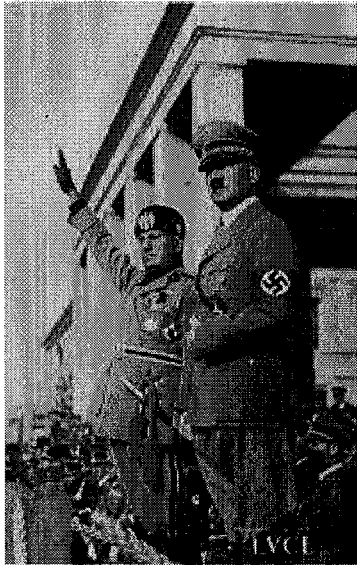


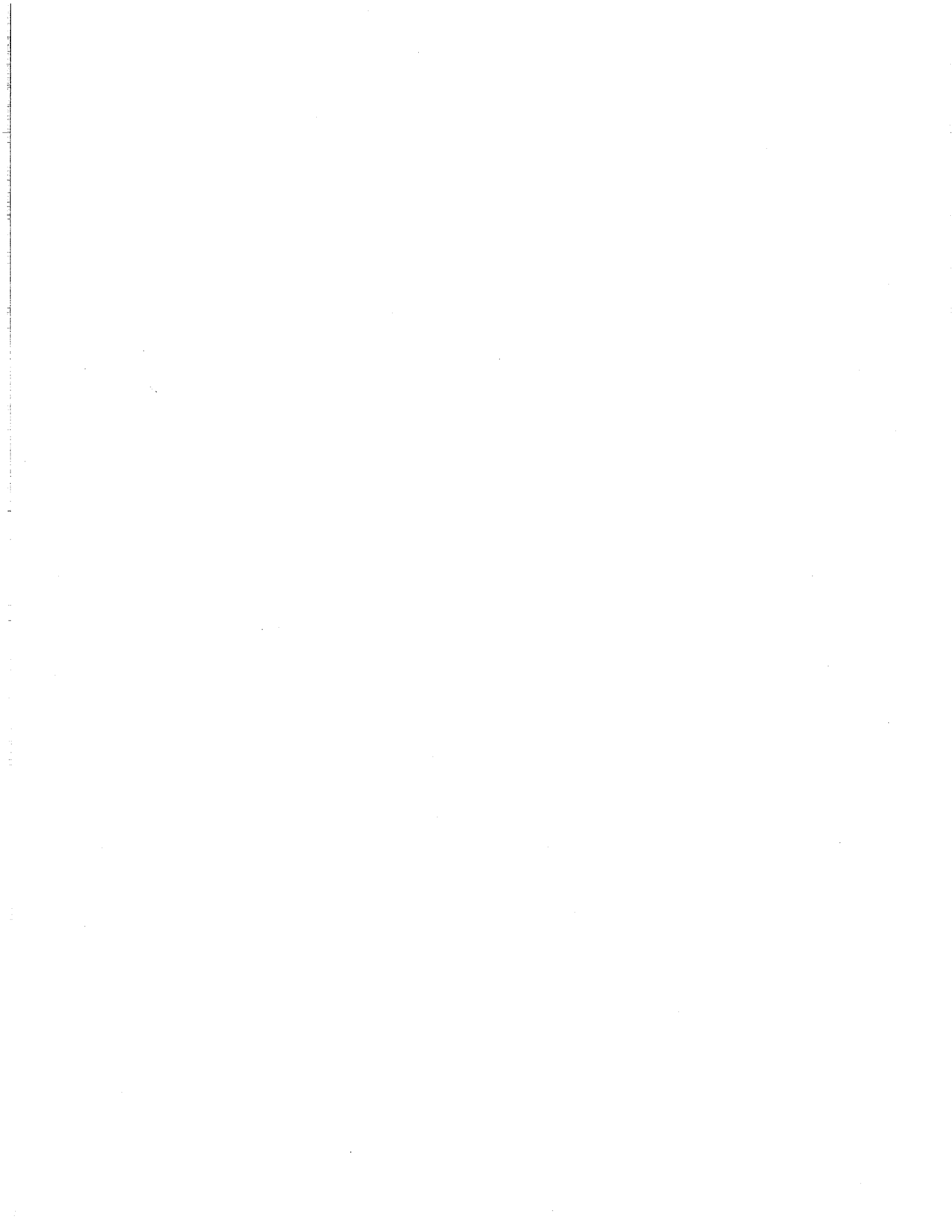
FASCISTS AND THE POWER OF THE STATE



NAME _____

PERIOD _____

DUE DATE _____



Fascists and the Power of the State

Global History and Geography



Excerpt adapted from
fordham.edu

“Benito Mussolini (1883-1945) over the course of his lifetime went from Socialism - he was editor of *Avanti*, a socialist newspaper - to the leadership of a new political movement called “fascism” [after “fascēs”, the symbol of bound sticks used as a totem of power in ancient Rome]...

“Fascism conceives of the State as an absolute, in comparison with which all individuals or groups are relative, only to be conceived of in their relation to the State...For Fascism, the growth of empire, that is to say the expansion of the nation, is an essential manifestation of vitality, and its opposite a sign of decadence ...” ~Mussolini

Excerpt adapted from bbc.co.uk

“Benito Mussolini (1883-1945) was the founder of Fascism and leader of Italy from 1922 to 1943. In March 1919, Mussolini formed the Fascist Party, galvanizing the support of many unemployed war veterans. He organized them into armed squads known as Black Shirts, who terrorized their political opponents. In 1921, the Fascist Party was invited to join the coalition government.

By October 1922, Italy seemed to be slipping into political chaos. The Black Shirts marched on Rome and Mussolini presented himself as the only man capable of restoring order. King Victor Emmanuel invited Mussolini to form a government. He gradually dismantled the institutions of democratic government and in 1925 made himself dictator, taking the title ‘Il Duce’. He set about attempting to re-establish Italy as a great European power. The regime was held together by strong state control and Mussolini’s cult of personality.”

Questions:

1: Who was Benito Mussolini?

2: How did Mussolini come to power?

3: What problems did many nations face after WWI (from previous lesson)?

4: What did Mussolini and the Black Shirts promise the Italian people?

5: According to Fascists, what is the role of the State? _____



German money being used for cooking fuel in 1924

Questions:

1: Why would any sane person burn money?

2: What problems faced Germans after WWI?

3: Who was Adolf Hitler and what did he promise the German people?

4: How did Adolf Hitler come to power?

5: What were the Nuremberg Laws?

6: How did Fascist dictators eventually affect countries beyond their borders?

7: Why did Fascism appeal to many people after WWI?

Excerpt adapted from junobeach.org

“The economic depression that follows the 1929 stock market crash has a dramatic impact on European and American nations ...Germany, humiliated by the Treaty of Versailles, stripped of its colonies and forced to compensate the allies for war damages, is also facing a major crisis. The economic situation results in a severe depression, which for many exemplifies the failure of capitalism. The National Socialist Party of German Workers (National-Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei or NSDAP) strikes an alliance with extreme-right industrialists to counter the rise of communism. The NSDAP, or Nazi Party, is ruled by a charismatic leader, Adolph (Adolf) Hitler, who inflames the crowds by promising a strong Germany, freed from the humiliation of the Treaty of Versailles and reconciled with its past military grandeur. Through propoganda, manipulation and terror, Hitler eliminates all forms of opposition and on January 30, 1933, is named Chancellor. The following year, after a bloody repression, he takes on the title of Fuehrer (Supreme Leader) of the Third Reich and seeks popular approval of the move through the August 19 referendum...

In 1935, Hitler proclaims the Nuremberg Racial Laws that deprive Jews of their civil rights and pave the way to their persecution. The brutality and intolerance of the Fascist and Nazi regimes are now blatant but their action still restricted to their national territories. Starting in 1935, both dictators will launch attacks beyond their borders and threaten the whole of Europe...”

"Demoralize the enemy from within by surprise, terror, sabotage, assassination. This is the war of the future."

-Adolf Hitler



Excerpt adapted from bbc.co.uk

“When the Wall Street stock market crashed in October 1929, the world economy was plunged into the Great Depression. By the winter of 1932, America was in the depths of the greatest depression in its history.

Excerpt adapted from bbc.co.uk

“Causes of the Depression”

As early as 1926, there were signs that the boom was under threat:

1. ...Collapse of land prices in Florida
2. ... Too many goods being made and not enough people to buy them
3. Farmers had produced too much food in the 1920s, so prices...became...lower
4. There were too many small banks - these banks did not have enough funds to cope with the sudden rush to take out savings...
5. Too much speculation on the stock market - the middle class had a lot to lose and they had spent a lot on what amounted to pieces of paper.

The Wall Street Crash of October 1929 was a massive psychological blow...America had lent huge sums of money to European countries. When the stock market collapsed, they suddenly recalled those loans. This had a devastating impact on the European economy.

The number of unemployed people reached upwards of 13 million. Many people lived in primitive conditions close to famine. One New York family moved into a cave in Central Park. In St Louis, more than 1,000 people lived in shacks made from scrap metal and boxes. There were many similar Hoovervilles all over America. Between 1 and 2 million people travelled the country desperately looking for work. Signs saying 'No Men Wanted' were displayed all over the country...”

Questions:

1: What were the causes of the Great Depression?

2: What were the effects of the Great Depression?



Questions:

1: According to the passage, what concept does Fascism oppose?

2: According to the passage, what do Fascists believe is the true reality of the individual?

3: What concept matters most to Fascists, according to the passage?

4: How does Fascism differ from democracy?

5: Why would some people willingly give up their rights to the Fascist state?

6: What do you think happened to those individuals who did not willingly give up their rights in Fascist states?

7: What economic conditions increased the popularity of Fascists?

8: What can happen in a society where the State is all-powerful?

9: How did the Treaty of Versailles encourage the growth of Fascism?

Excerpt adapted from
wwwnorton.com

“Against individualism, the Fascist conception is for the State; and it is for the individual in so far as he coincides with the State...It is opposed to classical Liberalism, which arose from the necessity of reacting against absolutism, and which brought its historical purpose to an end when the State was transformed into the conscience and will of the people.

Liberalism denied the State in the interests of the particular individual; Fascism reaffirms the State as the true reality of the individual. And if liberty is to be the attribute of the real man, and not of that abstract puppet envisaged by individualistic Liberalism, Fascism is for liberty. And for the only liberty which can be a real thing, the liberty of the State and of the individual within the State. Therefore, for the Fascist, everything is in the State, and nothing human or spiritual exists, much less has value, outside the State. In this sense Fascism is totalitarian, and the Fascist State, the synthesis and unity of all values, interprets, develops and gives strength to the whole life of the people.”

Critical Thinking Question:

Could Fascism ever become a powerful force in world history again?

Weimar Republic biographies**Gerda Munchen**

Gerda Munchen is the owner of a small Munich grocery store started by her parents. For years, her parents saved to send her to the university. But Munchen chose not to go and the money stayed in the bank. In 1923, she had planned to use the money to pay for her children's education. But that year inflation hit Germany. Just before her older daughter was to leave for the university, the bank informed the family that its savings were worthless. This was a blow to Munchen, but even more of a blow to her daughter, whose future hung in the balance. Munchen does not think she will ever regain her savings. With so many people out of work, sales are down sharply. And Munchen's small grocery is having a tough time competing with the large chain stores. They can offer far lower prices. She and her children question a system that has made life so difficult for hardworking people.

Albert Benjamin

Albert Benjamin is a professor of mathematics at the University of Berlin. While his grandparents were religious Jews, Benjamin is not religious. Benjamin's three brothers, however, are religious Jews. He is very proud of his German heritage, and even volunteered to serve in the German Army during World War I. After the war, Benjamin married Eva Steiner. Eva is Protestant and they are raising their three children as Christians. Benjamin is concerned because prices have gone up while his salary as a professor has not. His family can no longer afford vacations and special presents for the children. His wife worries that if the economic problems continue, the family might have to cut back on spending for food.

Eric von Ronheim

Eric von Ronheim, the head of a Frankfurt textile (fabric) factory, is very concerned about the depression. Sales are down and so are profits. If only Germany had not been treated so ruthlessly at Versailles, he argues, the nation would be far better off. Instead the government has had to impose heavy taxes to pay reparations to its former enemies. As a result, Germans are overtaxed with little money to spend on textiles and other consumer goods. The worldwide depression has made matters worse by making it difficult to sell German products to other countries. Even if the depression were over, Ronheim does not think taxes would come down because of reparation payments.

Weimar Republic: Primary source documents

The Weimar Constitution (approved in 1919)

After Germany lost World War I, the king left the country and a new government was formed. It was called the Weimar Republic because it was formed in Weimar, a city in Germany. One of the first acts of this new government was to write a constitution. A constitution is a document which sets up the way a nation will govern itself. Questions such as "Who writes the laws? Who picks the leaders? Who is a citizen? And what rights do they have?" are answered in a nation's constitution.

Excerpts from the Weimar Constitution²**Article 22**

Members of parliament are elected in a general, equal, immediate and secret election; voters are men and women older than 20 years . . .

Article 109

All Germans are equal in front of the law . . .

Article 118

Every German is entitled, within the bounds set by general law, to express his opinion freely in word, writing, print, image or otherwise . . .

Article 123

All Germans have the right to assemble peacefully and unarmed . . .

Article 135

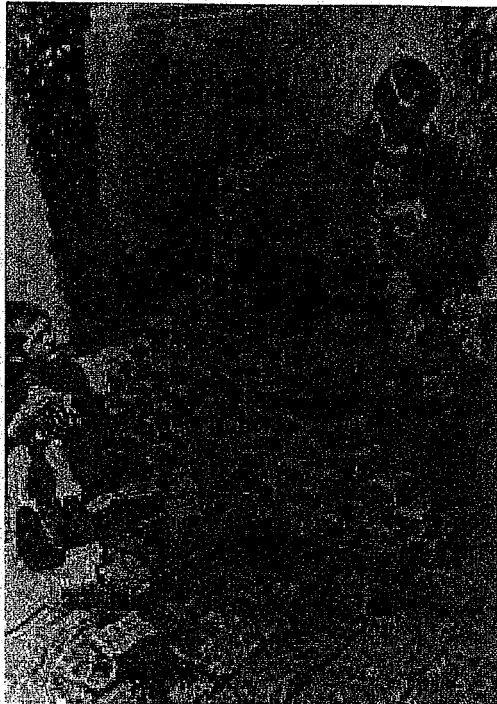
All Reich inhabitants enjoy full freedom of liberty and conscience. Undisturbed practice of religion is guaranteed by the constitution and is placed under the protection of the state . . .

Questions:

1. When was the Weimar Constitution approved?
2. What does the constitution say about elections?
3. What rights does the Weimar Constitution give to German citizens living at this time?
4. What thoughts or opinions might _____ (the German citizen you have been assigned) have had about any of the ideas in the Weimar Constitution?

Weimar Republic: Primary source documents

Hyperinflation

**Germans describe life during the hyper-inflation:**

Lingering at the [shop] window was a luxury because shopping had to be done immediately. Even an additional minute meant an increase in price. One had to buy quickly because a rabbit, for example, might cost two million marks more by the time it took to walk into the store. A few million marks meant nothing, really. It was just that it meant more lugging. . . . People had to start carting their money around in wagons and knapsacks.³

Of course all the little people who had small savings were wiped out. But the big factories and banking houses and multimillionaires didn't seem to be affected at all. They went right on piling up their millions. Those big holdings were protected somehow from loss. But the mass of the people were completely broke. And we asked ourselves, "How can that happen?" But after that, even those people who used to save didn't trust money anymore, or the government. We decided to have a high-ho time whenever we had any spare money, which wasn't often.⁴

Inflation is when money loses its value. During an inflation, you need more money to buy the same item (e.g., \$3 to buy milk when it used to cost \$2). Hyperinflation is very high inflation. This picture, taken in 1923, shows German children playing with stacks of money. Because of hyperinflation, German money had become virtually worthless. People even put paper money in their stoves, instead of wood, to heat their homes.

Questions:

1. When was this photograph taken?
2. Describe what you see in this photograph.
3. What does this image and the quotations tell you about how hyperinflation impacted life in Germany at this time? How might it feel to live in Germany at this time?
4. How might hyperinflation have impacted _____ (the German citizen you have been assigned)?

Weimar Republic: Primary source documents

Mein Kampf ("My Struggle") —
published in 1925Quotations from *Mein Kampf*:

"The Jew has always been a people with definite racial characteristics and never a religion."¹⁵

"What we must fight for is to safeguard the existence and reproduction of our race and our people, the sustenance of our children and the purity of our blood, the freedom and independence of the fatherland, so that our people may mature for the fulfillment of the mission allotted it by the creator of the universe."¹⁶

"[T]he personification of the devil as the symbol of all evil assumes the living shape of the Jew."¹⁷

Hitler wrote *Mein Kampf* ("My Struggle") while he was in jail for treason (trying to overthrow the German government). In this book, Hitler writes about many of the ideas in the Nazi Party platform. He writes that one cannot be both a German and a Jew and that the Jews are hurting Germany. He also writes that Germans are part of a superior race and that Germany should have never signed the Versailles Treaty.

Questions:

1. When was *Mein Kampf* written? By whom?
2. What ideas are expressed in this book?
3. What do you think _____ (the German citizen you have been assigned) would have thought if he/she read *Mein Kampf*? Would any of the ideas have appealed to him/her?

Weimar Republic Historical Context: Primary source documents

Culture and Arts During the Weimar Republic



Metropolis by Otto Dix (1928)

Otto Dix painted *Metropolis* to represent the cultural life of many German cities during the Weimar Republic. Throughout the 1920s in Germany, the arts flourished. The number of dance halls (cabarets), art galleries, and movie houses increased. While some Germans were excited by this artistic growth, other Germans saw the music, films, and images as evidence that German culture was becoming immoral and out of control. Even though the Weimar Constitution said that Germans had the right to freedom of expression, many artists, including Otto Dix, were fined or arrested for producing work that was considered "anti-German" by judges.

Questions:

1. When was *Metropolis* painted?
2. Describe this painting. What do you see?
3. What message do you think the artist is trying to send about art and culture during the Weimar Republic?
4. What do you think _____ (the German citizen you have been assigned) would have thought about German culture during the Weimar Republic? Would he/she have been more likely to be excited about artistic freedom or worried that this art was evidence of Germany's moral decline?

Weimar Republic: Primary source documents

Depression



Depression is a word used to describe a time when many workers are unemployed. During a depression, companies make less money and some may close. As a result, workers lose their jobs. Without regular paychecks, many workers and their families struggle. They might not have money to buy food or pay rent.

In 1929, Germany's economy was in a depression. With so many people out of work and with wages low, many Germans relied on the government and charities for food. This photograph, taken in 1930, shows a long line of men waiting for soup in Berlin. In 1932, Germany's economy was still suffering and the unemployment rate remained very high.

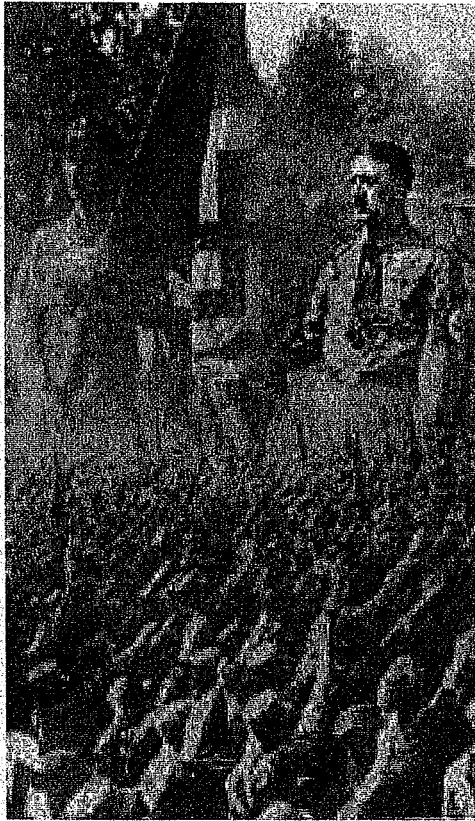
Questions:

1. When was this photograph taken?
2. Describe what you see in this image.
3. What does this image tell you about life in Germany at this time? How might it feel to live in Germany at this time?
4. How might the depression have impacted _____ (the German citizen you have been assigned)?

Purpose: To deepen understanding of how historical context can impact decision-making by studying Weimar Germany. • 107

Weimar Republic: Primary source documents

Fear in the Streets: Nazi Stormtroopers



James Luther Adams, an American student, attended a Nazi rally in 1927. A young Nazi supporter told him that it was necessary for Germany to be free of Jewish blood. Adams asked him where the Jews would go if they were forced to leave Germany. The conversation continued and suddenly, somebody grabbed Luther and dragged him down an alley. Luther recalls what happened next:

I didn't know what was going to happen to me. Was he going to beat me up because of what I had been saying . . . He shouted at me in German, "You damn fool, don't you know that in Germany today you keep your mouth shut or you'll get your head bashed in. . . . You know what I have done. I've saved you from getting beaten up. They were not going to continue arguing with you. You were going to be lying flat on the pavement."⁸

This postcard made in 1930 shows a crowd of Germans saluting Hitler. Next to Hitler is a Nazi stormtrooper. Stormtroopers were the military branch of the Nazi Party. Hitler organized the stormtroopers to protect Nazi meetings and rallies. Many of the stormtroopers were former soldiers who were now unemployed. They often carried weapons and intimidated people who spoke against the Nazi Party.

Questions:

1. When was this postcard made?
2. Describe what you see in this image.
3. What does this image tell you about life in Germany at this time? How might it feel to live in Germany at this time?
4. How might these conditions at Nazi rallies (and in the streets as well) have impacted _____ (the German citizen you have been assigned)?

Weimar Republic: Primary source documents

1932 Nazi Election Posters



In July of 1932, Germans voted in national elections. Before the elections, the Nazi Party, as well as other political parties, used posters as one way to attract voters. In the photograph on the left, German youth are standing next to an election poster that says, "Adolf Hitler will provide work and bread. Elect List 2!" The posters on the wall behind them are Nazi election posters urging women and workers to vote for the Nazis. The poster on the right says, "Workers of the mind and hand, vote for the soldier Hitler."

Questions:

1. When were these posters made? Why were they made?
2. Describe what you see in these images.
3. What does this image tell you about life in Germany at this time?
4. How might Nazi posters like these have impacted _____ (the German citizen you have been assigned)?