

Past Exam Questions: Germany 1900-1945: From Kaiser to Führer

June 2010

1. 'Hitler became Chancellor in January 1933 **because** he was leader of the most popular party in Germany.' **How far do you agree** with this opinion?

Type of question	Factor
Paragraph 1	1. Nazi popularity - mass movement: propaganda, volkspartei, key support from business and army
Paragraph 2	2. Nazi popularity - Electoral success: election results of July/November 1932, access to popular support in Reichstag
Paragraph 3	3. Mistakes of establishment: unpopularity of existing regime, Brüning, Papen, Schleicher mistakes
Paragraph 4	4. Political intrigue: Believed they could control him, gave in to Hitler's demands, political intrigue and deals
Judgement	Most important: Mistakes of the establishment → caused desperate atmosphere in which Hitler was seen as only viable authoritarian alternative.

2. 'The Final Solution evolved **because** of the chaotic nature of the Nazi Regime in the years 1939–42.' **How far do you agree** with this opinion?

Type of question	Factor
Paragraph 1	1. Chaotic nature (the state): No formal restraints, rivals vying to work towards Führer - cumulative radicalisation, Experiences from euthanasia programme, anti-Semitic propaganda (EG: 1938 Kristallnacht, Heydrich, ordered authorities to arrest as many Jews as prisons could contain → Legislation accompanied with propaganda making it seem necessary.
Paragraph 2	1. The war: Goebbels = 'not the second world war but the great racial war', Mass killings began in Poland in 1939, escalated during invasion of USSR, not just SS Einsatzgruppen but ordinary Wehrmacht. WW2 disrupted plans for emigration, meant Germany controlled millions more Jews, Brutalised people (Germans were dying so killing enemies justified), Intensified paranoia about enemy within
Paragraph 3	2. Hitler: anti-Semitic, often referred to the 'removal' and 'eradication' of the Jewish people, masked deliberately by euphemisms like 'resettlement'/'special handling' or 'final solution', never signed a document authorising Holocaust, didn't act in a bureaucratic way, high-ranking officials said Hitler knew, whole state worked towards the will of the Führer, idea that he disapproved of it is inconceivable
Paragraph 4	1. The people: Studies show that thousands of ordinary Germans (not party members) willingly participated, (>100,000), regime tried to keep it secret, rumours, small number actually involved (most Ukrainians/non-Germans), Catholic church knew of murders, widespread propaganda, but not all Germans = 'eliminationists'.
Judgement	Most important: The war → contributed most to cumulative radicalisation.

June 2011

1. **To what extent** was the effective government of Germany in the years 1919–33 handicapped by the nature of the Weimar Constitution?

Type of question	Extent – Agree/Disagree
Paragraph 1	1. Agree - Article 48: Used extensively from 1930-33 which eliminated opposition but made frustrations grow – no majority, eliminated democracy in Prussian coup d'état BUT used to good effect in hyperinflation and tackling of Munich Putsch in 1923
Paragraph 2	2. Agree - Proportional Representation: Lots of small parties represented in Reichstag – Bayernbund in 1928 etc.
Paragraph 3	3. Disagree – Nature of Parties: Stubborn refusal of SPD to join coalitions, movements of DNVP, Parties as interest groups, fringe parties campaign on narrow platform. Muller coalition fails and makes very few laws.
Paragraph 4	4. Disagree – Opposition: Growing urban class – threat of KPD, threat from left and right, conservative right and elites, unreformed institutions. Hindenburg's nature
Judgement	Disagree – Opposition/Nature of Parties → disrupted effective government policy in turbulent early years, then the conservative elites made for ineffective government, even during 'stable' period.

2. **To what extent** did the Nazi Regime face serious opposition within Germany during the years 1939–45?

Type of question	Extent – Agree/Disagree
Paragraph 1	1. Agree – Conservatives: Goerdeler circle, Kreisau circle, contacted allies, included many conservatives which had originally brought Hitler to power
Paragraph 2	2. Agree – Army (Operation Flash, Bomb Plot): Potential to kill Hitler, shook his confidence when already losing war. Public shock, created shockwave across country, restored respect to army, showed not all converted to Nazism.
Paragraph 3	3. Disagree – Youth/Church: Individual not institutional – Edelweiss pirates executed, White Rose group active but silenced, Bishop von Galen put a stop to T4 programme and crucifixes removed BUT not opposition to state, more concerned with preservation of religion. Dietrich Bonhoeffer defied church policy – executed.
Paragraph 4	4. Disagree – The Left: Weak and divided between SPD and SPD, forced underground. 89 resistance cells in Berlin but little else. Fringe groups: red patrol, new beginning, socialist front.
Judgement	Disagree: Church/Left → individual dissent, opposition split and divided over aims. Church strong in support, but mainly concerned with preservation of values

June 2012

1. To what extent was Germany a parliamentary democracy in the years 1900–14?

Type of question	Extent – Agree/Disagree
Paragraph 1	1. Agree: Presence of Reichstag/Lander: Reichstag elected by all men over 25, state assemblies give states authority over local education, policing, health etc., Reichstag could debate budget and finance bills
Paragraph 2	2. Agree: Opposition to Kaiser's actions: Tariff laws of 1902 – successful sidelining of Kaiser, budgetary crisis, fall of Bulow bloc, opposition to actions in Daily Telegraph affair and Zabern Affair – vote of no confidence on Bethmann Hollweg.
Paragraph 3	3. Disagree: Dominance of Prussia: Dominates Bundesrat (17 seats with 14 needed for a veto), Chancellor and Kaiser also governed Prussia, Imperial government made up of landed nobility.
Paragraph 4	4. Disagree: Dominance of Kaiser: Silences Reichstag in Zabern Affair, replaces Bulow when he loses his trust
Judgement	Disagree: Dominance of Prussia and Kaiser → Entrenched autocracy

2. 'The transformation in the fortunes of the Nazi Party in the years 1930–33 was largely **because** of Hitler's remarkable talents as a politician.' **How far do you agree** with this opinion?

Type of question	Factor
Paragraph 1	1. Hitler's talents: Refused to back down or take vice chancellorships, wanted chancellor role, oratory skills, control over party, mass movement
Paragraph 2	2. Propaganda/party structure: Goebbels, Gauleiter, modern use of technology, aeroplane electioneering, mass movement
Paragraph 3	3. Impact of the Great depression: 6 million unemployed, 50,000 businesses bankrupt, 5 major banks close, Bruining the Hungry Chancellor
Paragraph 4	4. Mistakes of the existing government: Lack of action by Bruining, failure of Papen to gain a majority, failure of Schleicher's cross front, belief that Hitler can be controlled.
Judgement	Mistakes of existing government → could have made decisive action to deal with economy, and political intrigue and personal motives of Papen and Schleicher meant they overlooked Hitler as a threat

June 2013

1. **To what extent** did the social and political tensions that existed within the Second Reich increase during the First World War?

Type of question	Extent – Agree/Disagree
Paragraph 1	1. Increase: Class divisions: Junkers remain dominant, kept tax privileges,
Paragraph 2	2. Increase: Political divisions: USPD formed, divide on the left,
Paragraph 3	3. Decrease: Dominance of Kaiser: Silent dictatorship take over.
Paragraph 4	4. Decrease: Unity/opposition: Burgfrieden, all affected by shortages, votes for peace resolution, Treaty of Brest Litovsk
Judgement	Agree: → Tensions increase but Kaiser is sidelined.

2. **How far do you agree** that the new Weimar Republic was seriously threatened by political extremists in the years 1919–24?

Type of question	Extent – Agree/Disagree
Paragraph 1	1. Agree: Right wing: Kapp Putsch. Munich Putsch, Organisation Consul
Paragraph 2	2. Agree: Conservative elites: Undermined the regime from within
Paragraph 3	3. Disagree: Left wing: Spartacist Uprising, Bavarian Uprising easily put down by Freikorps
Paragraph 4	4. Disagree: Public support: Elections showed pro-Weimar support = 76%, strikes during Kapp putsch, protests against political murders (>700,000 people).
Judgement	Disagree: → Left divided, public support for regime

June 2014

1. **How far do you agree** with the view that, in the years 1919–29, the democratic experiment in Germany must be seen as a success?

Type of question	Extent – Agree/Disagree
Paragraph 1	1. Agree: Golden Years: Support for pro-Weimar parties, rich culture
Paragraph 2	2. Agree: Economic success: Dawes Plan, boom in German economy, Young Plan
Paragraph 3	3. Disagree: Opposition movements: Threat from left and right, conservative elites heavily biased, DNVP, industrial and agricultural unrest, growth of fringe parties
Paragraph 4	4. Disagree: Parties as interest groups: System failed to develop, 7 governments 1923–30, Muller government, movements of DNVP, SPD reluctance to join coalitions
Judgement	Disagree: opposition/nature of parties

2. 'Nazi war production in the years 1939–45 was essentially inefficient.' **How far do you agree** with this view?

Type of question	Extent – Agree/Disagree
Paragraph 1	1. Agree: Raw Materials/Early inefficiencies: Never enough of a supply to stop problems, Donbas region of Ukraine produced 5% of pre-war output, imports of iron ore remained constant instead of increasing, skilled labourers being conscripted to fight led to shortages
Paragraph 2	2. Agree: Labour Force – foreign and female: 6.4 million foreign labourers had a productivity of 60-80% less than a German worker, badly treated, women not fully mobilised due to ideology and relatively high pre-war female employment rate
Paragraph 3	3. Disagree: Blitzkrieg wars 1939-41, importance of consumer: Severe sacrifices not made until 1942, consumer prioritised, appeared to be successful as Germany conquered France, Belgium, Luxemburg, Holland by 1940.
Paragraph 4	4. Disagree: Speer's rationalisation: Improved inefficiencies, munitions production doubled 1941-43, 55% of labour force conscripted for post, impressive given allied bombing campaign
Judgement	Agree: Raw materials, labour → remained a problem throughout the war and not solved by Speer's rationalisation