Initially rule by terror was limited in scope selectively focussing on 'small enemies' but by the end of the 1930s it encompassed an enormous system of labour and political re-education camps and a purge of the Party and military.

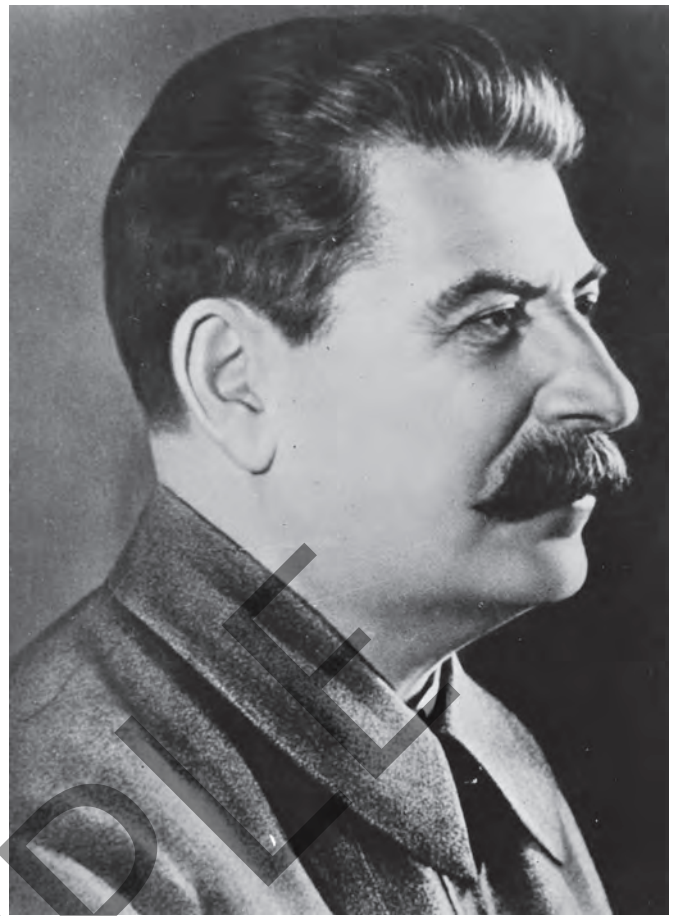


These purges initially focussed on the managers and owners of factories during the period of the New Economic Policy. Of these managers it is estimated that 75 per cent were eliminated in the early 1930s. From 1934 the purges became increasingly political. The NKVD, the Soviet Secret Police that had emerged out of the Cheka, tracked down countless enemies of the revolution. From 1935 to 1939 there were three great show trials when senior Party leaders, men who helped Lenin make the revolution, were put on trial. They were accused of and confessed to seeking to destroy the revolution and of spying for foreign countries like Germany, Japan and Britain. Of the twelve members of the first revolutionary government still alive in 1937, Stalin killed eleven; he, the twelfth, was the only one to survive. Meanwhile in private, arrests and interrogations of many less important members of the Communist Party and officials took place.

In 1937 the purges extended to the armed forces. Leading generals of the army were tried and executed in secret. Half the officer corps, 35 000 officers, fell victim to the purges. The entire military leadership was destroyed. Three out of five Soviet marshals, thirteen out of fifteen army commanders, seventy divisional commanders out of one hundred and ninety, the vice commissars for war, and seventy-five out of ninety members of the Higher Council for War were executed.

Those who escaped the executioner but were found to be opponents of the revolution also suffered enormously. The NKVD had established a complex apparatus of terror that included not only a network of informers but also a system of re-education and labour camps. The Gulag archipelago extended from Siberia in the east to the frozen wastes of the Arctic Circle in the north. Here it is believed that as many as eight or nine million, at the low end of estimates that range to more than twenty million, died in conditions that rivalled those of their nearest counterparts in modern history, the genocidal death camps of the Holocaust.

Conservative estimates suggest that during Stalin's rule to 1939 there were as many as thirty million deaths, caused by starvation and political repression, in the Soviet Union. Based on interpretation of the ideologies of Marx, Engels and Lenin, Stalin had created a new form of society. Arguably, as Montifiore suggests, Stalin might be viewed as a Red Tsar. However Stalin's power and authority far exceeded that of Russia's imperial leader. That the new society differed so markedly from the imagined utopia of his intellectual forbearers or from that of the Tsarist state was a result of circumstances and Stalin's own initiatives. Instead of an egalitarian society of proletarian splendour there emerged a modern dictatorship, a totalitarian state, in which the apparatus of power under the direction of an individual and charismatic leader sought to control the everyday life of its citizens. Terror, brutality and control dominated the new order, an order that after the Second World War would expand its influence to the whole of eastern Europe and be a model for future dictatorships in Asia and beyond.



Stalin, the master dictator, in his prime. The economy moving forward, all opposition crushed.

# Weimar Germany: The Democratic Experiment

The Weimar period of German history lasted from 1919 to 1933. At its heart was an experiment in liberal democracy, an idea that in the climate immediately following the First World War seemed to be in the ascendancy. Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, for example, had stressed the need for the establishment of democratic institutions in Europe. Indeed as the old European empires crumbled when fighting ended in 1918, democracy and self-determination, the voice and the sovereignty of the people, emerged in place of the rule of tradition and the challenge of Bolshevism. New democratic republics, indeed new countries, emerged not just in Germany but in Austria, Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Baltic States. Others such as Yugoslavia became constitutional monarchies, embracing a democratic restraint on the power of the ruler. The 1920s therefore represented a new set of possibilities, a new order in which sovereignty resided in the people, a people who shared political and legal rights and a people who voted.

The German experiment in liberal democracy, the Weimar Republic, emerged from a revolution at the end of the First World War. Despite opposition from the left and the right in its formative years, by 1924 the young republic had entered a 'Golden Age' when its fragile economy and celebrated artistic culture both thrived. Like so many other experiments with liberal democracy the Weimar system failed. The impact of the Great Depression, the failure to form truly legitimate governments and the resort to rule by Presidential Decree meant that by 1930 Weimar was only a democracy in name.

## The German Revolution

As the war drew to an ignominious end for Germany various political interests began scrambling to pick up the pieces. On 28 October 1918 the German Constitution of 1871 was amended to recognise Germany as a parliamentary democracy in order for peace negotiations to take place. The new Chancellor, Prince Max von Baden, was now no longer responsible to the Kaiser but to the *Reichstag* instead. The situation on the streets was chaotic. People panicked as food shortages ensued. The political left seized on the success of the Russian Revolution as an example to follow and began forming workers' and soldiers' councils, modelled loosely on the Russian 'Soviets'. A number of German cities were virtually under the control of these groups and in Munich on 7 November, King Ludwig III of Bavaria was forced to depart in great haste.

Unlike the Russian experience however, these German workers' councils were not run by the Bolsheviks. They themselves included competing leftist factions and there was little effective coordination within cities let alone on a national level. The extreme right wing groups drew a lot of support from disenchanted soldiers returning defeated from the fronts. After the Armistice of 11 November and the Paris Peace Conference during the early part of 1919 the bitterness and resentment grew although at this early stage, before the Treaty of Versailles was signed, the young republic seemed to have enjoyed a considerable degree of support.



Ebert was leader of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) when von Baden transferred power to him on 9 November 1918 and a new government was proclaimed in Berlin. Just a few hours later a 'socialist republic' was declared by Karl Liebknecht of the Spartacist League. The Spartacists, led by Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, advocated nothing less than a communist takeover of Germany. Ebert on the other hand was committed to social democracy, a more moderate and conventional democratic form of socialism. To bolster his support and neutralise the more radical Spartacists, Ebert established a 'Council of People's Commissioners' to advise the *Reichstag*. This won the support of the Berlin workers' and soldiers' councils. Ebert's 'Council of People's Commissioners' introduced a raft of social legislation that promised reforms such as: the eight hour day; labour reform; freedom of association, religion and speech; national health insurance; wage arbitration and universal suffrage.

source box

### *Freikorps* recruiting poster



This *Freikorps* recruiting poster exhorts 'Protect your Homeland! Enlist in the *Freikorps* Hülsen'.

### Questions

1. To whom might such a poster be appealing to?
2. What might the 'homeland' need protection from?

source box

Ebert was also the ultimate pragmatist about the exercise of political power. He knew that whoever controlled the military would run the country. He quickly settled a deal with the military to protect the republican government in exchange for a promise that the government would not seek to reform the military structure. Ebert also found a new and dangerous ally, shady paramilitary nationalist groups called *Freikorps*. Members of the *Freikorps* movement took it upon themselves to beat to death Liebknecht and Luxemburg. *Freikorps* units also engaged in the brutal repression of communist and workers' movements, initiating white terror against the perceived and largely imagined red threat. Rather than this leading to coordinated uprisings

among the workers it had the effect of dampening enthusiasm for further revolutionary attempts. As if nothing significant had happened, the German people went to the polls on 19 January and elected Ebert and his Social Democratic Party with a large majority.

Despite these opponents the constitution of the Weimar Republic was ratified in August 1919. Ebert, initially as Chancellor and then later as the first Weimar President, steered a complex course between the left and right. In the end the system established with the ratification of the constitution was a model of liberal democratic principles. In place of the former Imperial Government that had been dominated by the Kaiser was the very ideal of the liberal democratic state. The Weimar Constitution embodied individual political, legal and economic rights, freedom of the press, association and assembly. In place of the Kaiser the people became sovereign. The government of the day would be formed from whatever party enjoyed the confidence of the *Reichstag*, the parliament. Members of the *Reichstag* would be elected by voting using proportional representation. This would ensure that even the smallest minority groups could enjoy representation in the parliament. The Chancellor would be head of the government. An upper house, the *Reichsrat*, would represent the interests of the states in a federal system of government. The head of state, the President, would be elected by the people by direct ballot. Special provisions existed within the constitution (Article 48) to ensure that in the event of an emergency the President could overrule the government of the day in the name of the people.



Friedrich Ebert, a social democrat had served as Chancellor, then as first President of the Weimar Republic.

## Challenges for the New Republic

Once established as a democratically elected government with a guiding constitution one might have imagined that the German political climate would have settled during 1919. However the impositions of the Treaty of Versailles, particularly the 'war guilt' clause, reparations and territorial losses, ensured that the radical right continued to oppose the republic. International pressures also exerted as a result of the treaty would simply complicate the matter further.

On 13 March 1920, for instance, a group of *Freikorps* radicals in Berlin effectively took over the city. They were led by Wolfgang Kapp who was immediately declared Chancellor. The legitimate Weimar Government called for a general strike and within four days the Kapp Putsch was brought to an end. There were continual bloody clashes throughout the country between the left and right. Another attempted coup launched from a beer hall in Munich in 1923 by the early Nazi movement was in part inspired by the model of the Kapp Putsch.

Between these two attempted right wing coups the Weimar economy went into freefall. By 1923 the French and Belgian war reparations payments had bankrupted the nation. French troops occupied the industrial heartland of the Ruhr region taking control of major German industries. The ensuing protests involved strikes and forms of passive resistance but nothing could halt the damage to the economy. The



government began printing additional currency to meet their payments requirements and to pay the striking workers. This, together with growing deficits in other areas of the national budget, led directly to a period of hyperinflation. Hyperinflation occurs in the rare situation where there is both a rapid increase in prices and a dramatic collapse in the value of the currency. A vicious downward spiral ensues. Before the First World War one US dollar was worth just over four German marks. By the end of 1923 one US dollar was worth roughly 4 200 000 000 000 German marks. The Weimar Government actually issued fifty million mark banknotes and postage stamps.

The crisis of hyperinflation ended on 1 December 1923 when a new currency, the Rentenmark, was introduced. The conversion was at the rate of one trillion old German marks for one new Rentenmark. The value of this currency was fixed, loans from United States' banks were secured, the French left the Ruhr and reparation payments resumed.

## A Golden Age?

The man who issued the Rentenmark and saved the Weimar Republic was Gustav Stresemann (1878–1929), who acted as Chancellor for a brief period in 1923. From then until 1929 he occupied the strategically important position of Foreign Minister. The Stresemann years are often regarded as the 'Golden Age of Weimar'. A liberal politician, Stresemann brought to his role a sound economic instinct and a liberal attitude to culture. He accepted that Germany had to work through the conditions of Versailles and win back the trust of Europe. In 1926 he jointly won, with French politician Aristide Briand, the Nobel Peace Prize for rebuilding constructive relations with the French. Above all, he helped restore confidence in Germany's future both inside and outside the country.

Nowhere was this more obvious than in the brief cultural renaissance centred in Berlin. Berlin in the 1920s was one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the world. People travelled from throughout Europe to experience the nightlife, especially the cabaret shows. Many creative people who would become famous in the coming decades participated in this bohemian lifestyle, including the singer and actor Marlene Dietrich, playwright Bertolt Brecht, musician Kurt Weill and expatriate English writer Christopher Isherwood. Isherwood's *Berlin Stories* (1946) documented the almost amoral character of the place and his novel *Goodbye to Berlin* (1939) highlights the seething undercurrent of anti-Semitism that was seized upon by the Nazis. The tensions of the time are captured powerfully in the film *Cabaret* (1972) which was based on Isherwood's novel. It would not be long before the artistic freedoms of Stresemann's Weimar Germany would be brought to a halt as the Nazi cultural revolution proceeded.



With the *Deutschmark* hardly worth the paper it was printed on in 1923, this woman feeds her stove with it.



## The failure of Weimar Democracy

During the Stresemann years social and political unrest appeared to settle down. From 1929 onwards, however, economic and political crisis combined to undermine Weimar democracy. Indeed long before the National Socialist movement was invited into power in 1933 democracy in Germany, as in other central European countries, had failed.

The Wall Street Crash in October 1929 destroyed the German economy. Much of the recovery since 1923 had been on the back of loans from the United States. Now that the American economy was in crisis the loans to Germany were being called in. Unemployment began to rise alarmingly: from around 650 000 in September 1928 it doubled in one year; by September 1932 over five million were looking for work in a severely depressed job market; and by January 1933 it peaked at just over six million. The economic failure created an environment in which parties at the extremes of the political spectrum, the Nazis and the communists who both opposed the republic, made considerable electoral advances.

The economic crisis also fractured the delicate balance of the 'Weimar coalition' of middle class parties and moderate socialists that had steered the nation through the early years of political instability and the 'Golden Years'. President von Hindenburg, at heart a monarchist and so never a truly convinced democrat, appointed a new Chancellor, Heinrich Brüning, from the right wing of the Catholic Centre Party. The Centre Party did not have a majority in the *Reichstag* and so was unable to govern effectively. Hindenburg as President, however, utilised Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution enabling Brüning use of the President's emergency powers to rule by decree. Once this happened the spirit of democratic rule in Germany ended. Over the next three years successive minority governments, backed by the powers of the President, overrode the principles of Weimar democracy.

Against the background of economic crisis and failed democracy the Nazi Party rose to prominence. In the 'Golden Weimar' years its fortunes had waned but it had successfully managed to reconstruct itself as a national political party rather than a violent fringe organisation. By the eve of the Great Depression it was beginning to gather strong support in rural electorates.



Paul von Hindenburg, the aging President of the Weimar Republic.

Following the Wall Street Crash, Hitler had hoped for a better return in the 1930 election. Expecting perhaps 60 seats the Nazis won 107. Momentum was growing. By July 1932 the swing seemed irresistible with the Nazis winning 230 seats and becoming the largest party in the *Reichstag*. The November elections of 1932 saw a slight dip in support (196 seats) and some of this was picked up by the communists (100 seats).

## source box

**Dictatorships of interwar Europe**

Country	Duration	Dictator	Ideology
Soviet Russia and USSR	1917–91	Lenin (to 1924) Stalin (to 1953)	Bolshevik coup, establishment of Bolshevik totalitarian state
Hungary	1919–44	Admiral Horthy	Right wing authoritarian dictatorship
Italy	1922–43	Benito Mussolini	Fascist
Bulgaria	1923–44	Aleksander Tsankov	Military coup, right wing authoritarian regime, from 1934 a royal dictatorship
Spain	1923–30	General Miguel Primo de Rivera	Conservative authoritarian dictatorship in agreement with King
Turkey	1923–38	Gazi Mustafa Kemal Pasha (Attatürk)	Effective personal dictatorship and one party national state
Albania	1925–40	Ahmed Zogu	Conservative authoritarian regime, first republican, then monarchical (1928)
Poland	1926–29	Marshal Józef Pilsudski	Military coup, operating behind parliamentary façade
Portugal	1926–75	Manuel de Oliveira (until 1932) Antonio Salazar	Authoritarian regime
Yugoslavia	1929–41	King Alexander I Peter II	Coup, royal dictatorship
Lithuania	1929–40	Antonas Smetona	Nationalist single party state
Romania	1930–41	King Carol II	Coup, royal dictatorship
Austria	1933–37	Engelbert Dollfuss	Semi-fascist state
Estonia	1934–40	Konstantin Paets	Authoritarian right wing regime
Latvia	1934–40	Karlis Ulmanis	Authoritarian right wing regime
Greece	1935–41	General J Kondilis General I Metaxas	Authoritarian military-royal regime
Spain	1936–75	General Francisco Franco	Military semi-fascist regime

**Questions**

1. What European countries remained democracies throughout the interwar years?
2. Is the failure of German democracy part of a larger pattern?

## source box

**Weimar Republic Election Results: Number of Deputies Elected**

Date	Jan 1919	Jun 1920	May 1924	Dec 1924	May 1928	Sept 1930	July 1932	Nov 1932	Mar 1933
Total Deputies	423	459	472	493	491	577	608	584	647
SPD Social Democrats	165	102	100	131	153	143	133	121	120
USPD Independent Socialists	22	84							
KPD Communists		4	62	45	54	77	89	100	81
Centre Party (Catholics)	91	64	65	69	62	68	75	70	74
BVP Bavarian Peoples Party		21	16	19	16	19	22	20	18
DDP Democrats	75	39	28	32	25	20	4	2	5
DVP Peoples Party	19	65	45	51	45	30	7	11	2
<i>Wirtschafts Partei</i> Economy Party	4	4	10	17	23	23	2	1	
DNVP Nationalists	44	71	95	103	73	41	37	52	52
NSDAP Nazis			32	14	12	107	230	196	288
Others	3	5	19	12	28	49	9	11	7

**Questions**

1. What other political parties gained support in the final years of the republic?
2. What parties lost support?
3. Is the economic environment the key to the increase in the vote for Nazis and communists or might other factors be significant?

source box

Conservative politicians realised that Nazism could give the troubled Weimar political structures a sense of legitimacy. The involvement of the Nazis in a government would also ensure a majority in the *Reichstag* and reduce the dependence of the Chancellor on Presidential favour. After considerable scheming Franz von Papen persuaded President von Hindenburg to appoint Adolf Hitler as Chancellor. Hindenburg did so on 30 January 1933. The new government with Hitler at its head, however, was only to include a limited number of Nazi Party members. Papen, naively, insisted that as Vice Chancellor he would be able to protect the interests of the conservative elites who had backed rule by Presidential Decree and to control the radicalism of the Nazi movement.



While popular understandings tend to rest on the belief that Nazism destroyed the Weimar Republic it is clear that the failure of democracy in Germany was the result of many factors. The republic itself was never the most robust of political systems as in its early years political violence, from the left and the right, challenged it. Its economy throughout the 1920s was also fragile. Despite this the republic, under the guidance of the 'Weimar Coalition', did thrive as an example of liberal democracy. Arguably it was a democracy that was too liberal. Ultimately the Weimar system was undone from within. In a climate of economic, social and political crisis its leaders disregarded the very principles on which a representative democracy stands. The Nazis were simply the party best placed to benefit from the failure of democracy.



Franz von Papen was instrumental in the political manoeuvring that resulted in the appointment of Hitler as German Chancellor in 1933. This picture shows von Papen in his First World War uniform, where he served on the Western Front and in the Middle East. Von Papen served briefly as German Chancellor between June and November 1932.

# The Rise of Fascism

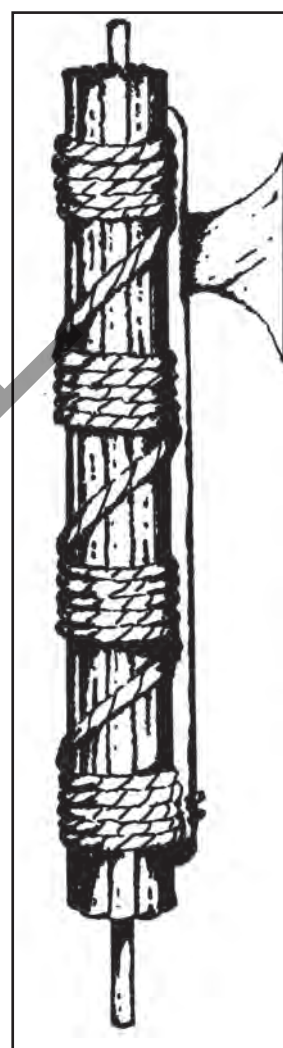
Of the three ideologies to dominate the politics of the interwar decades fascism was the shortest lived. Liberal democracy and communism had their origins in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries respectively and both would remain powerful influences on the lives of all people long after the Second World War. Fascism, however, emerged rapidly at the end of the First World War. Burning with enormous intensity, fascism at its peak was viewed as a serious and viable option to democracy and communism. After 1945 however, fascism has been almost universally regarded as a failure of western civilisation, a political path that while explored by many failed utterly in the delivery of its utopian vision.

## What is Fascism?

Unlike communism and liberal democracy, fascism did not emerge from a long ideological heritage. It is however simplistic to suggest that it simply arrived. Rather fascism was a synthetic political ideology. It drew on a range of intellectual traditions, including social Darwinism, non-Marxist socialism, nationalism and Nietzschean philosophy to create a new ideology and new movement.

While fascism took different forms in whatever country it emerged all fascist parties shared a set of common ideological and organisational characteristics. They were anti-individual, anti-liberal, anti-democratic, anti-materialistic and anti-communist. They defined themselves as nationalistic, authoritarian and corporatist, maintaining that while private enterprise was desirable it had to be subordinated to the interests of the nation. Fascist movements also shared a common visual style, using uniforms, banners and aesthetics as an extension of their politics. The majority of fascist movements also had paramilitary arms and considered violence, or its threatened use, an acceptable political technique. Fascist parties were largely built around a cult of their leader's personality. Followers generally regarded the leader as a saviour and defining authority. Hostility to people of other countries or races also figured prominently in fascist politics. In some fascist movements, particularly those influenced by German Nazism, racism and anti-Semitism were central preoccupations.

Fascists also saw the modern European order as morally bankrupt and in need of renewal and for some this meant a kind of 'spiritual' renewal. Fascism emerged in a time of perceived social crisis. It fed on basic prejudices and fears in the community and offered a strong alternative moral order. Such an order was essentially a totalitarian state. Viewing the nation as an organic entity and rejecting notions of a class struggle, fascism worked to regulate and control all aspects of social, political and economic life. Rather than advocating the abolition of private property like the communists, fascists called for regulatory power to control the use of capital in the national interest. Fascism also drew on the myth of traditional order preaching that at some point in the past things had been simpler and purer without the complications of modernity.



The *fasces* was the symbol of the Italian Fascist movement, but a number of other groups, including the British Union of Fascists used it as well. Derived from the symbol of authority and power used in Imperial Rome it is composed of a bundle of sticks bound together with an axe. The *fasces* has also been frequently used by non-fascists to convey similar meanings. In the United States, for instance, *fasces* appear beside the American flag in the House of Representatives.

This combination of concerns made fascist movements revolutionary in nature. While celebrating what they imagined to be the traditions of their respective nations, fascism sought to mobilise the entire population into a new type of society.

## source box

**Fascist Parties and Movements in Europe between the Wars**

Country	Party Name	Leader/Founder	Founded
Italy	National Fascist Party	Benito Mussolini	1919
Germany	Nazi Party	Adolf Hitler	1919
Austria	Nazi Party Fatherland Front	Adolf Hitler Engelbert Dollfuss Kurt Schuschnigg	1919 1934
Belgium	Rex <i>Vlaamsch Nationaal Verbond</i>	Léon Degrelle Staf de Clerq	1930 1933
France	<i>Faisceau</i> <i>Jeunesses Patriotes</i> <i>Solidarité française</i> <i>Francistes</i> <i>Parti Populaire Français</i> <i>Rassemblement National</i> <i>Populaire</i>	George Valois Pierre Taittinger François Coty Marcel Bucard Jacques Doriot Marcel Deat	1923 1924 1923 1933 1936 1941
Hungary	Arrow Cross	Ferenc Szálasi	1935
Ireland	Blueshirts	Eoin O'Duffy	1932
Portugal	National Syndicalist	Francisco de Barcelos Rolão Preto	Early 1930s
Romania	Iron Guard	Corneliu Zelea Codreanu	1927
Norway	Nasjonal Samling	Vidkun Quisling	1933
Spain	<i>Falange</i>	José Antonio Primo de Rivera	1933
United Kingdom	British Fascists Imperial Fascist League British Union of Fascists	Rotha Lintorn-Orman Arnold Leese Sir Oswald Mosley	1923 1928 1932
Yugoslavia (Croatia)	<i>Ustashe</i>	Ante Paveli	1929

**Questions**

1. This list is not exhaustive. What are some other interwar fascist movements?
2. Why might some countries have had more than one fascist movement?
3. When are most fascist movements formed?
4. Were there fascist movements outside Europe?

## source box



## THE RISE OF ITALIAN FASCISM

The first fascist movement emerged in Italy under the leadership of the former revolutionary socialist Benito Mussolini. It was founded on 23 March 1919 in Milan at a meeting of war veterans, syndicalist and members of the modernist art movement the Futurists. It derived its name from the Latin word *fascis* meaning a bundle of rods grouped around an axe, an ancient Roman symbol of the magistrates that signified authority and strength. Fascism, with a capital F, is generally reserved to describe the Italian movement, fascism, with the lower case f, tends to be used to describe any similar movement.

Mussolini's Fascists rapidly gained a national profile. Using violence in political street fighting they were able to achieve far greater political influence than their electoral support might have entitled them to. On 28 October 1922, following a period of great social unrest mainly fomented by the Fascists themselves, Mussolini ordered a *Marcia su Roma* ('March on Rome'). The democratic government capitulated and, on 31 October, the King invited Mussolini to form a new government. Over the next seven years Mussolini marginalised his political opponents and established a dictatorship.

Mussolini's success served as a model to others. By the early 1930s parties modelled on Italian Fascism had emerged in most European countries. Even Adolf Hitler claimed to be inspired by Mussolini describing him as the 'great man beyond the mountains'. The Nazi seizure of power in 1933 strengthened the appeal of fascism. Their successes in power, restoring Germany to world power status and dragging it out of the Great Depression, confirmed that fascism could overcome the threats to the nation posed by liberal democracy, with its capitalist foundations, and by international communism. Fascism was therefore recognised as a third alternative capable of reconciling the aims of both systems in a new form of authoritarian nationalist state.



Benito Mussolini, *Il Duce* (The Leader) of Italian Fascism.



Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler stand together on an reviewing stand during an official visit to occupied Yugoslavia. By the 1930s Mussolini and Hitler had formed a strong alliance.



## BRITISH FASCISM

The British Union of Fascists (BUF) was founded in 1933. Its leader, Sir Oswald Mosley, had been a Conservative and then Labour Party politician in the 1920s. After a visit to Italy Mosley came to believe that fascism was the way to overcome the crisis of the Great Depression and bring about a cultural, economic and political revival of Britain.

The BUF had much in common with other fascist movements. It had a paramilitary arm, the Blackshirts, it was hostile to communism, liberalism and conservatism, and it called for the establishment of a dictatorship.

Like other fascist movements the BUF was more than just a political party. It produced its own newspapers, ran sporting clubs, film nights, holiday camps and among other things its own charitable organisation. Party offices also served an important social function, particularly in city branches where membership was often in the hundreds.

The BUF reached its peak in 1933-34, claiming a membership of around 50 000. Violence at the meetings, the adoption of anti-semitism and the loss of media support pushed it to the fringes of British politics. Nonetheless it remained strong in the East End and their opposition to war with Germany led to revival in the late 1930s.

Following the German invasion of France in 1940 most of the party leadership were interned, without charges being laid, as potential threats to national security.

After the Second World War, Mosley attempted to revive the BUF as the Union Movement. Although he failed to exert any serious political influence many former members remained active in this successor movement.



Mosley as an iconic fascist leader.



Here Mosley receives the salutes of his followers. Notice the militarised style of the uniforms and the use of the salute which is the same as that of Italian Fascists and the Nazis.

# The Third Reich: Fascism to Power

Rarely in political history has a movement and a person been as intimately linked as with the rise of Nazism. It is certainly true that all the key ingredients in Nazi philosophy – a belief in German racial superiority, anti-Semitism, militarism and a strong centralised government – can be found elsewhere in German history. What is so unique to the Nazi experience is that one man, Adolf Hitler, united all these disparate themes and forged a vehicle for political power that within a decade had seized total control of the German nation.

Founded as the German Workers' Party in January 1919, the fledgling Nazi Party was one of many radical right wing groups that emerged in Bavaria after the German Revolution. More a talking circle than political party the German Workers' Party (DAP) provided an opportunity for its limited membership to express their concerns about the threat of communism and the need to promote nationalism among the working classes.

In September 1919 Adolf Hitler attended his first meeting while still serving in the army. Despite his later claim, Hitler was not the seventh member to join the DAP, but was appointed as the seventh member of its executive committee. Once discharged from the army in March 1920 Hitler devoted himself to the activities of the movement on a full-time basis. By 1921 Hitler was attracting a great deal of attention in Munich as a political speaker. Hitler soon began to turn his 'celebrity' status into personal political advantage. Alarmed at Hitler's popularity other DAP leaders wished to restrict his activities. Hitler confronted them, demanding their full support, which the party gave him. He became the leader, *Der Führer*, of the renamed National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) – the Nazi Party.

From the time of Hitler's ascendancy to the position of *Führer* the main ideological characteristics of the movement were clearly defined. The central themes that would shape its ideological priorities for the rest of its history stressed many of the characteristics common to all fascist movements; hostility to communism, liberalism and democracy, the positive evaluation of violence and extreme nationalism. The fascist look, such as the use of uniforms, mass demonstrations and political symbolism,

## THE FORMATIVE YEARS OF ADOLF HITLER

Born in Braunau am Inn, Austria, Adolf Hitler was the son of a minor Austrian customs official. After his father's death Hitler moved to Vienna hoping to study art. He failed to gain admission to the Viennese Academy and, after a period leading a moderately bohemian lifestyle, he left Vienna for Munich, the capital of the southern German state of Bavaria, to avoid military service in the Austro-Hungarian army. At the outbreak of the First World War he enlisted in a Bavarian regiment and served from 1914 to 1918 on the Western Front as a regimental messenger. He rose to the rank of corporal and was awarded the Iron Cross, first and second class. In November 1918 he was gassed and, while recuperating in hospital, learned of Germany's revolution and defeat. According to his later account in *Mein Kampf* (1925) this news inspired him to turn to politics.





An enthusiastic Hitler cheering the announcement of a declaration of war between Germany and its allies against the powers of the Triple Entente in 1914.

such as the use of the swastika, had become commonplace. By 1921 Hitler had established the *Sturmabteilungen* (SA), storm troops, as the party's paramilitary arm. What distinguished Nazism from other forms of early fascism was its overwhelming preoccupation with race and racism. For Hitler racism in general and anti-Semitism in particular were integral to the very nature of National Socialism. Race defined the nation. In developing such an understanding of the nation, anti-Semitism became a cornerstone of Nazi ideology. In this sense it differed markedly to Italian Fascism. Italian Fascists defined the nation as the country, Nazism defined the nation as a racial community that extended beyond national boundaries to include all Germans.

#### source box

#### **The Programme of the National Socialist German Workers' Party**

24 February 1920

The Programme of the German Workers' Party is designed to be of limited duration. The leaders have no intention, once the aims announced in it have been achieved, of establishing fresh ones, merely in order to increase, artificially, the discontent of the masses and so ensure the continued existence of the Party.

1. We demand the union of all Germans in a Greater Germany on the basis of the right of national self-discrimination.
2. We demand equality of rights for the German people in its dealings with other nations, and the revocation of the peace treaties of Versailles and Saint-Germain.
3. We demand land and territory (colonies) to feed our people and to settle our surplus population.
4. Only members of the nation may be citizens of the State. Only those of German blood, whatever their creed, may be members of the nation. Accordingly, no Jew may be a member of the nation.

5. Non-citizens may live in Germany only as guests and must be subject to laws for aliens.

6. The right to vote on the State's government and legislation shall be enjoyed by the citizens of the State alone. We demand therefore that all official appointments, of whatever kind, whether in the Reich, in the states or in the smaller localities, shall be held by none but citizens.

We oppose the corrupting parliamentary custom of filling posts merely in accordance with party considerations, and without reference to character or abilities.

7. We demand that the State shall make it its primary duty to provide a livelihood for its citizens. If it should prove impossible to feed the entire population, foreign nationals (non-citizens) must be deported from the Reich.

8. All non-German immigration must be prevented. We demand that all non-Germans who entered Germany after 2 August 1914 shall be required to leave the Reich forthwith.

9. All citizens shall have equal rights and duties.

10. It must be the first duty of every citizen to perform physical or mental work. The activities of the individual must not clash with the general interest, but must proceed within the framework of the community and be for the general good.

**We demand therefore:**

11. The abolition of incomes unearned by work.  
The breaking of the slavery of interest

12. In view of the enormous sacrifices of life and property demanded of a nation by any war, personal enrichment from 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 been formed into corporations (trusts).

14. We demand profit-sharing in large industrial enterprises.

15. We demand the extensive development of insurance for old age.

16. We demand the creation and maintenance of a healthy middle class, the immediate communalising of big department stores, and their lease at a cheap rate to small traders, and that the utmost consideration shall be shown to all small traders in the placing of State and municipal orders.

17. We demand a land reform suitable to our national requirements, the passing of a law for the expropriation of land for communal purposes without compensation: the abolition of ground rent, and the prohibition of all speculation in land.

18. We demand the ruthless prosecution of those whose activities are injurious to the common interest. Common criminals, usurers, profiteers, etc., must be punished with death, whatever their creed or race.

19. We demand that Roman Law, which serves a materialistic world order, be replaced by a German common law.

20. The State must consider a thorough reconstruction of our national system of education (with the aim of opening up to every able and hard-working German the possibility of higher education and of thus obtaining advancement). The curricula of all educational establishments must be brought into line with the requirements of practical life. The aim of the school must be to give the pupil, beginning with the first sign of intelligence, a grasp of the notion of the State (through the study of civic affairs). We demand the education of gifted children of poor parents, whatever their class or occupation, at the expense of the State.

21. The State must ensure that the nation's health standards are raised by protecting mothers and infants, by prohibiting child labour, by promoting physical strength through legislation providing for compulsory gymnastics and sports, and by the extensive support of clubs engaged in the physical training of youth.

22. We demand the abolition of the mercenary army and the formation of a people's army.

23. We demand legal warfare on deliberate political mendacity and its dissemination in the press. To facilitate the creation of a German national press we demand:

(a) that all editors of, and contributors to newspapers appearing in the German language must be members of the nation.

(b) that no non-German newspapers may appear without the express permission of the State. They must not be printed in the German language;

(c) that non-Germans shall be prohibited by law from participating financially in or influencing German newspapers, and that the penalty for contravening such a law shall be the suppression of any such newspaper, and the immediate deportation of the non-Germans involved.

The publishing of papers which are not conducive to the national welfare must be forbidden. We demand the legal prosecution of all those tendencies in art and literature which corrupt our national life, and the suppression of cultural events which violate this demand.

24. We demand freedom for all religious denominations in the State, provided they do not threaten its existence nor offend the moral feelings of the German race.

The Party, as such stands for positive Christianity, but does not commit itself to any particular denomination. It combats the Jewish-materialist spirit within and without us, and is convinced that our nation can achieve permanent health only from within on the basis of the principle: The common interest before self-interest.

25. To put the whole of this programme into effect, we demand the creation of a strong central state power for the Reich; the unconditional authority of the



political central Parliament over the entire Reich and its organisations; and the formation of Corporations based on estate and occupation for the purpose of carrying out the general legislation passed by the Reich in the various German states.

The leaders of the Party promise to work ruthlessly - if need be to sacrifice their very lives - to translate this programme into action.

Source: J. Noakes and G. Pridham (eds) *Nazism 1919-1945 vol. I The Rise to Power 1919-1934 A Documentary Reader* (Exeter, 1983), pp.14-16.

### Questions

1. What would you consider to be the aims of the program?
2. What criticisms does it make of the Weimar system?
3. What kind of society does the Nazi movement aim to create?

### source box

During these early years many who would become key players in its later history began to join. Among the most important of these figures were Hermann Göring, Ernst Röhm, Joseph Goebbels, Heinrich Himmler, Alfred Rosenberg, Rudolf Hess, Gregor Strasser and Julius Streicher. During this time the party established valuable connections with a range of institutions and groups such as the Bavarian Government, the military and the *Freikorps* movement. These associations in the long-term proved to be very valuable links for a small regional organisation.

Hitler's first attempt to seize power was in Munich, the capital of Bavaria, on 8 November 1923. This attempted coup has come to be known as the Beer Hall Putsch. By this time the party had around 35 000 members and this attempted coup launched the movement onto the national political stage. The putsch attempt, partly inspired by the failed Kapp Putsch and by Mussolini's 'March on Rome', was an attempt to draw together a range of right wing groups to overthrow the republican government in Berlin. It was a failure and ended the next day in a barrage of gunfire from members of the police force. With fourteen dead the coup attempt dissolved and the Nazi leadership scattered to avoid arrest. In the confusion Hitler dislocated his shoulder, fled and was arrested two days later.

While a failure, the putsch thrust the Nazi movement onto the national stage. Hitler and the Nazi leaders were tried for high treason and Hitler made a number of impassioned courtroom speeches in which he claimed total responsibility for the attempted seizure of power. Although he was sentenced to five year's prison, Hitler received lenient treatment and while in prison wrote what would become his major ideological work, *Mein Kampf*. With their leader imprisoned the Nazi movement lacked direction and was deeply divided by infighting between different



The cover of an early edition of Adolf Hitler's political memoir/autobiography *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle). This long work outlines clearly Hitler's political ideas and was written during his imprisonment following the failed Beer Hall Putsch.

factions. More importantly, however, with time for reflection Hitler came to reject the violent path to power. Instead he came to advocate the adoption of a legal path through the use of the democratic process.

Following his release from Landsberg prison in December 1924, Hitler reasserted his authority over the party, continued to make public speeches and the Nazis staged numerous marches in German cities. But as we have already seen, the tide was turning for the Weimar Republic. The economy was looking up again and the far-right political parties were losing support. During this time, with its electoral support flagging, the Nazi Party undertook a series of internal reforms. Guided by Gregor Strasser, these reforms included the finetuning of propaganda techniques to ensure that they were pitched to the various interest groups in German society. Strasser also established a range of Nazi professional associations for teachers and doctors, a student movement and a women's arm. In addition, the party organisation was restructured to fight election campaigns. Through these 'Golden Years' of the republic the Nazi movement solidly built on its membership base growing from around 35 000 in 1923 to around 108 000 members in 1929.

By 1930 the impact of the Great Depression and the agricultural crisis was beginning to be felt in German society. For the Nazi movement its constant electioneering campaigns and the reorganisation of the party were beginning to reap returns. By 1932 the party held the most seats in the *Reichstag* and on 30 January 1933 President von Hindenburg offered Hitler the Chancellorship of Germany.

### *Gleichschaltung: The Making of the Dictatorship*

Hitler's appointment to the Chancellorship of Germany in 1933 marked the culmination of a process that had started in 1919. The appointment however did not ensure lasting power or the formation of a dictatorship. The cabinet Hitler headed included only two other Nazis, Wilhelm Frick, Minister of the Interior, and Hermann Göring, Minister without Portfolio and Prussian Minister for the Interior. Göring's dual role was of particular significance as Prussia was the largest of the states that made up the German republic. In theory, as Franz von Papen had convinced President von Hindenburg, the other ministers, being drawn from conservative political parties and the civil service, would be able to control Hitler. Over the eighteen months however the Nazis consolidated their authority over the German political system. This process of seizing power, *Machtergreifung*, and the subsequent coordination of that power, *Gleichschaltung*, would lay the foundations for the Nazi dictatorship. Through this process the Nazi movement legally wound back the provisions of the Weimar Constitution, exerted its control over the civil service and legal systems and outlawed opposition parties. As a process it culminated in a purge of the party and the combining of the position of Chancellor and President.

The winding back of the Weimar Constitution was the result of a series of decrees that provided the Nazi Party with the legal basis for their rule of Germany. The first, on 28 February 1933, was a direct response to a fire that destroyed the *Reichstag* building the night before. This fire, attributed to a Dutch communist Marinus van der Lubbe, was viewed by the Nazis as evidence of a wider communist conspiracy. Utilising Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution, President von Hindenburg, at the request of Hitler, issued the decree 'For the Protection of People and State'. This decree, also called the 'Reichstag Fire Decree', overrode many of the individual rights that had been enshrined in the Weimar Constitution including the right to express opinions, peaceful assembly and to form associations. In addition it enabled the state to engage in the monitoring of



This 1923 photograph shows Herman Göring as leader of the Nazi Party's paramilitary SA. The medal shown at his neck is the *Pour le Mérite*, or Blue Max, a prestigious decoration often awarded to fighter pilots during the First World War. Göring had risen to notoriety during the war as a fighter pilot and commanded the 'Red' Baron's flying circus in the final stages of the conflict.

mail and communications and conduct searches of property without warrants. As a result the publications and meetings of the Communist Party were banned and some 4 000 party members were arrested. The response of other political groups was limited because they were in the midst of fighting an election campaign and the Social Democrats were already being attacked and harassed. While the use of the decree's powers were directed at the radical left, the communists, its longer term implications were far more wide reaching. Staying in place for the duration of the Reich the decree provided the legal basis for the Nazi regime to deny basic political and civil rights for German citizens.

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### **The *Reichstag* Fire Decree**

#### **Order of the Reich President for the Protection of People and State**

On the basis of Article 48 paragraph 2 of the Constitution of the German Reich, the following is ordered in defence against Communist state-endangering acts of violence:

Articles 114, 115, 117, 118, 123, 124 and 153 of the Constitution of the German Empire are suspended until further notice. It is therefore permissible to restrict the rights of personal freedom, freedom of opinion, including the freedom of the press, the freedom to organize and assemble, the privacy of postal, telegraphic and telephonic communications, and warrants for house searches, orders for confiscations as well as restrictions on property, are also permissible beyond the legal limits otherwise prescribed.

#### **The Enabling Act: Law to Remedy the Distress of the People and the Reich**

The has enacted the following law, which is hereby proclaimed with the assent of the Reichsrat, it having been established that the requirements for a constitutional amendment have been fulfilled:

##### **Article 1**

In addition to the procedure prescribed by the constitution, laws of the Reich may also be enacted by the government of the Reich. This includes the laws referred to by Article 85 Paragraph 2 and Article 87 of the constitution.

##### **Article 2**

Laws enacted by the government of the Reich may deviate from the constitution as long as they do not affect the institutions of the *Reichstag* and the Reichsrat. The rights of the President remain undisturbed.

##### **Article 3**

Laws enacted by the Reich government shall be issued by the Chancellor and announced in the Reich Gazette. They shall take effect on the day following the announcement, unless they prescribe a different date. Articles 68 to 77 of the Constitution do not apply to laws enacted by the Reich government.

##### **Article 4**

Treaties of the Reich with foreign states which affect matters of Reich legislation shall not require the approval of the bodies of the legislature. The government of the Reich shall issue the regulations required for the execution of such treaties.

##### **Article 5**

This law takes effect with the day of its proclamation. It loses force on 1 April 1937 or if the present Reich government is replaced by another.

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The second document, The Enabling Act, became law on 24 March 1933. This act, unlike the earlier decree, was passed by the *Reichstag* where as a result of the 5 March elections the Nazis and their conservative allies had gained a majority. Passing the bill however required a quorum of two-thirds of *Reichstag* members and a two-thirds majority of those present because the proposed act was a change to the constitution. After much brokering the Catholic Centre Party agreed to support the bill. Many Social Democrats and all eighty-one communist members of the *Reichstag* were absent due to the continuing harassment of the SA who had also encircled the temporary parliament at the Kroll Opera House. Göring, as the presiding officer of the *Reichstag*, ruled that the absent communists could be excluded from the numbers required to form the quorum, a decision on Göring's part that enabled the passing of the act but was questionable in legal terms. In the end only the Social Democrats voted against the act.<sup>7</sup> The passing of the Enabling Act made the *Reichstag* redundant. It allowed the government, in effect the Chancellor and cabinet, to proclaim all laws. In the wake of the act's proclamation many of the major German political parties simply dissolved as without a function in the *Reichstag* a political party served very little purpose, or, like the communists and Social Democrats were banned under the provisions of the earlier 'Reichstag Fire Decree'.



The *Reichstag* in flames. This fire, lit by the Dutch communist Marinus van der Lubbe, set in motion the National Socialist consolidation of power in 1933.

Now holding total legal authority, the Nazi Government extended their authority by centralising the structures of power. Under the Weimar Constitution each of the German *Länder* (states) that made up the Weimar Republic had enjoyed considerable autonomy. This freedom ended with the 'Law for the Co-ordination of the States within the Reich', issued in April 1933. In January 1934 the governments of the various *Länder* were dissolved. This made the Nazi Government the sole structure of authority in Germany.

While the Nazi Party maintained the illusion of legal legitimacy throughout its reign, almost from the time of its first coming to power fear and intimidation were consistently used to stifle opposition. In the first National Socialist cabinet Frick and Göring had been appointed to portfolios that gave the Nazi Party direct control of the German police forces. In Prussia, the largest of the German states, Göring made 50 000 members of the SA, the party's paramilitary arm, auxiliary police and established the Gestapo. The SA also undertook its own campaign of terror against political opponents and Jews. This campaign was extensive and continued until the end of 1933. In Bavaria alone it is estimated that 10 000 arrests had been carried out by April. The figure doubled that by June. Arresting communists and socialists many

of these victims found themselves, after brutal beatings and assaults, interned in the first of the regime's concentration camps at Dachau, near Munich, and Oranienburg, outside Berlin, while thousands of others were incarcerated in conventional prisons and police cells. In June official figures indicate 27 000 individuals in 'protective custody'. This does not include those who may have passed through the process earlier in the year. During this time it is believed that as many as 600 were killed as a result of these SA and police campaigns of violence and intimidation. By the year's end more than 100 000 political arrests had taken place.<sup>8</sup>

In June 1933 to support and promote the initiatives of the Nazi Government a new ministry, the Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda (*Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda*), was established with Joseph Goebbels as its head. Initially its focus was on the media, controlling the press, radio and film. By October its authority, as the Reich Chamber for Culture, had been expanded to include all areas of the arts including music, theatre and literature. The ministry also functioned as the official news service of the regime. Among its most important responsibilities was the propagation of the 'Hitler Myth' – that Hitler embodied the 'New Germany' and that he would unite Germany. The ministry's control of the media ensured that the myth did not necessarily relate to reality. This ministry, ultimately, controlled all modes of mass expression and communication within the regime.

During the period of *Gleichschaltung* a range of other initiatives assisted in the consolidation of Nazi authority. In April 1933 'The Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service' provided a framework for the removal of Jews and political opponents from the public service. This also had direct implications for the teaching profession. During May 1933 the trade union movement was dissolved and many of its leaders imprisoned. In its place the regime established the *Deutsche Arbeitsfront* (German Labour Front) under the leadership of Robert Ley. During July, largely as a payback for the Catholic Centre Party's support of the Enabling Act, the Nazi Government signed a Concordat with the Vatican. This agreement theoretically secured the religious and spiritual rights of German Catholics but it also meant that all aspects of its social organisation were absorbed by the state.

## The final act

By the end of 1933 it was clear that the Nazi Party had successfully established a single party state. This process had, for all intents and purposes, been carried out with the appearance of legality. Presidential Decree, followed by the Enabling Act, had circumvented the Weimar Constitution. Terror and intimidation had silenced opponents and subsequent laws had curtailed other paths to power. At the start of 1934 the only remaining challenges to Hitler's authority were the President, the army and a fear of a more radical revolutionary faction within the party itself. Through the course of 1934 each of these obstacles, real or imagined, were removed.

The 'Night of the Long Knives', also called the Blood Purge, resolved the concerns about the army and the fear of a more radical second revolution. Throughout the party's Weimar years and for much of the period of *Gleichschaltung* the SA had been the strong arm of the Nazi movement. It had carried out the political street fighting, rounded up political opponents and blockaded Jewish businesses, but as the regime settled into the stride of ordered dictatorship the radicalism of between three and four million idle storm troops appeared challenging. The army also feared the SA believing that it intended to usurp its status as the principal military service. It is also clear that Heinrich Himmler, head of the *Schutzstaffel* (SS), and Hermann Göring also had concerns about the SA and its leader, Ernst Röhm.



## THE *SCHUTZSTAFFEL* (SS) PROTECTION SQUAD

Formed in 1923 as Hitler's personal bodyguards, the SS was originally a subsidiary unit of the SA. In 1929, with the appointment of Heinrich Himmler as its leader, it had expanded to around 200 000 members by late 1933 and around 240 000 by 1939. After the 'Night of the Long Knives' the SS became the principal policing arm of the regime, a position consolidated by its control of the Gestapo and the concentration camp system. The SS was widely regarded as embodying the racial ideas of the Nazi movement with members required to demonstrate their 'blood' lineage for membership. As a movement its outlook was highly ideological. Membership was clearly indicated by its distinctive black uniform and insignia.

Through the 1930s the SS structures expanded until it earned a reputation of being a state within the state. The original formation of the SS, the *Allgemeine-SS* (General-SS), was expanded to include *SS-Totenkopfverbände* (Deaths Head Formations) concentration camps guards and the *Waffen-SS* (Armed SS). The *Waffen-SS* functioned as a military force deployed in most combat spheres after 1941. At its peak it numbered approximately one million troops drawn from fifteen countries.



Overview of the mass roll-call of SA, SS and NSKK troops. Nuremberg, November 9, 1935

On the night of 30 June 1934, SS units arrested and shot Röhm and a number of other SA leaders. They also took the opportunity to settle numerous other old scores: General von Schleicher, a former Chancellor; Gustav Ritter von Kahr, in 1923 General State Commissioner of Bavaria deemed by the Nazis to have been responsible for the failure of the Beer Hall Putsch; and Gregor Strasser, who had left the party after reconstructing it in the late 1920s. Strasser died despite having little to do with the SA or the talk of a second revolution. In all some 200 members of the SA and others were killed.

Recent archival research has demonstrated that the threat of this second revolution is largely overplayed and the SA did not genuinely seek to take over the army. The problem for the SA by 1934 was that it appeared to have no role. Indeed for much of the first half of 1934 the storm troops had been on leave. Nonetheless the end result of this calculated party purge and settling of old scores served two purposes. It revealed that in the interest of preserving power the Nazi Party was prepared to turn upon its own. It also satisfied the *Wehrmacht* confirming the special status of the army in German society. The SA, even if it was not before, was no longer regarded as a threat.

The problem of the President was ultimately a question of time. Aged (he was eighty-seven years old) and arguably senile, Hindenburg died on 2 August 1934.



The death of the President enabled the combining of the offices of Chancellor and President into a single position. It also meant that Hitler became the head of the military services with all personnel swearing an oath of fealty to him. With Hindenburg's death Hitler became not just *Der Führer* of the National Socialist movement, but also *Der Führer* of the German State.

## The Party State

The process of *Gleichschaltung* laid the foundations of the new National Socialist State, a regime that sought to transform the very nature of German society and bring about a renewal of Germany as an international power. The social, cultural and foreign policy aspects of this regime are discussed in later chapters. It is however appropriate to consider aspects of domestic policy and to examine the nature of power and authority within the regime.

## Economic Initiatives

When the Nazis came to power the impact of the Great Depression on German society was at its peak. More than six million Germans were unemployed, government expenditure exceeded income and production had slumped. This experience was not limited to Germany – most developed economies were suffering similar crises. Inheriting a series of job creation campaigns and implementing many other proposals from the previous governments of the Weimar Republic, the Nazi Party, once in power, was able to bring about a rapid resolution to the economic problems facing Germany. Introducing tax concessions and subsidies, public work programs such as road building and infrastructure development, the Nazi Government was able to bring about marked improvements in most areas of economic activity. By 1936 industrial output had surpassed the levels of 1928; by 1937 unemployment had been reduced to fewer than one million and by 1939 the economy had grown by thirty-three per cent on late 1920s levels.<sup>9</sup>

The initial phase of this revival of Germany's economic fortunes had been the result of rather cautious policy implementation by the new regime. In 1936 more radical steps began to be taken that emphasised autarky (economic self-sufficiency). In October 1936 the government also announced its Four Year Plan under the leadership of Hermann Göring. This plan, while extending on the earlier public works programs, greatly increased the influence of the government on the economy and reflected the regime's shift towards rearmament. Emphasising the desirability of self-sufficiency, substantial investments were made in the development of chemicals, synthetic fuels and rubber and improvement of German agriculture for food production. During



With unbelievable precision the Nazi rallies became ritualised politics.



The German *Autobahn* system had been planned during the Weimar years and construction had started before the Nazis came to power. Once in power however the National Socialist government made their development an important aspect of their public works program to combat unemployment.

this time unsurprisingly the level of trade between Germany and other countries was also reduced to levels well below those of the 1920s. More important was the rearmament process itself. Establishing aircraft factories, the expanding naval capacity and motorising the armed forces accounted for much of the economic growth of the period.

In a limited sense, of course, such developments had a positive impact on the lives of Germans. After the uncertainty during the Weimar years and the Great Depression the Nazi movement appeared to be providing economic and social stability. The control of the media, via Goebbels' Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda, certainly ensured that this was the message conveyed. For many racial Germans, although the standard of living had declined in real terms, the benefits of the economic miracle and political stability had allayed old fears and the sense of crisis that had dominated German society up until 1934.

## ANTI-SEMITISM BEFORE 1939

Increasingly marginalised politically and socially, Nazism's racial conception of the nation increasingly distanced German Jews from everyday society. Adhoc harassment and abuse became systematised in 1935's Nuremberg Laws. These laws defined Jewishness in pseudo-scientific terms, revoked the German citizenship of Jews and criminalised marriage and sexual relations between Aryans and non-Aryans. Successive interventions also restricted the working rights of Jews preventing them from work in teaching, universities and the law. Such policies were reinforced in the education system, the youth movements and through anti-Semitic propaganda. In each setting racism was justified and explained as necessary steps in protecting the Aryan race.

On 9 November 1938 a pogrom, *Kristallnacht* 'Night of the Broken Glass', was launched against the Jewish communities of Germany. While not officially sanctioned this outbreak of violence marked an intensification of Nazi anti-Semitic policy. Thousands of Jewish businesses and synagogues were systematically looted and burned, cemeteries, artworks and religious texts defaced and individual Jews were beaten and killed. In the wake of the events roughly 30 000 Jewish men were taken into 'protective custody' and held in concentration camps. The Nazi Government also imposed a one million mark penalty on the Jewish communities of Germany. Jewish immigration from Germany increased significantly following *Kristallnacht* and the SS also came to dominate anti-Jewish policy.



# HITLER: MASTER OF

The National Socialist consolidation of power during 1933 and 1934 established a fascist totalitarian dictatorship. Nazi Germany was a single party state in which the Führer, as head of the party and of state, was a central figure and the party's programs constituted the official ideology of the state. As a government the Nazi Party sought to intervene in all aspects of everyday life, including education, the workplace and the home. The apparatus of rule also used terror, real and threatened violence, as a mechanism of social and political control. By the late 1930s the party had become the sole source of authority in the regime.

The place of Adolf Hitler in this system of rule has been a central concern of any historian attempting to understand and explain the Third Reich. Overwhelmingly historians accept that Hitler had a special status. As *Führer* it is clear that Hitler was a figure with charismatic authority. This means that Hitler's followers saw him as a figure that had special and life changing ideas. For the most devoted of followers Hitler was a messianic figure, somebody whose special knowledge could change their lives.<sup>10</sup> This charismatic nature of Hitler's status is also reflected in the 'Hitler Myth'. This myth, a product of the Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda, stressed that Hitler had been chosen by destiny and was unlike other leaders as he embodied and united the new Germany. This myth encouraged even non-Nazis to accept Hitler as the national leader. This aspect of the myth served the important function of helping to hold the Nazi system together.<sup>11</sup>

Given this status within the regime, and the Nazi Movement's commitment to the idea of the *Führerprinzip* – that leadership and authority went to the fittest to lead – it is hardly surprising that many historians have come to view Nazi Germany

as the Hitler State. Such a view proposes that Nazi Germany was a Hitler centred government, that Hitler's ideas and efforts were reflected in all aspects of the Third Reich and that the apparatus of state and party implemented Hitler's policies. Historians of this approach suggest that Hitler's plans were also premeditated, arguing that sometime in his early political career he developed these ideas and in power worked to the realisation of these goals. *Mein Kampf* is often seen as the key document in this approach. This understanding of the Third Reich dominated much of the scholarship of the 1950s and 1960s. Because the approach stresses the dominance of Hitler it is often described as the monocratic (rule by one) school or as the intentionalist school because of its emphasis on intention and planning. Among the most important scholars in this school are Eberhard Jäckel, Karl Dietrich Bracher, Klaus Hildebrand, Joachim Fest, Alan Bullock and Hugh Trevor-Roper.<sup>12</sup> Historians of this approach tend to argue that Hitler was master of the Third Reich, a strong dictator.

In contrast to the intentionalist school of interpretation from the 1970s a number of historians, often described as functionalist or structuralist, have proposed that this emphasis on Hitler as the strong dictator is misplaced. They argue that while Hitler was important the nature of rule in the Third Reich was polycratic, rule by many. These scholars contest that other individuals, including Göring, Himmler and Goebbels, the party itself, and other structures of the state like the *Wehrmacht* and the Foreign Office, also had important roles in shaping the nature of rule. These historians argue that the structures of rule were chaotic. Competing ideas, institutions and circumstances therefore drove the regime rather than just Hitler and his ideas. To support this argument they highlight Hitler's idiosyncratic work style and that there were other forces, such



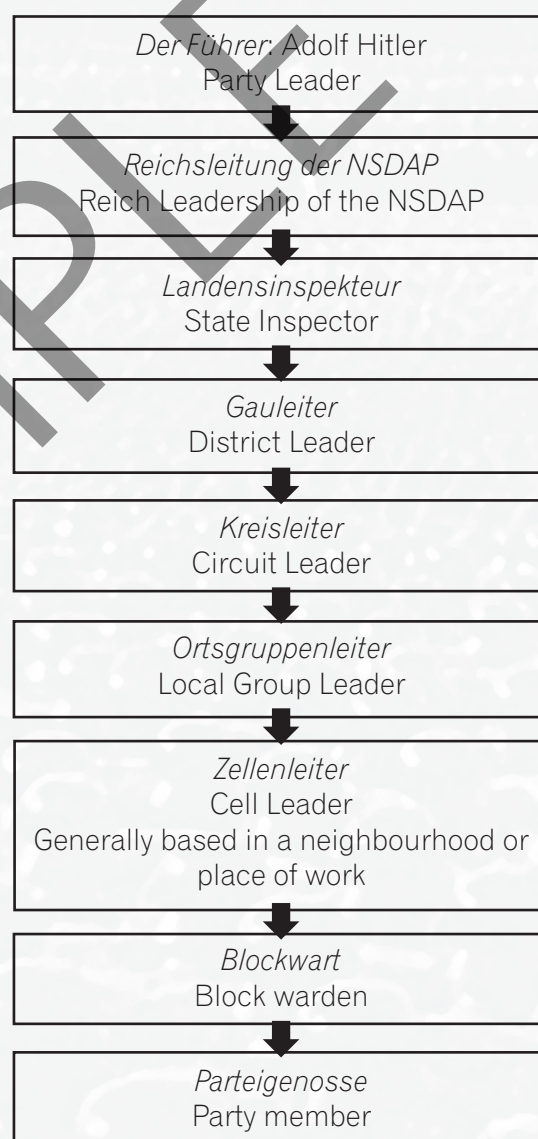
# THE THIRD REICH?

as the economy or institutions that shaped Nazism in power. According to Hans Mommsen, Martin Broszat, Tim Mason and others Hitler was not the strong dictator but one constrained by his habits and circumstances.<sup>13</sup>

More recently, Ian Kershaw, among others, has come to a position that combines intentionalism and structuralism. Kershaw argues that Hitler's intentions created an environment that provided others with the structures and opportunity to pursue their own initiatives. Often these ideas competed with each other and so on occasion Hitler or wider circumstances, like the economy or war, would determine the final outcome.<sup>14</sup> This particular interpretation is often described as 'working towards the *Führer*'. For Kershaw this idea encapsulates the complex structures of power in the Third Reich. These structures included Hitler's absolutism, the lack of clear ideological frameworks, the erosion of a formal government and the emergence of various overlapping and competing institutions and responsibilities.<sup>15</sup>

The characterisation of the Third Reich as a regime dominated by one individual, Adolf Hitler, is a tempting explanation. As a model it is simple. It attributes responsibility to an individual rather than a range of amorphous organisations, individuals and developments. Importantly none of these models attempt to free Hitler from responsibility, he is always regarded as a key player. What they attempt to explain is the way the political system of the regime in power functioned. This is an important task for any historian seeking to understand the Third Reich. Understanding the nature of Nazi rule in Germany helps explain how a variety of fascism had such cataclysmic consequences; the Holocaust and the Second world War.

## Organisational Structure of the NSDAP



## Conclusion

The political culture of the interwar decades was dominated by three competing ideologies; liberal democracy, communism and fascism. The aspirations of these movements, be they the recognition that sovereignty lay in the people, in a class or in a nation, had far reaching consequences. Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points had emphasised the desirability of nation states established on liberal democratic foundations. In 1919 this idea appeared to dominate the new map of Europe. Communism and fascism both emerged as direct challengers to this ideology. In Russia, the Bolshevik Revolution overthrew the fledgling liberal democracy of the Provisional Government, establishing a new society that culminated in a brutal totalitarian state under the leadership of Stalin. The threat of a worldwide proletarian revolution, while never realised, haunted the imagination of Europe. Partly in response to this but also due to a rejection of liberalism, fascism too emerged as an ideological contender. First in Italy and later in Germany, fascism established dictatorships while similar smaller movements advocated the establishment of similar states in most European nations.

By 1939 the age of democracy seemed over. The rise of communism and fascism, the establishment of other authoritarian dictatorships in eastern, central and southern Europe meant that on the eve of the Second World War democracy held power only on the western fringe of Europe; France, Britain, Ireland, the Low Countries, Scandinavia and Switzerland. The war that followed, the Second World War, would therefore be not just the playing out of the international balance of power but a conflict of world views.

# Further Reading

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## General

**Jonathan Glover, *Humanity: A Moral History of the Twentieth Century*, New Haven, 1999.**

In this profound meditation on the brutal history of the century Glover helps the reader to understand what happens when utopian visions go bad. There are excellent chapters on Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany.

**Richard Overy, *The Dictators: Hitler's Germany, Stalin's Russia*, London, 2005.**

This is an outstanding comparative study of the two dictators featured in this chapter. Overy draws immensely practical lessons on the nature of totalitarian societies and how the myth of the great leader lulls ordinary people into accepting the most terrifying consequences.

## Soviet Russia

**Anne Applebaum, *Gulag: A History*, London, 2003.**

The Russian Revolution cannot be understood without taking into account the Gulags. This is the most comprehensive study yet made of the Soviet concentration camps.

**Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar*, London, 2004.**

This is now probably the best single volume biographical study of Joseph Stalin and his inner circle, describing how Stalin came to be so loved and hated at the same time.

## Nazi Germany

**Michael Burleigh, *The Third Reich: A New History*, London, 2001.**

Burleigh has written a very accessible single volume history. It addresses the extent to which Nazism was a secular religion and how this fact influenced the politics of fascism.

**Richard J. Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich*, London, 2003.**

From its origins in shady groups of extremists and beer halls, how did the Nazis achieve total power in such a relatively short time? Evans provides a gripping historical account.



## Endnotes

- 1 Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991*, London, 1994, p.23.
- 2 Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age*, London, 1989.
- 3 Leon Trotsky, *The Russian Revolution: The Overthrow of Tzarism and the Triumph of the Soviets*, New York, 1959, p.304.
- 4 This was something that the Soviet Union would try to address following the Second World War.
- 5 The most comprehensive study of this so far is Anne Applebaum's, *Gulag: A History*, Penguin Books, London, 2003.
- 6 Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar*, London, 2004, pp.3-5.
- 7 Richard J. Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich*, pp.350–352.
- 8 Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich*, pp.347–349.
- 9 Richard Overy, *The Penguin Historical Atlas of the Third Reich*, London, 1996, p 32.
- 10 For a detailed discussion of Hitler as a charismatic leader see Joseph Nyomarkay, *Charisma and Factionalism in the Nazi Party*, Minneapolis, 1967.
- 11 See Ian Kershaw, *The Hitler Myth: Image and Reality in the Third Reich*, New York, 1989.
- 12 For examples see Eberhard Jäckel, *Hitler's World View: A Blueprint for Power*, Middletown, Conn, 1972; Karl Dietrich Bracher, *The German Dictatorship: The Origins, Structure and Consequences of National Socialism*, Harmondsworth, 1973; Alan Bullock, *Hitler: A Study of Tyranny*, Harmondsworth, 1962. For a detailed discussion of the historiography of the Nazism see Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*, Third Edition, London, 1993.
- 13 For examples see Hans Mommsen, *From Weimar to Auschwitz*, Oxford, 1991; Martin Broszat, *The Hitler State: The Foundation and Development of the Internal Structure of the Third Reich*, London, 1981; Tim Mason, *Nazism, Fascism and the Working Class*, Cambridge, 1995
- 14 Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship*, p.79.
- 15 Ian Kershaw, *Hitler, 1889–1936: Hubris*, London, 1998, pp.529–530.