

AS

History

20 Democracy and Nazism: Germany, 1918-1933
Report on the Examination

7041/20
June 2018

Version: 1.0

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General

In general, there was some evidence of improvement in terms of the responses from students. It is clear that many students were well prepared and had a good grasp of structure and technique, especially for Question 1. Both essay questions, on Weimar economic stability and the role of Brüning's failures in bringing Hitler to power, were popular and, in the main, tackled effectively. Students need to always ensure, however, that the focus of their answer is maintained with reference to the question so that explicit understanding can be shown.

Question 01

Students found the sources (not extracts) in Question 1 accessible and allowed them to show their understanding of the provenance, tone and emphasis of these sources. They were also able to bring in their own contextual knowledge of the attitudes to and impact of, the Treaty of Versailles to further challenge and support their value. Most students dealt with each source in turn, assessing their content and provenance before forming a comparative conclusion at the end as to which was the most valuable. Students should remember that clear and substantial comparison is needed in order to form meaningful conclusions as to which source has the most value. Most students did address the provenance, tone and emphasis of each source but weaker responses resorted to general comments about bias or lapses in memory whereas stronger responses did try to integrate the provenance and tone into the wider emphasis of the source as well as addressing issues such as motive, audience and origin. Students should also be aware that this is a depth topic and that they do need to show meaningful and relevant own contextual knowledge in order to fully assess the value of the sources for the focus set by the question. Weaker responses again resorted to commenting on phrases within the source for accuracy rather than really supporting or challenging the arguments and points analytically with clear use of knowledge. Strong answers did note the subtle difference in emphasis between these two sources, especially as both came from SPD members, arguing that both Scheidemann and Schiff saw the Treaty itself as very harmful and challenging but saw the German response to it, as well the impact of the Treaty itself, very differently. Weaker answers which assumed that Schiff was somehow in favour of the Treaty, or that the Treaty was good for Germany, were less effective and convincing. Finally, students should be aware that it is a far more convincing approach to analyse, support and challenge the arguments as well as the provenance which is evident in the extracts for value rather than rely on examining what is not included in the sources.

Question 02

This was a popular choice for students and one which was often completed to a very good standard. Good answers were focused, had clear supporting evidence which is expected and necessary for a depth paper, were balanced and contained substantive judgements. Weaker responses focused primarily on 1923-24, describing hyperinflation and the response to it or lost focus and began to describe the 'Golden Years', bringing in political and international elements not directly relevant to the question. Keeping within the timeframe of the question is extremely important in ensuring focused answers and weaker responses sometimes tended to focus on the Great Depression or the Young Plan without tying this to a clear argument from 1924-28. The strongest answers had a clear conceptual understanding which meant they were able to link their analysis to the issue of stability in terms of relative, genuine or superficial. Weaker answers

tended to describe the economic changes made without clearly linking them to impact on stability and judgement on the extent of this stability.

Question 03

This question was also popular with students and a wide range of responses were evident. The stronger answers were able to provide meaningful and supported information on the role of Brüning in terms of his economic and political changes and the impact this had, both on the Weimar Democracy but also on Hitler's rise to power, as the questions demands. These strong answers were also able to put the role of Brüning into the wider context of Hitler's own role in his rise to power as well as the wider issues such as the backstairs intrigue and fear of communism and form judgements based on these interlinked factors. Weaker responses did lack knowledge on Brüning and therefore either made general and very vague references to him or ignored his role completely. These students tended to write pre-planned answers on Hitler's rise to power and therefore did not fully understand the demands of this question.

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