Bentley Wood
High School for Girls

History
GCSE to A level

Bridging Work

Year 11 into 12 for 2024/25

Name: _____

Tutor Group: _____

Teacher: _____

Year 11 – 12 Bridging Work – Component 1: The Tudors 1485 – 1603

All due in first lesson in September. We will be assessing you on this very early on in September.

1) Complete a flipped learning sheet for each of the following people
(See attached sheet)

- Arthur Tudor,
- Lord Stanley,
- Thomas Wolsey
- Thomas Moore
- Margaret Beaufort,
- Thomas Cromwell
- Thomas Cranmer

2) **Create a PowerPoint Presentation on the Wars of The Roses.**
Email it to bmatchett@bentleywood.harrow.sch.uk

You may want to think that you are explain this to a group of year 7's who know nothing about this topic. What do you think they need to know?
This can be as long or as short as you like.
There will be test on this in September.

3) Literary Review
Read the article on Henry VII

Henry VII Problems and Possibilities by Steven Gunn

A. List all the historians and their publications that are referred to in this article
B. Summarise the problems faced by Henry VII
C. Summarise how he tried to overcome these problems

4) Book Review

Alison Weir and Philippa Gregory are both very popular authors who write Tudor Historical fiction.

Books to choose from (you can choose others)

https://www.philippagregory.com/books
http://www.alisonweir.org.uk/

Book Review Requirements

The Title and author of the book.

4)

Who are the characters?

What is it about?

What happened?

Who do you think should read it? Why?

5)

Ext – How close is it to the true historical context?

Flipped learning sheet

Topic:	
Write 5 key bullet points from what you have researched on this topic	
What have you done to ensure you remember this?	○ Made a mind map ○ Written a set of quiz questions ○ Taught a friend or family member ○ Been tested by a friend of family member ○ Created a Kahoot! Quiz
Where did I get my information from?	
What questions or thoughts I have as a result of this research	

Flipped learning record sheet for research at home

Topic:	
Write 5 key bullet points from what you have researched on this topic	
What have you done to ensure you remember this?	○ Made a mind map ○ Written a set of quiz questions ○ Taught a friend or family member ○ Been tested by a friend of family member ○ Created a Kahoot! Quiz
Where did I get my information from?	
What questions or thoughts I have as a result of this research	

Flipped learning record sheet for research at home

Topic:	
Write 5 key bullet points from what you have researched on this topic	
What have you done to ensure you remember this?	○ Made a mind map ○ Written a set of quiz questions ○ Taught a friend or family member ○ Been tested by a friend of family member ○ Created a Kahoot! Quiz
Where did I get my information from?	
What questions or thoughts I have as a result of this research	

Henry VII in Context: Problems and Possibilities

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Abstract
Clearer understanding of Henry VII's reign is hindered not only by practical problems, such as deficiencies in source material, but also by its liminal position in historical study, at the end of the period conventionally studied by later medievalists and the beginning of that studied by early modernists. This makes it harder to evaluate changes in the judicial system, in local power structures, in England's position in European politics, in the rise of new social groups to political prominence and in the ideas behind royal policy. However, thoughtful combination of the approaches taken by different historical schools and reflection on wider processes of change at work in Henry's reign, such as in England's cultural and economic life, can make a virtue out of Henry's liminality. Together with the use of more unusual sources, such an approach enables investigation for Henry's reign of many themes of current interest to historians of the later Tudor period. These include courtly, parliamentary and popular politics, political culture, state formation and the interrelationships of different parts of the British Isles and Ireland.

Henry VII is the victim of a sad paradox. 'Liminality' – existence on the threshold between two phases of a process – is a fashionable notion, so fashionable that some groups of students laugh excitedly each time one of them contrives to use the word. Henry VII, first of the Tudors, last of the Lancastrians, presiding over the end of the Wars of the Roses, the eve of the Reformation and the first English landfalls in North America, is surely a liminal king. Yet Henry VII is by no stretch of the imagination fashionable. To be outshone in public memory by his charismatic son and granddaughter, Henry VIII and Elizabeth, might be accepted as his dynastic duty. To be eclipsed in fame by the man he displaced is a bitter fate indeed. Since 1980 Richard III has scored six new biographies to Henry's two, at least four monographs to Henry's two, and three collections of scholarly essays to Henry's one; not to mention three edited collections of contemporary documents, a personalized academic journal and several Ricardian websites.

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Henry's liminality is institutionalized in the way historians write and teach. All too often his reign serves as the coda to surveys of later medieval England or the prologue to studies of the Tudors. This is not always a matter of superficial assimilation of his reign to some larger story. Sometimes the Tudorists decide he was not very Tudor, or the late medievalists decide that he was not very late medieval, or either decide that he was irredeemably unique. As T. B. Pugh put it, 'if ever there was a "New Monarchy" in England, it began and ended with Henry VII'.[1] The problem lies deeper than casual appropriation or divergence of judgement. Late medievalists and Tudor scholars inhabit different scholarly worlds, which prompt them to privilege different sources and ask different questions of the reign. To see Henry in proper perspective these two sets of debates must be drawn together, but it is not easily done. If we can do it, however, it will mean that we have two sets of questions, two hierarchies of sources, a finer analytical grid to apply to the reign where these questions and hierarchies cut across each other; and thus a subtler appreciation of Henry than we could ever have of a less acutely liminal monarch.

Sources, of course, are a problem: in large measure Geoffrey Elton's characterization of Henry's reign as 'an ill-documented period of history' still stands.[2] Chronicles for Henry's reign are fewer and less useful than for some earlier periods and the great gentry letter collections, led by the Paston letters, peter out. The records of the Exchequer are less helpful than they might be on account of the increasing financial role of the Chamber. Meanwhile, the records of more specialized financial agencies, dealing with crown estates, wardships, exactions from the church and so on, are less informative than those of their successors, the Tudor revenue courts. The surviving papers of royal ministers such as Sir Reynold Bray are a pale foreshadowing of the mighty Cromwell and Cecil archives.[3] The state paper collection is almost non-existent and there are no compensatory signet records like those of Richard III.[4] Other sources familiar to Tudor historians, such as the reports of foreign ambassadors at the English court, begin only stutteringly under Henry before blossoming under his son.

This pattern – in which the sorts of sources medievalists are accustomed to using thin out, while the sort early modernists are accustomed to using are too frail to bear much weight – is exemplified by the problems in testing Henry's success or failure in the doing of justice. The records

[1] T. B. Pugh, 'Henry VII and the English Nobility', in *The Tudor Nobility*, ed. G. W. Bernard (Manchester, 1992), p. 91. Pugh was echoing K. B. McFarlane's judgement on William the Conqueror, but doing so to challenge McFarlane's assessment of Henry.

[2] G. R. Elton, 'Henry VII: A Restatement', in his *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government* (4 vols., Cambridge, 1974–92), i. 95.

[3] W. C. Richardson, *Tudor Chamber Administration, 1485–1547* (Baton Rouge, La., 1952), pp. 505–6; M. M. Condon, 'From Caitiff and Villain to Pater Patriae: Reynold Bray and the Profits of Office', in *Profit, Piety and the Professions in Later Medieval England*, ed. M. A. Hicks (Gloucester, 1990), pp. 137–68.

[4] *British Library Harleian Manuscript 433*, ed. R. Horrox, P. W. Hammond (4 vols., Gloucester, 1979–83).

of the central courts of King's Bench and Common Pleas, mainstays of many a thesis on fifteenth-century local politics, order and disorder, can only tell part of the story, though they would repay much more scholarly investigation. Much of Henry's provision of justice depended on the effectiveness of assizes and quarter sessions, the courts at county level, yet no systematic records of either survive. Perhaps even more depended on the activities of the equity courts: during Henry's reign at least one in three peers, including five earls, a marquis and two dukes, were involved in suits before the king's council in its judicial mode, nearly always as defendants.[5] Yet tantalizingly enough materials survive to suggest booming business in Chancery and the Council Attendant, but insufficiently full archives to analyse the dynamics of change in either court properly, while our records of the council's proceedings in Star Chamber largely depend upon the interests and transcriptions of seventeenth-century antiquaries.

No one doubts that a good deal of parliamentary legislation aimed to modify the judicial system in Henry's reign, but later medievalists instinctively tend to see this as a sign of recurrent complaint about the inadequacy of royal justice, while the inclination of Tudorists is to see it as a deliberate improvement to the system forged in dialogue between crown and political nation. Such differences in approach help to explain why a later medievalist such as Christine Carpenter, unconvinced by legislation and fond of the National Archives King's Bench classes KB9 and KB27, can conclude that 'in the sphere of internal order . . . closer inspection shows Henry's record to have been particularly weak', while those approaching Henry from the Tudors, with a more positive view of statutes and a taste for the equity court records in STAC1 and REQ1, continue to think the opposite.[6] Beyond such calculations lies the unsettling problem, common to all historical studies of crime, of the degree to which the records of prosecution reflect not the level of disorderly activity but public faith in and preparedness to use judicial institutions; thus, indictments of rioting gentry from Henry's reign – like those much vaunted under Henry V – may prove confidence in the king's commitment to justice rather than dissatisfaction at his failures.[7]

Such issues are particularly hard to set in proper perspective because the detailed reconstructions of local political society in which the post-McFarlane generation of later medievalists have specialized so rarely extend beyond 1509, 1499 or 1485. Conversely, Tudor county studies

[5] *Select Cases in the Council of Henry VII*, ed. C. G. Bayne and W. H. Dunham, Selden Society, lxxv (1956); *List of Proceedings in the Court of Star Chamber preserved in the Public Record Office*, i: *AD 1485–1558*, Public Record Office Lists and Indexes, xiii (1901); *The Ancient State, Authoritie and Proceedings of the Court of Requests by Julius Caesar*, ed. L. M. Hill (1975); The National Archives [hereafter NA], PRO, REQ1/1, fos. 106r, 121r, 145v.

[6] C. Carpenter, *The Wars of the Roses: Politics and the Constitution in England, c.1437–1509* (Cambridge, 1997) [hereafter Carpenter, *Wars of the Roses*], p. 233; S. J. Gunn, *Early Tudor Government, 1485–1558* (1995) [hereafter Gunn, *Early Tudor Government*], pp. 72–108.

[7] E. Powell, *Kingship, Law, and Society: Criminal Justice in the reign of Henry V* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 173–94, 208–28.

rarely reach back in any detail before 1509 or even 1558 and understandably tend to concentrate on the causes and consequences of Reformation and rebellion at least as much as on the politics of nobility and gentry. Both groups of county historians shy away from Henry VII's reign. Late medievalists find some of their sources running out, notably the records of private retaining that underpin analysis of bastard feudal affinities. Early modernists find some of their key sources lacking: ministerial correspondence, privy council registers, papers from gentry families. Thus, while it is painfully clear that the state of local politics and governance is a key issue for understanding the impact of Henry's rule, it cannot at present be assessed in its proper context of the changing condition of a range of local societies across the period from roughly 1450 to 1550.

A similar problem affects attempts to set English politics in their European context. Conventionally Henry's reign is often seen as a time when the English came to terms with the end of the Hundred Years War, as the conquest of Brittany by the French crown was added to the end of Valois Burgundy and the loss of English Normandy and Gascony. 'Together' as R. B. Wernham put it, 'these events inaugurated a new era in England's relations with the continent.'[8] As European politics re-orientated themselves towards Italy after the French invasion of 1494, so England's part in them became inevitably more peripheral. Yet, as John Currin and Ian Arthurson have shown, it is not at all clear that Henry and his subjects realized this, and the events of 1489–92 in particular suggest a king eager to make war effectively in France.[9] Seeing Henry's actions in context is made harder by the fierce debate amongst historians of the fifteenth century over the role of external war in maintaining the health of the Lancastrian and Yorkist body politic and in particular over Edward IV's campaign of 1475. Was this a half-hearted effort by king and nobility alike, seeing the signs of the times in the recovering strength of France and the war-weariness of the English people, or an unchivalrous failure of royal nerve much resented by an important part of the political nation for whom Richard, duke of Gloucester, was the spokesman?[10] Debate about the motivation, practicality and political context of Henry VIII's military ventures also makes it hard to decide whether his father was properly cautious in his foreign

[8] R. B. Wernham, *Before the Armada: The Growth of English Foreign Policy 1485–1588* (1966) [hereafter Wernham, *Before the Armada*], p. 11.

[9] I. Arthurson, 'The King's Voyage into Scotland: The War that Never Was', in *England in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. D. T. Williams (Woodbridge, 1987), pp. 1–23; J. M. Currin, 'Henry VII and the Treaty of Redon (1489): Plantagenet Ambitions and Early Tudor Foreign Policy', *History*, lxxxi (1996), 343–58; id., '"To Traffic With War"? Henry VII and the French Campaign of 1492', in *The English Experience in France c.1450–1558: War, Diplomacy and Cultural Exchange*, ed. D. Grummitt (Aldershot, 2002), pp. 106–31.

[10] J. R. Lander, 'The Hundred Years' War and Edward IV's 1475 Campaign in France', in his *Crown and Nobility 1450–1509* (1976), pp. 220–41; C. Richmond, '1485 and All That: Or What Was Going On at the Battle of Bosworth', in *Richard III: Loyalty, Lordship and Law*, ed. P. W. Hammond (1986), pp. 186–91; M. K. Jones, *Bosworth 1485: Psychology of a Battle* (Stroud, 2002), pp. 71–2.

adventures or unduly timid.[11] Would a more warlike Henry VII have united the political nation more readily behind his dynasty? Or was external warfare unlikely to succeed, disruptive of internal order through resistance to taxation, and largely irrelevant to an internal politics which revolved around the balance of noble power in each locality and the effectiveness of royal justice?

Any assessment of the role of war is complicated further by an apparent change in the recruitment of English armies in Henry's time. It is striking that Henry VIII was able to put into the field for single campaigns armies two to three times the size of those led by Henry V, drawing on a population admittedly larger but not that much larger than that of the early fifteenth century. It seems likely that the need to recruit large and politically dependable forces for short civil war campaigns from the 1450s led to regular military service by the sort of leading townsmen, yeomen and administratively active gentlemen who would probably not often have fought in the Hundred Years War. These were certainly the men who filled the retinues licensed by Henry under the 1504 retaining act, judging from that of Sir Thomas Lovell, for which a list of members survives. His 1,365 followers included the leading inhabitants of numerous towns and villages, most strikingly seven past and future mayors of Walsall, while sub-contingents were organized by his fellow justices of the peace in the counties where he exercised influence, or by his lesser-gentry subordinates in the administration of the crown estates and the exchequer. These were precisely the men on whom Lovell and the king relied in the day-to-day government of their communities. That was why they were valuable members of his affinity, seen as an instrument of local political control.[12] Whether they were as effective for external warfare is another question, one to which Henry VIII seems to have found the answer rather depressing as his armies mutinied their way across France and Spain. And how their composition affected the place of foreign war in the wider dialogue between king and political nation is a question as yet unasked.

Henry's European context is important in another way. He was not the least English king ever to rule England – easily outstripped by Swein Forkbeard, George I, and perhaps others – but at his accession, after fourteen years of exile in Brittany and France, he had an experience of helplessly watching continental politics that few could match. This used to make it easy to classify him in a general category of 'New Monarchs', together with Ferdinand and Isabella, Louis XI and sometimes other contenders. Here were kings who took tight personal control of government, strengthened crown finances, allied with urban and other anti-aristocratic

[11] S. Doran, *England and Europe in the Sixteenth Century* (Basingstoke, 1999), pp. 13–26, 59–62; R. Hoyle, 'War and Public Finance' and D. Potter, 'Foreign Policy', in *The Reign of Henry VIII*, ed. D. MacCulloch (Basingstoke, 1995), pp. 75–99, 101–33.

[12] S. J. Gunn, 'Sir Thomas Lovell (c.1449–1524): A New Man in a New Monarchy?', in *The End of the Middle Ages? England in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, ed. J. L. Watts (Stroud, 1998) [hereafter Gunn, 'Lovell'], pp. 139–49.

forces, and repressed their fractious and over-mighty nobilities to build the foundations of the modern national state. This is the formulation of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, of A. F. Pollard, J. R. Green and Wilhelm Busch, but the grouping is much older: for Francis Bacon, Henry, Louis and Ferdinand were 'the *tres magi* of kings of those ages'.[13] More recently historians have been wary of such comparisons. On the one hand, Marxism and the Annales School have led some parts of the historical profession towards seeing political developments as mere foam on the Europe-wide sea of long-term economic, demographic and environmental change, making the personalities or policies of individual monarchs largely irrelevant. On the other hand, amongst political historians national historiographies have become increasingly complex and introverted, making dependable comparative handholds harder to find.

Some of Henry's contemporaries thought in comparative terms: 'He would like to govern England in the French fashion, but he cannot' reported the Spanish ambassador in 1498.[14] But quite what they meant by such comments, quite how far Henry and his advisers thought in these ways, and quite how this affected their government of England, is a matter still requiring much thought. That thought will surely require more study by English historians of developments in France, Spain and the Netherlands. It may well involve closely focused comparative projects of the sort recently conducted with colleagues from France, Belgium and the Netherlands.[15] It will be enriched by reflection on the careers and attitudes of those of Henry's ministers who had telling experience of foreign countries, courts and armies, whether churchmen like John Morton or laymen like Sir Edward Poynings.[16] It will have to ask whether the sequence of political breakdown and civil war, followed by assertive monarchy, followed in turn by public reaction against perceived excesses of monarchical power – the sort of public reaction seen in the Estates General of 1484 and the *Guerre Folle* in France, the revolt of the *Comuneros* in Castile, and the parliament of 1510 in England – was common by coincidence or by some deep parallels between west European political systems.

A key element of the New Monarchy model was the accession of new men to political power. Quite how to characterize these men, however, has proved problematic. Contemporary opponents of Henry such as Perkin Warbeck were content with calling them 'caitiffs and villains of

[13] A. F. Pollard, 'The New Monarchy', in his *Factors in Modern History* (1907) [hereafter Pollard, 'New Monarchy'], pp. 52–78; J. R. Green, *A Short History of the English People* (1874), pp. 282–97; W. Busch, *England under the Tudors*, i: *King Henry VII (1485–1509)* (1895); Francis Bacon, *The History of the Reign of King Henry VII*, ed. B. Vickers (Cambridge, 1998) [hereafter Bacon, *History*], p. 204.

[14] *Calendar of State Papers Spanish*, i: *Henry VII*, ed. G. A. Bergenroth (1862), no. 178.

[15] *Governing in Late Medieval England and France: Office, Network, Idea*, ed. J.-P. Genet and J. L. Watts (forthcoming); S. Gunn, D. Grummitt and H. Cools, *War, State and Society in England and the Netherlands, 1477–1559* (Oxford, forthcoming).

[16] C. S. L. Davies, 'Bishop John Morton, the Holy See and the Accession of Henry VII', *English Historical Review*, cii (1987), 2–30; S. J. Gunn, 'Sir Edward Poynings: An Anglo-Burgundian Hero', *Publications du Centre Européen d'Etudes Bourguignonnes*, xli (2001), 157–69.

simple birth', but we need to be a little more discriminating.[17] They used to be termed 'middle class', a group amalgamating gentry, lawyers, clerics, merchants and townsmen in an anti-magnate coalition. For some social scientists unconcerned about offending historians' sensibilities they still are: Bruce D. Porter wrote in 1994 of Henry's alliance with 'numerous middle-class professionals whose economic interests were threatened by the wars of the nobility'.[18] Those more chastened by J. H. Hexter's assault on the notion of the middle class in Tudor England find it harder to know what to call them and whom to include or exclude.[19]

For historians working with McFarlanite models of later medieval political society, the key issue is the changing balance of power between peers and gentry in local politics, though the extent to which change was fostered by royal policy or came about autonomously as a result of the Wars of the Roses is more disputed.[20] The notion that Henry's government forged a special relationship with the gentry can be built into a satisfying model of a developing Tudor regime in which the court, the crown lands, the commissions of the peace and the commons in parliament all acted as points of contact between the king and the men who governed the shires. This can be represented as the generalization of a pattern visible earlier in the fifteenth century in counties where the king held substantial estates as duke of Lancaster.[21] But problems of perspective remain, for the gentry had been active in most of these spheres since the thirteenth century and it is far from certain what if anything made Henry's reign a time of special acceleration in their importance. For greater precision distinctions should be made amongst the gentry: interestingly it seems to be the case in Henry's reign that the heads of leading landed families outside the peerage took a greater part than ever before in the work of the peace commissions and also that increasing numbers of upwardly mobile gentlemen-administrators hitched their stars to the service of the crown rather than to that of noble magnates.[22]

Many of these upwardly mobile gentlemen were lawyers. The decisive role of lawyers in the strengthening of the New Monarchies has often been stressed, whether they were A. F. Pollard's Roman lawyers or Eric Ives's common lawyers.[23] Lawyers were important for what they did,

[17] *The Reign of Henry VII from Contemporary Sources*, ed. A. F. Pollard (3 vols., 1913), i. 153.
[18] B. D. Porter, *War and the Rise of the State* (New York, 1994), p. 31.
[19] J. H. Hexter, 'The Myth of the Middle Class in Tudor England', in his *Reappraisals in History* (1961), pp. 71–116.
[20] Carpenter, *Wars of the Roses*, pp. 262–6.
[21] Gunn, *Early Tudor Government*, pp. 28–38; H. Castor, *The King, the Crown and the Duchy of Lancaster: Public Authority and Private Power 1399–1461* (Oxford, 2000) [hereafter Castor, *Duchy of Lancaster*].
[22] C. Arnold, 'The Commission of the Peace for the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1437–1509', in *Property and Politics: Essays in Later Medieval English History*, ed. A. J. Pollard (Gloucester, 1984), pp. 126–31; S. M. Wright, *The Derbyshire Gentry in the Fifteenth Century*, Derbyshire Record Society, viii (1983), pp. 82, 89–96, 104–9; C. Carpenter, *Locality and Polity: A Study of Warwickshire Landed Society, 1401–1499* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 101–5, 145–7.
[23] Pollard, 'New Monarchy', pp. 69–70; E. W. Ives, *The Common Lawyers of Pre-Reformation England* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 222–62.

staffing both judicial and administrative organs of government, but also for how they thought. It is particularly significant to assess their impact because of the apparent lull in the writing of formal political thought in Henry's England. It is not of course the case that those around Henry did not have any political ideas, just that, characteristically, they were too busy running the country to write them out until crises such as Edmund Dudley's imprisonment and William Warham's impending *praemunire* prosecution called them to do so.[24] Outside these special cases, the ideas behind policy have to be reconstructed by a combination of more indirect means. The general intellectual atmosphere of the Inns of Court, where Edmund Dudley, Richard Empson, Thomas Lovell and so on learned their trade, and of the university civil law faculties that bred Richard Fox, John Morton, William Warham and others, can be invoked. Hints can be sought in the sparse correspondence and public statements of the king's ministers that show the ideas apparently prevalent in these nurseries of statism being put into practice, as in Lovell's concern for 'good rule' and the punishment of those who would subvert it.[25]

Just how important lawyers were amongst the king's advisers is also hard to judge when it is far from clear who the most influential of those advisers were. Neither the administrative papers nor the diplomatic reports that provide ample evidence of the role of a Wolsey or a Cromwell exist for Henry's reign. Attempts to chart the changing distribution of influence by such measures as the changing composition of the king's council are also problematic when there are signs that the nature of the council itself changed over the course of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.[26] Although it seems clear that Henry never had individual ministers whom contemporaries judged to be as influential over him as Wolsey and Cromwell were thought to be over Henry VIII, the balance between the king and the wider ruling circle is harder to weigh. The cult of the politic prince, begun by contemporaries such as John Fisher and Polydore Vergil and perpetuated by Bacon, plays down the role of ministers when common-sense deduction from the king's inexperience would tend to play it up.[27] It may be that, as John Watts has argued, the 'unusually

[24] E. Dudley, *The Tree of Commonwealth*, ed. D. M. Brodie (Cambridge, 1948); J. Moyes, 'Warham, an English Primate on the Eve of the Reformation', *Dublin Revue*, cxiv (1894), 401–14.

[25] M. McGlynn, *The Royal Prerogative and the Learning of the Inns of Court* (Cambridge, 2003); C. T. Allmand, 'The Civil Lawyers', in *Profession, Vocation and Culture in Later Medieval England: Essays dedicated to the Memory of A. L. Myers* (Liverpool, 1982), pp. 155–80; NA, PRO, SP1/8, fo. 159v; *Records of the Borough of Nottingham*, ed. W. H. Stevenson (9 vols., Nottingham, 1882–1936), iii. 342–3.

[26] M. M. Condon, 'An Anachronism with Intent? Henry VII's Council Ordinance of 1491/2', in *Kings and Nobles in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. R. A. Griffiths and J. Sherborne (Gloucester, 1986), pp. 228–53; J. A. Guy, 'The Privy Council: Revolution or Evolution?', in *Revolution Reassessed: Revisions in the History of Tudor Government and Administration*, ed. C. Coleman and D. Starkey (Oxford, 1986), pp. 59–85.

[27] *The Anglica Historia of Polydore Vergil, A.D. 1485–1537*, ed. D. Hay, Camden 3rd ser., lxxiv (1950), pp. 145–7; *The English Works of John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, part 1*, ed. J. E. B. Mayor, Early English Text Society extra series, xxvii (1876), pp. 269–70.

detached, legalistic and conciliar nature of Henry VII's regime' represented less the king's cool and independent will than an institutionalization of executive power in the ruling bureaucratic elite.[28] A side-effect is the difficulty scholars have had in dividing up the reign chronologically: there are no clear political breaks like those of 1529, 1540 or 1549, and John Guy's attempt to delineate periods dominated by Richard Fox, Reynold Bray and the king's personal rule, perhaps an unconscious echo of the Wolsey–Cromwell–personal rule sequence of the following reign, seems not to have won general acceptance.[29] Behind all these issues lies the problem of Henry's impenetrable personality, a matter encapsulated in the motto Bacon placed beneath his frontispiece portrait of the king, 'cor regis inscrutabile': unsearchable is the heart of the king. Painstaking work on intractable records can still yield new insights into Henry's mind, as Margaret Condon's investigation of his provisions for commemoration at Westminster and elsewhere shows, but breakthroughs are few and far between.[30]

So far this discussion has perhaps seemed mainly to demonstrate the wisdom of those who choose not to research Henry VII's reign. Yet pessimism about the prospects for advancing understanding is unjustified. The dearth of sources is not insurmountable. Important new documents have recently been discovered or recognized. These include the account books of the clerks of John Heron as treasurer of the chamber, which show the chamber system to have been less simple than might appear from Heron's own accounts; a register of 581 recognizances to the king taken from the earliest months of the reign, which put the explosion of such bonds recorded on the close rolls in the king's last years in a rather different light; and a list of failed bills from the 1495 parliament.[31] In any case, most sources do not solve arguments, they start them. The weakening of the Paston letters in Henry's reign may be a blessing in disguise, given the stir caused amongst late medievalists by Helen Castor's exercise in reading them from the point of view of the Pastons' opponents in local politics rather than the family itself.[32] The absence of regular, detailed diplomatic dispatches like those of Eustace Chapuys may be no handicap when historians of the politics of the 1530s have taken diametrically opposed views over the reliability of his reports.[33]

[28] J. L. Watts, '"A New Fundacion of is Crowne": Monarchy in the Age of Henry VII', in *The Reign of Henry VII*, ed. B. Thompson (Stamford, 1995) [hereafter *Reign of Henry VII*], pp. 48–50.
[29] J. A. Guy, *Tudor England* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 53–5.
[30] M. M. Condon, 'God Save the King! Piety, Propaganda and the Perpetual Memorial', in *Westminster Abbey: The Lady Chapel of Henry VII*, ed. T. Tatton Brown and R. Mortimer (Woodbridge, 2003), pp. 59–97.
[31] D. Grummitt, 'Henry VII, Chamber Finance and the "New Monarchy": Some New Evidence', *Historical Research*, lxxii (1999), 229–43; Sean Cunningham is currently editing the recognizance roll for publication; Paul Cavill, 'Henry VII and Parliament' (DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2005) [hereafter Cavill, 'Parliament'], pp. 115–16, 123.
[32] Castor, *Duchy of Lancaster*, pp. 128–55.
[33] E. W. Ives, *Anne Boleyn* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 72–5; R. M. Warnicke, *The Rise and Fall of Anne Boleyn* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 1–3.

Instead of bemoaning Henry's liminality, historians should surely embrace it. A reign situated in so many border regions of historical development is a fascinating object of study. As instances we might take England's economic and cultural trajectories in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Henry's reign saw a startling increase in recorded cloth exports and patchy signs of a revival in the agrarian economy, parts of a general recovery from the effects of the Black Death and the sharp economic depression of the mid-fifteenth century. The king's political power benefited from rising income from customs and land rents; his diplomatic hand was strengthened by the ability to negotiate trade treaties and to cut off cloth exports to the Netherlands to deter Habsburg support for pretenders.[34] In the towns and villages of England the result was different but perhaps, to follow the lead of Marjorie McIntosh, complementary. In Henry's reign and for twenty years either side of it, local courts reacted vigorously to assert order in the face of the social disruption produced by rapid economic change, especially the growth of the cloth industry and the development of agricultural markets. In so doing they echoed the language and paralleled, indeed in some ways anticipated, the measures associated with the simultaneous revival of monarchical authority, building the New Monarchy from below in an alliance of the middling sort with strong kingship that would have warmed A. F. Pollard's heart.[35]

Culturally too, Henry's reign presents fascinating transitions. It is an oversimplification to think of a single coming of the Italian Renaissance to England under Henry and bundle up to prove it Polydore Vergil's *Anglica Historia*, Pietro Torrigiano's tomb sculpture, and the totemic visit of Baldassare Castiglione bearing Raphael's *St George and the Dragon*. The penetration of fifteenth-century England by Italian literary and visual forms was too long-standing and too multifaceted for that, and the roles of France and the Netherlands as intermediaries for Italian influence too important. The complex interchange between Erasmus, Colet and More from 1499 amply illustrates all these propositions.[36] In English literature too, it is easy to say that Sir Thomas Wyatt, born towards the end of Henry's reign, was of a different and more Italianate generation than John Skelton, Henry Medwall or Stephen Hawes, but harder to say that they were untouched by Italian influence, at least as mediated through Burgundy or France. The links between cultural change and royal policy are also open to debate. Henry clearly welcomed the efforts of those who would use verse, prose and visual magnificence to glorify his rule, whether in classicizing or more traditional styles, yet recent work by Tom Penn and Susan Powell has shown how literary patronage at the court has to be analysed in more complex terms than those of a Tudor propaganda

[34] R. Britnell, *Britain and Ireland 1050–1530: Economy and Society* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 326–31, 466–7, 499–501; Wernham, *Before the Armada*, pp. 66–76.
[35] M. K. McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour in England, 1370–1600* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 101, 130–3.
[36] R. J. Schoeck, *Erasmus of Europe* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1990–3), i. 223–33, ii. 51–9, and *passim*.

campaign, highlighting the role of individual patrons such as Bishop Fox and the king's mother.[37]

What such studies suggest is that if scholars are attentive to Henry's double historiographical context, late medieval and early modern, and prepared to look for the right material in often unpromising or intractable sources, then most of the issues with which debate is currently concerned in other parts of the Tudor period can be investigated in Henry's reign. To begin at the more traditional end of the historiographical agenda, research on Henry's parliaments by Paul Cavill is showing that by careful combination of central with local records, especially those in borough archives, parliament's role in the polity can be re-evaluated for Henry's reign as it has been for Elizabeth's. Parliamentary sermons can be made to yield insights into the rhetoric of government and indeed into the political ideas and expectations of royal power which Henry's ministers and the assembled political nation must have been thought to share. Archival traces of parliamentary procedure can be used to reconstruct the politics of legislation, while local records of the implementation of statutes such as that regulating wages in 1495 – which was met with riotous opposition in several villages in Kent – can be used to test the functions of statute law in the period before the Cromwellian legislative orgy.[38]

The politics of Henry's court too can be better illuminated than was once thought.[39] The same sources may not exist as for later reigns, but this may enable rather different and in some ways more refreshing questions to be asked of what sources there actually are. The social and professional fault-lines exposed by conflicts such as those between Archbishop Savage and the fifth earl of Northumberland, whose retinues clashed on the highway at Fulford, near York, in May 1504, or Bishop Nykke and Attorney-General Sir James Hobart, whom he cursed as an 'enemy of God and his churche' for his attacks on ecclesiastical court jurisdiction, can be investigated.[40] The effects of gender on politics can be explored in the exercise of power by great women, supremely but by no means uniquely the king's mother, with her clients among the bishops and the bureaucrats and her regional rule from Collyweston.[41] The networks of influence and protection betrayed by the payments of pensions by peers,

[37] T. D. Penn, 'Literary Service at the Court of Henry VII' (PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2001); S. Powell, 'Lady Margaret Beaufort and her Books', *The Library*, 6th ser., xx (1998), 197–240.
[38] Cavill, 'Parliament'; id., 'The Problem of Labour and the Parliament of 1495', *The Fifteenth Century*, v (2005), 143–55; id., 'Debate and Dissent in Henry VII's Parliaments', *Parliamentary History*, xxv (2006), 160–75.
[39] S. J. Gunn, 'The Courtiers of Henry VII', *English Historical Review*, cviii (1993), 23–49; id., 'The Court of Henry VII', in *The Court as a Stage: England and the Low Countries in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. S. Gunn and A. Janse (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 132–44.
[40] R. W. Hoyle, 'The Earl, the Archbishop and the Council: The Affray at Fulford, May 1504', in *Rulers and Ruled in Late Medieval England: Essays presented to Gerald Harriss*, ed. R. Archer and S. Walker (1995), pp. 239–56; NA, PRO, SC1/44/83.
[41] M. K. Jones and M. G. Underwood, *The King's Mother: Lady Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond and Derby* (Cambridge, 1992); B. J. Harris, *English Aristocratic Women, 1450–1550: Marriage and Family, Property and Careers* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 175–240.

bishops and religious institutions to those around the king can be reconstructed. These reached not only the leading councillors – Bray, Lovell, Sir John Cheyney and Giles, Lord Daubeny were all pensioned by the fourth earl of Northumberland in the early years of the reign – but also the king's intimate servants at court, such as Richard Weston and Hugh Denis.[42]

The politics of the court can be tied to its cultural life through examination of the constant round of gift-giving. At one level this bound those outside the court to their patrons within it. Each of the different Kent and Sussex ports overseen by Poynings as deputy warden of the Cinque Ports regaled him with a different sort of gift: fish from Rye, capons and curlews from New Romney, whelks and porpoises from Sandwich, wine, oranges and pomegranates from cosmopolitan Dover.[43] Inside the court, more lasting and sophisticated gifts sought the favour of those who mattered, as a list of jewels given to Prince Henry in the last five years of the reign tells us. Some were religious in significance, some dynastic – a rose of rubies from Daubeny – and others chivalrous: 'a man armed on horsebacke silv[er]' from the earl of Kent.[44] The inclusion of the plate given by Lady Margaret Beaufort and Bishop Richard Fox to their respective collegiate foundations in the recent *Gothic* exhibition gives a glimpse of what these gifts must have looked like.[45]

As these examples suggest, investigation of the politics of Henry's reign can readily extend into a study of political culture where the 'new constitutional history' of the fifteenth century meets the growing interest in 'Tudor political culture'.[46] A court with strong chivalrous interests which also fostered humanist scholarship and intense piety and a council packed with high-flying civil and common lawyers gave free flow to many different currents in political thought and practice. The mixture can be investigated in microcosm in the arrangements made for the education of Prince Arthur.[47] Under Bernard André's tuition he was not just to read ancient historians and rhetoricians and their modern devotees, Guarino of Verona and Lorenzo Valla, but to think how their lessons might be put into political practice: André seems to have composed a set of speeches addressed to Arthur by imaginary Athenian and

[42] Suffolk Record Office, Bury St Edmunds, Ac 449/E3/15.53/2.7, 2.8; M. A. Hicks, 'Dynastic Change and Northern Society: The Career of the Fourth Earl of Northumberland, 1470–89', *Northern History*, xiv (1978), 93; Cambridge University Library, Hengrave MS 88/3, no. 6; St George's Chapel, Windsor, The Aerary, MS XV.49.6.

[43] British Library, Egerton Manuscripts [hereafter BL, Egerton MS] 2092, 2107, *passim*; Centre for Kentish Studies, NR/Fac3, fos. 106v–33v; Sa/FAt 11–25; East Sussex Record Office, Rye 60/3, fos. 110v–112r, Rye 60/4, *passim*.

[44] *The Antient Kalendars and Inventories of the Treasury of His Majesty's Exchequer*, ed. F. Palgrave (3 vols., 1836), iii. 393–9.

[45] *Gothic: Art for England 1400–1547*, ed. R. Marks and P. Williamson (2003), nos. 104–8, 112–13.

[46] C. Carpenter, 'Introduction: Political Culture, Politics and Cultural History', *The Fifteenth Century*, iv (2004), 1–19; *Tudor Political Culture*, ed. D. Hoak (Cambridge, 1995).

[47] S. J. Gunn, 'Prince Arthur's Preparation for Kingship', in *Arthur Tudor, Prince of Wales: Life, Death and Commemoration*, ed. S. Gunn and L. Monckton (Woodbridge, forthcoming).

Spartan ambassadors.[48] Chivalry balanced the classics, as King Arthur was brought on stage at Coventry in 1498 to tell his namesake of the benefits of prowess in subduing 'rebelles' and 'outward enmyes'.[49] Religion provided both moral and intellectual frameworks and consolation amidst the pressures of political life, as the commentary on Augustine's City of God André wrote for Arthur and the Fayrfax Song Book, probably intended for his household, suggest.[50] In the prince's council, sometimes sitting in his presence, high-powered lawyers, common and civil, showed how their learning made for good government. And all the while Arthur was coached in the magnificence that spoke of Tudor power, listening to his lutenist, organist, poet and players, making splendid entries into Chester, Coventry, London, Oxford and Shrewsbury, and buying over £600 worth of clothes for his wedding, including the crimson velvet riding gown that had to be sent specially from London to Reading for him to wear in October 1501 as he prepared to meet his bride, Catherine of Aragon.[51]

Henry VII's calculated magnificence, whether building Richmond, Greenwich and his Westminster Chapel or putting on pageants and jousts, has often been stressed.[52] What has been less noticed was that his was a court perhaps more open to the public than its successors, because it was more mobile. Henry's campaigns and progresses took him further around the country than either his son or his grandchildren, to Exeter and Newcastle, to Lancashire and Calais. On his travels he and his ministers were open to dialogue of varying degrees of formality, from the urban pageants that greeted him in 1486 at Bristol, York and Worcester to the trip ten miles down the road to Canford made by the spokesmen of the borough of Christchurch in Dorset to speak with the king's council and present him their petition.[53] On campaign the king was even more visible. In 1492, for instance, there were 15,000 men from all over England and Wales in his army, from as far north as Newcastle, Brancepeth and Carlisle. Those who saw him march through London 'wyth honourable Tryumph' and on through Kent must also have been impressed by the sheer richness of his equipage.[54] His helmets and horse harness, decorated with gold, pearls and precious stones, cost nearly £2,000, a sum that was more than the annual income of any but his richest half-dozen subjects; even at sea he proclaimed his regality, decorating his flagship the *Regent* with a gilded latten crown.[55]

[48] D. R. Carlson, 'The Writings of Bernard André (c.1450–c.1522)', *Renaissance Studies*, xii (1998), 236.

[49] S. Anglo, *Spectacle, Pageantry and Early Tudor Policy* (Oxford, 1969) [hereafter Anglo, *Spectacle*], pp. 55–6.

[50] R. Bowers, 'Early Tudor Courtly Song: An Evaluation of the Fayrfax Book' (BL Additional MS 5465)', in *Reign of Henry VII*, pp. 199–212.

[51] Keele University Library, Marquess of Anglesey Papers, Accounts Various 1 (unfol.).

[52] Anglo, *Spectacle*; G. Kipling, *The Triumph of Honour: Burgundian Origins of the Elizabethan Renaissance* (Leiden, 1977); S. Thurley, *The Royal Palaces of Tudor England* (1993), pp. 11–15, 25–37.

[53] Anglo, *Spectacle*, pp. 21–46; Dorset Record Office, C1/1/3.

[54] *The Great Chronicle of London*, ed. A. H. Thomas and I. D. Thornley (1938) [hereafter *Great Chronicle*], p. 247.

[55] NA, PRO, E36/285, fos. 26r, 45v, 49r; E404/81/1, unnumbered warrant of 8/2/1492.

Such displays raise the issue of Henry's engagement with popular politics. At one level his regime was wary of plebeian involvement in political life. He granted close corporation charters to Exeter and Bristol and his councillors seem to have backed town elites in repressing popular involvement in urban politics. Sir Thomas Lovell did so explicitly at Nottingham and was influential at Walsall and Wallingford when they passed measures against anyone misbehaving against the mayor and aldermen. Something of the same sort may well have been at issue at Dover in 1506 when Lovell advised the mayor and jurats to take order that 'oon Rychard Yong, Scottysheman born, for dyv[er]s offens & sclaundryng w[ith] hys tong, that he shall have hys ere nayled to a cart whele & so be band the towne for ev[er]'.[56]

At another level, however, Henry appealed more widely and directly to his subjects for their support than any previous king. His proclamations were fuller than his predecessors' in their explanations of policy – one in 1496, for example, featuring an extended passage blaming war with Scotland on James IV rather than himself – and he made much more use of print to communicate with his subjects, from the translation and printing of the papal bull authorizing his marriage to the tracts produced in celebration of his daughter's betrothal to the future Charles V.[57] He also used more popular media, as when 'sundry roundellis & songis to his shame & derision' were made about Perkin Warbeck following his failed attack on the Kent coast in 1495.[58] Henry knew how to play to a crowd, looking down from a window at the mass of penitent rebels in the cathedral close at Exeter in 1497 and then calling out his pardon to them, provoking cries of 'God save the king'.[59] His coinage was shaped to link his subjects to him, with the first realistic profile portraits ever used on English silver coins. Some have doubted how effectively the coinage conveyed political messages, but people certainly noticed the change, the author of the Great Chronicle of London noting the issue of 'newe coynys . . . which bare but half a fface'.[60] Henry also demanded active responses, encouraging more public celebration of his diplomatic, military and dynastic successes than his predecessors and meeting success in the triumphs held for Princess Mary's betrothal at Shrewsbury and Dover and, posthumously, in the riot of celebration for the birth of the short-lived Prince Henry in 1511.[61]

[56] S. H. Rigby and E. Ewan, 'Government, Power and Authority 1300–1540', in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, i: *600–1540*, ed. D. M. Palliser (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 309–12; Gunn, 'Lovell', p. 143; J. K. Hedges, *The History of Wallingford* (2 vols., 1881) [hereafter Hedges, *Wallingford*], ii. 76; BL, Egerton MS 2094, fo. 1r.

[57] *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, ed. P. L. Hughes and J. F. Larkin (3 vols., New Haven, 1964), i, no. 34; 'The "Spouselles" of the Princess Mary', ed. J. Gairdner, *The Camden Miscellany ix*, Camden n.s., liii (1895).

[58] Gunn, *Early Tudor Government*, pp. 189–91; *Great Chronicle*, p. 262.

[59] K. J. Kesselring, *Mercy and Authority in the Tudor State* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 183.

[60] S. Anglo, *Images of Tudor Kingship* (1992), pp. 118–19; *Great Chronicle*, p. 327.

[61] S. J. Gunn, 'War, Dynasty and Public Opinion in Early Tudor England', in *Authority and Consent in Tudor England: Essays presented to C. S. L. Davies*, ed. G. W. Bernard and S. J. Gunn (Aldershot, 2002), pp. 131–49.

Henry's regime engaged with individuals below the level of the gentry less anonymously in the construction of licensed retinues such as Lovell's. Yeomen and townsmen named as Lovell's retainers can be found in great numbers sitting on juries, helping to meet the regime's judicial and fiscal objectives: at one investigation into concealed lands at Henley in Oxfordshire in 1506, two out of four commissioners who were retained by Lovell questioned a jury of which nine out of twelve were his men.[62] Popular politics also manifested themselves to Henry in more unwelcome ways in popular revolts. For 1497 Ian Arthurson has shown how skilful use of the records produced by the royal commissioners investigating the revolt and fining the participants can show the range of support for the rising and inform debate on its causes.[63]

The reaction against taxation displayed in the risings of 1489 and 1497 is a reminder that Henry's reign raises large issues about Tudor state formation. Though direct taxation was levied sparingly, he aimed to make it bite when he needed it, securing unprecedented direct assessment of goods and income in the subsidy of 1489 and exchequer enforcement against defaulters in 1497. The result was resistance not just on the large scale of revolt but also on the small scale of persistent riots against tax collectors distraining for non-payment in the 1490s.[64] Nonetheless, Henry pushed ahead with what was in effect a peacetime subsidy in 1504. Intensified feudal dues and other exactions on the landed elite, sharp exploitation of the church and vigorous enforcement of the customs were all likewise unpopular, but gave Henry's government a revenue per head of English population markedly higher in real terms than that achieved by Elizabeth or the early Stuarts.[65] This is a significant and to some degree unsettling context for a historiography of early modern state formation that tends to take its baseline as 1550.[66] In this it complements the signs already considered that in Henry's reign an approach to social and economic problems at the level of the whole polity was developing in dialogue between king, parliament, and village and town elites. Perhaps Bacon should not be so often dismissed for praising Henry's legislation on such matters as enclosure, coinage and vagrancy.[67] Perhaps also, there was some foundation for the reputation Henry's reign had amongst the rebels of 1536 and 1549 as a time of reasonable rents, controlled enclosures and a king who 'enhanced his riches by wisdom and mercy', so that both he and his subjects prospered.[68]

[62] Gunn, 'Lovell', pp. 147–8; NA, PRO, C142/20/150.
[63] I. Arthurson, 'The Rising of 1497: A Revolt of the Peasantry?', in *People, Politics and Community in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. J. T. Rosenthal and C. F. Richmond (Gloucester, 1987), pp. 1–18.
[64] M. L. Bush, 'Tax Reform and Rebellion in Early Tudor England', *History*, lxxvi (1991), 379–400.
[65] P. K. O'Brien and P. A. Hunt, 'England, 1485–1815', in *The Rise of the Fiscal State in Europe c.1200–1815*, ed. R. Bonney (Oxford, 1999), p. 64.
[66] M. J. Braddick, *State Formation in Early Modern England c.1550–1700* (Cambridge, 2000); S. Hindle, *The State and Social Change in Early Modern England, 1550–1640* (Basingstoke, 2000).
[67] Bacon, *History*, pp. 57–60, 64–9, 123–4.
[68] R. W. Hoyle, *The Pilgrimage of Grace and the Politics of the 1530s* (Oxford, 2001), p. 462; M. L. Bush, '"Up For the Commonweal": The Significance of Tax Grievances in the English Rebellions of 1536', *EHR*, cvi (1991), 312; A. Fletcher and D. MacCulloch, *Tudor Rebellions* (4th edn., 1997), pp. 144–6.

Other key themes in Tudor state formation can likewise be located in Henry's reign. Not only were county gentry elites more closely articulated with central government, the same was true of urban regimes. Many towns established a mutually beneficial relationship with one of the king's leading councillors: Bray at Bedford, Empson at Coventry, Hobart at Norwich, Lovell at Nottingham, and so on.[69] King and council used these bonds to ensure orderly rule and to press their demands on the towns, for example for the troops Cheyney led from Salisbury in 1489, 1493 and 1495.[70] Towns used these connections to secure powers and privileges from the king. Wallingford was so grateful to Lovell for his role in securing its new charter in 1507 that the council ordered that he should be prayed for in each of the town's churches every Sunday for the rest of his life and an annual mass said for his soul thereafter.[71]

It can also be suggested that the strange lineaments of the English Reformation were in part inherited from Henry's complex relationship with the church. Conspicuous piety and royal patronage of reform went along with ruthless fiscal exploitation of the clergy – sufficiently ruthless that Henry asked the pope to add to his confessor's powers in 1504 so he could be absolved for simony – and an indulgence of fierce and effective attacks by common lawyers on clerical jurisdictions and immunities. Henry's agents in this were laymen like Edmund Dudley, who was quite happy to mulct the church for his own and his family's gain while urging improved morals and education on clergymen, just as many in the next generation would do.[72]

Finally, Henry's reign also played its own peculiar part in the interrelationships of the British kingdoms. His charters of liberties to the Welsh and oversight of Welsh government through the prince's council prepared the way for the Henrician acts of union.[73] His rapprochement with James III and treaty of peace and marriage with James IV prepared the way, albeit inadvertently, for the Stuart succession and union of the crowns. His attempts to rule the northernmost counties of England through less elevated or less local men than the great peers of the past anticipated the painful but ultimately successful transition from borders to middle shires.[74] Most striking but most ambiguous of all was his policy towards Ireland. At times he tried assertive but piecemeal intervention by English military men of the sort attempted repeatedly since the fourteenth century, the sort that produced Poynings' Law but resulted in no

[69] S. Gunn, '"New Men" and "New Monarchy" in England, 1485–1524', in *Powerbrokers in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. R. Stein (Turnhout, 2001), p. 158.
[70] Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office, Salisbury Leger Book B, fo. 121a; *Report on Manuscripts in Various Collections*, iv, Historical Manuscripts Commission, lv (Dublin, 1907), p. 211.
[71] Hedges, *Wallingford*, ii. 74.
[72] A. Goodman, 'Henry VII and Christian Renewal', in *Religion and Humanism*, ed. K. Robbins (Studies in Church History, xvii; 1981), pp. 115–25; S. Gunn, 'Edmund Dudley and the Church', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, li (2000), 509–26.
[73] G. Williams, *Renewal and Reformation: Wales c.1415–1642* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 242–3.
[74] S. G. Ellis, *Tudor Frontiers and Noble Power: The Making of the British State* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 46–71.

decisive change in the balance of power across Ireland. At times he tried endorsement of the ascendancy of the earl of Kildare, the classic Anglo-Irish magnate as the species had evolved in response to the Gaelic revival of the past two centuries, with his bastard feudal manipulation of the politics of the beleaguered Pale and his suspicious dabbling in Gaelic warlordism. At least once, in 1506, Henry contemplated a project for a decisive campaign led by the king in person with an army nearly ten times the size of Poynings' for the 'redress and sure reduction of all the said land'.[75] Even without Reformation and plantation, the alternative futures Tudor Ireland might face were sketched out under Henry.

A clearer understanding of the Tudor period depends upon clearer understanding of Henry VII and his reign: what was new, what was old, what was *sui generis*; what was changing, at what rate and for what reasons. Such understanding can be attained. But it demands challenging reflection on what came before and what came after Henry; on why historians approaching him from earlier and later periods come with such different expectations; and on what sources, models and questions may be drawn from each set of debates to equip ourselves to set the inscrutable king and his liminal reign most enlighteningly in context.

[75] S. G. Ellis, *Ireland in the Age of the Tudors: English Expansion and the End of Gaelic Rule* (1998), pp. 83–113.

Democracy and Nazism: Germany 1918-1945

As the twenty first century approached, one historical question more than any other demanded an answer.
How could a cultured nation at the heart of Europe be responsible for acts so heinous that they have altered concepts of what man is capable of.
How could the Nazis come to be? How was it possible that a cultured nation at the heart of Europe ever allowed Hitler and the Nazi party to come to power?

Summer activities to complete in preparation for A level history:

COMPULSORY

1) **Source Analysis Activity:** Read and review the following sources and answer the questions for each source:

Source 1:

TREATY OF PEACE WITH GERMANY (TREATY OF VERSAILLES) Treaty and protocol signed at Versailles June 28, 1919; protocol signed by Germany at Paris January 10, 1920 Treaty submitted to the Senate by the President of the United States for advice and consent to ratification July 10, 1919; 1 Senate resolutions to advise and consent to ratification failed of adoption November 19,1919,2 and March 19, 1920; 3 treaty returned to the President pursuant to resolution of March 19, 1920 4 Protocol of June 28, 1919, submitted to the Senate by the President of the United States July 31, 1919; 5 considered by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and laid aside without action on February 10, 1920; 6 returned to the Secretary of State pursuant to Senate resolution of February 12, 1935 7 Proces-verbal of first deposit of ratifications at Paris dated January 10, 1920 Entered into force January 10,1920,4:15 p.m., as between contracting parties (the United States was not a party) 8 Revised from time to time by the contracting parties 1919 For. Rel. (Paris Peace Conference, XIII) 55, 740, 743; Senate document 51, 66th Congress, 1stsession

ARTICLE 231 The Allied and Associated Governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her allies for causing all the loss and 138 MULTILATERAL AGREEMENTS 1918-1930 damage to which the Allied and Associated Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies.

1) What does this source suggest about the Treaty of Versailles?

2) What do you think the effect of this clause was on the German people?

3) How valuable is this source to a historian about the impact of the treaty of Versailles on Germany?

Source 2:

From H. Preuss, *Deutschlands Republikanische Reichsverfassung, 1923*, quoted in J.C.G Rohl, from Bismarck to Hitler, *Longman, 1970 pp.103-4*

… The German republic was born out of terrible defeat. This....cast, from the first, a dark shadow on the new political order … initially the belief still predominated that the new order was necessary for the rebirth of Germany.

That is why the democratic clauses of the Weimar constitution met relatively little resistance, despite the unrivalled severity of the armistice terms. For everyone still expected a peace settlement in accordance with Wilson's 14 points, which all the belligerent countries had bindingly accepted as the basis for the peace... The criminal madness of the Versailles Diktat was a shameless blow in the face to such hopes based on international law and political common sense. The Reich constitution was born with this curse upon it...'

1) What does this source suggest about the Treaty of Versailles?

2) What does this source suggest about the new democratic republic of Germany and how successful it would be?

3) How valuable is this source to a historian about opposition to the new democratic Germany?

2) Read and take detailed notes on chapter one from Michael Burleigh 'The Great War and its Aftermath'. The content of this chapter will help you to set the scene for the following essay and can be used as part of the bibliography.

Essay title: 'The payment of reparations was the most damaging requirement the Treaty of Versailles placed on Germany.' Assess the validity of this view.

1000-2000 word essay considering at least three factors including the given factor

Include a bibliography of works used (Use at least 4 different books/websites/articles)

OPTIONAL

1) Visit the Holocaust exhibition at the Imperial War Museum – find the 5 displays which interested you the most take a photo and explain what the exhibit tells you about the event.

2) Watch at least the first episode of 'Nazis: A warning from history' - https://www.dailymotion.com/video/xj79wx

Friedrich Ebert, the first President of the Weimar Republic, managed to restore some semblance of normality to a defeated Germany.

THE GREAT WAR AND ITS AFTERMATH

When war broke out in the summer of 1914, most European capitals briefly heaved with crowds of chauvinistic clerks. Less excitable observers realised that an era had ended – that they were witnesses to something both dreadful and unprecedented. On 4 August 1914, the American novelist Henry James wrote from his home in England – 'under the blackness of the most appalling huge and sudden state of general war' – to his friend and fellow writer Edward Waldo Emerson. Five nations were already at war, and Britain was about to join them. James commented:

> It has all come as by the leap of some awful monster out of his lair – he is upon us, he is upon all of us here, before we have had time to turn round. It fills me with anguish & dismay & makes me ask myself if this then is what I have grown old for, if this is what all the ostensibly or comparatively serene, all the supposedly bettering past, of our century, has meant & led up to. It gives away everything one has believed in & lived for – & I envy those of our generation who haven't lived on for it. It's as if the dreadful nations couldn't not suddenly pull up in a convulsion of horror & shame. One said that yesterday, alas – but it's clearly too late to say it today. . . . It brings to me the outbreak of the Wartime of our youth – but the whole thing here is nearer, closer upon us, huger, & all in a denser & finer world.[1]

In 1914 millions of men across Europe rallied to the colours. They were maimed or killed in unimaginable numbers, the quick commingled with the dead in muddy hellholes, in the service of either furthering or frustrating Germany's first bid for domination in the twentieth century. Since the 1860s Europe's statesmen had learned to live with the consequences of the brief but limited wars of German unification, which many welcomed as a positive international development in a part of Europe about which outsiders had few negative preconceptions. But by the mid-summer of 1914 more than a decade of belligerent

erraticism by German leaders, who lacked the diplomatic skill and self-restraint of Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, contributed to the feeling among Germany's neighbours that there were bounds which she should not be permitted to cross. Hence, a regional Balkan conflict involving Germany's ally Austria–Hungary and a Serbia supported by her Russian patron rapidly escalated first into a continental and then a general world war.

Imperial Germany's bid for continental domination by force of arms was stymied almost from the start. The German High Command had planned a war of movement that would be crowned by a stunning opening victory, but after the Battle of the Marne the conflict in the west degenerated into a war of attrition amid lines of trenches extending from Belgium to the Swiss border. Conscious of the deep fissures in German society, which some historians have claimed influenced the initial decision to go to war, Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm II proclaimed a 'civil truce' (or *Burgfrieden*). Domestic confessional, social and political conflicts were to be put in suspended animation, to be miraculously resolved through a German victory, which would preserve the authoritarian domestic social and political status quo from widespread demands for liberalisation. The enormous strains of over four years of total war left this civic truce in tatters.

Contrary to the expectations of Germany's rulers, the privations of total war between major industrial economies exacerbated pre-existing social tensions and generated new grievances and resentments. Industrialised warfare massively distorted the German economy, blasting vast amounts of human and material resources up in smoke, to no ascertainable strategic advantage, save endlessly to crater battlefields in Flanders which had long since been blasted bare already. The financial costs were as impossible as the death toll. An increasingly effective Allied naval blockade diminished government revenues from customs duties, while the well-to-do thwarted the introduction of more equitable franchises in local state parliaments, together with the fairer tax regimes that would have accompanied them. Taxation only covered some 14 per cent of German government expenditures throughout nearly five years of war. Instead, the imperial government financed the war through borrowing, in the form of war bonds purchased by patriotic citizens which would be redeemed through huge reparations to be exacted from Germany's defeated opponents. Since even this pecuniary patriotism failed to match the spiralling costs of war, the German government simply printed more money, which sent

the annual average rate of inflation sky-rocketing from 1 per cent in 1890–1914 to 32 per cent, a figure which did not include the effects of a flourishing black market. By 1918 the German Mark had lost three-quarters of its pre-war value.[2]

Prolonged industrialised warfare also had severe social effects, although the classes most distressed by war were often its most diehard supporters. By 1917, one-third of the country's artisan workshops had disappeared, their proprietors either conscripted or starved of raw materials voraciously consumed by massive plants which were accorded priority because of efficiencies of scale. Shopkeepers were undercut by factories which sold cheaply and directly to their own workforces. Civil service and white-collar salaries stagnated in contrast to the inflated wages of skilled workers in war-related industries and often failed to match rising prices. An influx of women into these occupations depressed salaries further. People in jobs regarded as superfluous to the war effort sank into poverty; people regarded as burdensomely unproductive, such as psychiatric patients, died of disease and neglect as they were assigned low priority by wartime triage. An ever growing percentage of the population became dependent on local or state support, their meagre entitlements being hopelessly out of kilter with the spiralling cost of living. In a workforce that was becoming radical, rootless, young and increasingly female, strikes proliferated, despite the government's habit of conscripting or imprisoning their ring-leaders, a policy pursued too, of course, in wartime Britain, where the number of strikers was significantly greater than in Germany.

Wartime upheavals had their less tangible consequences. Moralists discerned increases in crime, divorce, incivility, unbridled sexuality, venereal diseases and the numbers of fatherless young people with too much time and money on their hands. Housing shortages resulting from an abatement of inessential construction work made for cramped living conditions and an absence of either privacy or shame. The war contributed to what one observer called a 'moratorium on morality' in personal conduct, it being both necessary and legitimate to get along by any means, no matter how underhand.[3]

The burgeoning black market undermined conventional notions of honesty, of due rewards for a hard day's labour, and of who had the most right to certain goods. The corollary was a re-emergence of quasi-medieval notions of a 'just' price, with profiteers standing in for medieval usurers in wartime folklore.[4] Farmers sought to

circumvent state controls through illicit slaughtering and the black market; starving urban consumers descended on the fields to forage for food and sometimes ransacked food-supply trains. Farmers who had taken in millions of evacuated urban children gratis unsurprisingly resented these further incursions. What amounted to governmental affirmative action for urban consumers led to stringent bureaucratic controls and a regime of inspection for producers, not to mention such base practices as denunciation of those trying to turn a dishonest penny.[5]

Since these town–country cleavages showed the inadequacies of the German state's own distribution mechanisms, the government lost credibility in the eyes of people accustomed to a legendarily efficient administration. Artisans, farmers and shopkeepers saw themselves as powerless victims of corporatist collusion between labour and major vested interests, the plight of the little fellow being a constant refrain in the years to come. The question of who was fighting and who malingering took on racial overtones, leading to a notorious 1916 'Jew count' by the War Ministry, designed to investigate claims that cowardice was ethnically specific. When the survey proved the opposite, it was suppressed. The presence of Jewish businessmen in agencies purchasing raw materials abroad, and of the philosophising industrialist Walter Rathenau as war materials supremo in 1914–15, were used to give the impression that Jews were prospering while others were dying – this being a variant of an older habit of ascribing unattractive traits to Jews in order to heighten one's own virtuousness, a practice not confined to modern Germany. As a Leipzig rabbi commented: 'It is called patriotism if one profits from cannons or armoured plate, but treason sets in with eggs or stockings.'[6] In fact, these allegations that Jews were malingering would be controverted by the stony testimony to twelve thousand Jewish war dead in Germany's Jewish cemeteries, where families proclaimed their pride in those who had fallen for Kaiser and Fatherland.[7]

But the Jewish minority were not most Germans' principal concern. Across Europe 'ancient' hatreds were fomented. At first, educated Englishmen were horrified to be aligned with backward Tsarist Russia against the land of the much admired PhD. Within a few years, they would be baying for the blood of the 'barbaric' Hun, seeking to extirpate a Prussian militarism easily caricatured with its hair cut *en brosse*, duelling scars and monocles.[8] In Germany itself, enmities gradually focused upon similarly stereotypical notions, of England as

the home of rapacious 'Manchester' capitalism, or of France as the embodiment of the ideas represented by the date 1789, or as the home of a 'can-can' civilisation that seemed irredeemably frivolous to devotees of high *Kultur*. Among German intellectuals of an already illiberal cast of mind, such writers as the Russian novelist Fedor Dostoevsky, who were rabidly anti-Western, became modish.[9] As the war dragged on, these hatreds began to refocus on targets within Germany itself. Relatively liberal and unmilitaristic southern Germans began to blame the presiding military caste in Prussia for the prolongation of senseless slaughter.

The detailed course of the war need not concern us. Only how it ended is relevant to this story. The peace of Brest-Litovsk, imposed by Germany on the Russian Bolshevik regime in March 1918, which surrendered huge territories in the west for the chance to consolidate its contested grip on Russian society, enabled Germany to mass troops for an onslaught against the Western Allies, which since 1917 had included the United States of America. But this final spring offensive was checked when the Allies, refreshed by a million American troops, counter-attacked in the summer. The presence of such forces, and the enormous industrial resources supporting them, may have exerted a demoralising effect on German troops, especially given the views of President Woodrow Wilson, who was wedded to realising a juster new world, in which the prospect of such devastating conflicts would be considerably diminished. Germany's allies, first Austria–Hungary, then Bulgaria, began to abandon ship, seeking their own separate peace terms.[10]

The imperial German army rapidly imploded, although precisely why remains unclear. Rifts opened up between officers and ranks, or between front-line and rear-area troops. Restive soldiers, no longer prepared to be killed to no obvious purpose, spread demoralisation to civilians, who had reason enough to be depressed themselves. According to monitors of military mail, soldiers thought the war was a murderous 'swindle', a view that was, of course, shared by large numbers of 'muzhiki', 'poilous' and 'tommies' in the enemy trenches. Images of the once celebrated German commanders Hindenburg and Ludendorff screened in military cinemas evoked whistling and shouts of 'knives out and a couple of pots to catch the blood'. Civilians meeting soldiers on trains were shocked to hear their casual talk of desertion and self-mutilation, or of arms being smuggled home for an impending revolution.[11]

A once formidable fighting force began to surrender in ever greater numbers. Sailors mutinied in Kiel, baulking at the prospect of a final showdown with the British fleet which was designed to sabotage concurrent ceasefire negotiations. Disaffection spread through the German provinces before signs of it began to appear in the Berlin capital. Soldiers, sailors and industrial workers – as well as peasants and middle-class people – formed 'Councils' or 'Soviets' in towns across Germany. These Councils adopted the idioms current among Russian oppositional circles since 1905, not the narrowly sectarian social-revolutionary goals of the later Bolsheviks. The young Heinrich Brüning, a future chancellor of the Weimar Republic, but in 1918 a company commander on the Western Front, was elected chairman of a soldiers' Soviet. He recalled that, while these metalworkers in civilian life may have sung the Communist hymn, the 'Internationale', his news that Lenin's Bolsheviks had banned strikes in Russia made a keen impression on them.[12]

These signs of disaffection were symptoms, rather than the cause, of Germany's collapse. The rot started at the apex of the army, with the dawning realisation that the last roll of the strategic dice in the spring of 1918 had failed. During that final offensive the German army advanced about forty miles on the Western Front, but this bold move overstretched its supply lines, and resulted in horrendous casualties. Having inflicted defeat on himself, their commander, Erich Ludendorff, recommended an armistice and the formation of a government responsible to parliament. He hoped to deflect blame for the failings of the High Command itself on to democratic politicians. The more intelligent generals realised that a democratic government would check the prospect of a Bolshevik revolution, and be more likely to secure less draconian peace terms from the Allies.

Germany's defeat was closely followed by a peaceful republican revolution, there being no time between the two to mourn, or reflect upon more than two and a half million war dead and four million wounded. This was part of the terrible gap torn out of the lives of generations of Europeans (and their imperial allies), which even the most sensitive war memorials – such as the Cenotaph in London's Whitehall – could convey only through the architectural invocation of nothingness. Across Europe and the wider world, there were more than nine million war dead, killed at an average rate of more than six thousand per day for more than four and a quarter years. A way of life had vanished too, along with vast numbers of young men, in a

catastrophe which, for many contemporary Europeans, is more present in their emotions and imaginations than the supervening Second World War and Holocaust. Ten years after the event, Dick Diver, the hero of Scott Fitzgerald's *Tender is the Night*, caught the mood: 'All my beautiful lovely safe world blew itself up here [on the Somme] with a great gust of high-explosive love.'[13]

War and revolution destroyed three great empires. In Germany, the summit of the old order collapsed swiftly. In Munich, the rule of the venerable Wittelsbach dynasty was terminated when the Independent Social Democrat, the former Berlin journalist Kurt Eisner, led a left-wing coup in 1918 establishing a Bavarian Republic. In Berlin, the Majority Social Democrats took advantage of a unique opportunity. The absence from Berlin of crucial leaders of their Independent Socialist rivals left them with the initiative, while units of the army hitherto noted for their loyalty to the old order decided to support the Majority Social Democrats. The last Kaiser of the Hohenzollern dynasty, Wilhelm II, was prevailed upon to abdicate on 9 November; fleeing military headquarters at Spa in Belgium for what became a life in exile in Holland until his death in 1941. Although many Social Democrat leaders were indifferent to the matter of whether to retain the monarchy, provided it was not called Hohenzollern, Germany was proclaimed a republic. An interim chancellor resigned in favour of Friedrich Ebert, who formed a provisional government consisting of three members of his Majority SPD and three men from the more radical Independent Socialists. Briefly mulling over the offer, Ebert remarked, 'It is a difficult office, but I will assume it.'[14]

On 10 November, Quarter-Master General Wilhelm Groener offered Ebert military support, provided he upheld the authority of the traditional officer corps, whose insignia were already being torn off by insubordinate soldiers, and agreed to combat vigorously the threat of Bolshevism. These arrangements, which perpetuated the close wartime relationship between organised labour and the armed forces, ensured a remarkably smooth demobilisation of Germany's field armies. But there was no positive declaration of support for the new state by the army, nor would there be. More generally, Germany's traditional elites were stunned by the speed of defeat and change, regarding the onset of a democratic republic with scarcely concealed hostility and incomprehension. Their world had collapsed.[15]

The revolution that commenced in the autumn of 1918 as a bloodless popular push for peace and democracy assumed that winter

the character of a sectarian class conflict involving ferocious violence. Whereas the initial push for a more democratic polity had enjoyed widespread support among the liberal bourgeoisie as well as moderate workers, a subsequent push for social revolution enjoyed the support only of a minority within the working class and of the intellectuals who claimed to represent their interests. The Majority Social Democrats had achieved their goals and wanted to get on with the non-utopian business of demobilisation, peacemaking and restoration of economic normality. As good committee men they were uncomfortable with spontaneous manifestations on the streets, and suspected the Councils even when their own rank and file dominated them. These men were pragmatic realists. Regardless of their Marxist rhetoric, they realised that incremental reform had paid off, and recoiled from the prospect of risking everything they had achieved already with a roll of the revolutionary dice. The Social Democrat leaders were also conscious of being responsible for Germans of all classes, and spoke themselves of the 'national community', and to them this meant calls for early elections for a National Assembly and a rejection of violent escapades on the part of revolutionary sectarians. Ebert demonstrated a commendable degree of patriotic responsibility, and of disinclination to submit to dictation by irresponsible and unrepresentative minorities. Whatever choices he and his colleagues made should also be understood in terms of Allied insistence that there be some sort of central German government with which they could negotiate to make an eventual peace settlement stick.[16]

Conservatism with a small 'c' was also apparent in the industrial wing of the labour movement. The socialist Free Trades Unions had long been loath to let their members be used as industrial cannon fodder by excitable radical intellectuals, against some of whom the union leaders had rather old-fashioned prejudices. An Auxiliary Service Law in 1916 had advanced their interests by guaranteeing the right to organise, and giving them a degree of co-determination of wages and working conditions. One pragmatic bird in hand was worth ten passionately advocated utopias in the bush. Indeed, the unions believed that, through their own co-optation into running the war effort, they had already advanced a form of state socialism. More concessions had been secured through the November 1918 Central Working Association Agreements between the unions and the temporarily paralysed major employers' associations. The employers abandoned their support for their own emasculated trades unions, introduced a shorter working

day without reducing wages, and recognised works' committees in larger concerns. In return, the unions renounced deep 'socialisation' of the means of production.[17] What appeared to union functionaries as gains within an emergent corporatist framework did not always play that way on the factory floors or in the mines, where the consequences of wartime trade union co-optation seemed to be the abrogation of industrial safety measures, longer hours and inadequate representation by union leaders who spent too much time in the bosses' offices. The early years of Weimar would be plagued by localised outbreaks of worker militancy, sometimes triggered by anarcho-syndicalist elements, which the unions themselves were sometimes powerless to control. German trades union leaders thought that 'syndicalist actions will lead to anarchic excesses of the most anti-social nature', while the Majority Social Democrats claimed that 'there can be said to be only one truly dangerous enemy of the German revolution at the present time, and that is the German working class'.[18]

The Independent Social Democrats, who had broken with the main Party in 1917, included a democratic majority who wished to incorporate the workers' and soldiers' Councils into a parliamentary form of government, using the Councils to diminish permanently the might of generals and industrialists. Like the Majority SPD they desired a National Assembly, but wanted to delay elections, exploiting the interim period to carry out thoroughgoing socialisation of Germany's economy and society. In other words, they were not confident that an elected assembly would go down this route, and so wished to make the decision for it. The three Independent government ministers resigned from the cabinet in December 1918, after the government bungled an attempt to use military force to rescue Social Democrats who were being held hostage in a barracks by striking sailors. The Independents' extreme left wing rejected parliamentary democracy, but was in an ideological quandary about whether disciplined factory workers or amorphous crowds were the optimum vehicles of revolution. During the winter of 1918/19, these Spartacists coalesced with other far-left sects based in Bremen and Hamburg to form the Communist Party of Germany (KPD), an unstable union of intellectuals and angry young workers who opposed parliamentary democracy and favoured putschist violence. The Comintern agent Karl Radek formed the link with Lenin's Bolsheviks.[19] Fired by 'a spirit of utopian fanaticism', the radical left made a bid for power in early January 1919, the pretext being the Prussian government's dismissal of Emil Eichhorn,

Berlin's extreme left-wing police chief, who had afforded help to the mutinous sailors who had held hostage leading Social Democrats during the Christmas disturbances in the capital. Armed demonstrators occupied the offices of leading newspapers including the Social Democrat organ *Vorwärts*, in an attempt to destroy freedom of the press and to prevent the summoning of a constituent assembly. To restore order, Gustav Noske, the Defence Minister, decided to deploy volunteer Free Corps, as well as the regular army and troops avowedly loyal to the Republic. He told Ebert, 'You can relax now. Everything will be all right!'

The Social Democrats' allies of convenience included nihilistic counter-revolutionaries, whose view of Germany's new Republic was that it was, as one of them put it, 'an attempt of the slime to govern. Church slime, bourgeois slime, military slime.'[20] The Free Corps were latterday *condottieri*, consisting of former shock troops, junior and temporary officers, university students who had missed the war 'experience' and anyone still spoiling for blood or incapable of psychological demobilisation. Intense masculine camaraderie and a sense of isolation and serial betrayal characterised these bands, whose actions were supported by the regular army and the republican government. They began fighting Poles and Soviets on Germany's eastern frontiers of Silesia and the Baltic, in the last instance with the toleration of the Allies, who wished to check the spread of Bolshevism, but they quickly adapted to fighting fellow Germans.

These roughly four hundred thousand men were atypical of the millions of German war veterans who wanted normality and quiet, rather than an apocalypse on the nation's streets. Although many of them were middle class, they had absorbed an anti-bourgeois ideology in the pre-war youth movement, which had been hyper-radicalised during the war when intellectual propagandists had called the conflict one between 'German' and Western liberal democratic values, and when warrior–writers like Ernst Jünger and Ernst von Salomon had aestheticised carnage. Nietzschean vitalist individualism was transmuted into the amoral celebration of sheer brutality on the part of warriors more like machines than human beings.[21] Here is Salomon describing his own kind:

> When we probe into the make-up of the Free Corps fighter we can find all the elements which ever played a role in German history except one: the bourgeois. And that is only natural because the peculiar experience of these men . . . had forged them into one single force of consuming destructiveness. . . . The task required [of the warrior is] . . . that all ballast, all sentimentalism, all other values must be ruthlessly cast aside so that his whole strength could be set free.[22]

These gaunt survivors of the trenches brought the wartime polarities of friend and foe on to Germany's streets. In a clear departure from the anti-socialist repression experienced in the years before the war, but in line with their 'White' or Fascist equivalents in Hungary and Italy, these men had no scruples about killing political opponents. Among those to meet a bloody end at their hands were the left-wing activists Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, who were murdered by Free Corps officers on 15 January 1919. In other parts of Germany, Free Corps units stormed centres of working-class militancy.

International events raised Germany's domestic temperature in complex ways. On the right, an egregious elision of ethnic and political issues gained ground. Wartime aspersions about Jews and cowardice were superseded by the vicious game of identifying, or as with Lenin misidentifying, Jews and revolutionaries as one and the same. Originating as a Tsarist survival mechanism, this response became commonplace beyond Germany, with British officials convinced that 'the Bolsheviks are all organised and directed by Jews', and an American general fighting in Russia certain that Latvian Chekists (the Bolshevik's political police force) were predominantly Jews.[23]

It was true that some radicalised Jews were prominent in Bolshevik Russia and Hungary, and in attempts to install such regimes in Germany. The Hungarian revolutionary Béla Kun; Tibor Szamuely the head of the Red Guards; and Hungary's War Minister Vilmos Böhm were Jews, as were many political commissars and the personnel of revolutionary tribunals.[24] And that some of these characters were quite ghastly can be gauged from the fact that in his Soviet exile, after the failure of the Hungarian Revolution, Béla Kun acted as chief of the Cheka in the Crimea, when some sixty thousand indigenous Tatars were murdered as the Bolsheviks eradicated their autonomy.[25] Trotsky (born Bronstein), Luxemburg and Eisner were Jews, but their Jewishness was nominal, their cosmopolitan universalism antipathetic to Jewish patriotic and religious particularism, and their utopian extremism was unrepresentative of the Jewish populations of their respective countries. Indeed, in the nineteenth century, many Russian Jewish families declared a week of mourning when a child decided to join the anti-Tsarist revolutionaries.[26] But these nuances counted for nothing in the vicious climate of post-war Europe, the quintessential time of the

grands simplificateurs. As the Chief Rabbi of Moscow famously had it: 'The Trotskys made the revolutions, but the Bronsteins paid the bill.' They were irrelevant to the antisemitic right, wherever it hailed from. Rightist White Russian and Baltic German émigrés, notably Erwin Scheubner-Richter, Alfred Rosenberg and Count Ernst zu Reventlow, were prominent in propagating an antisemitic interpretation of the human disaster that had befallen Russia, and they influenced Adolf Hitler, who came from a background where the forging of simple connections between Jews and revolutionaries was already commonplace.[27] The antisemitic *völkisch* right admitted exploiting political chaos and 'using the situation for fanfares against Jewry, and the Jews as lightning conductors for all grievances'.[28]

There is one further point about the international impact of the Bolshevik Revolution which needs to be made emphatically. It is totally misleading to imagine that horror of Bolshevik dictatorship was confined to the political right. Indeed some German conservatives hated the Poles and France, which was Poland's main protector, so implacably that they would ally with the Devil to undo them, and they welcomed business or military opportunities in the new Russia, where Trotsky provided the German army with facilities for the covert manufacture of aircraft, toxic gas and tanks in violation of Allied restrictions on German armaments.[29] In Germany, the most consistent opponents of the Bolshevik tyranny were the Majority Social Democrats, who after welcoming the overthrow of the Tsar quickly turned to exposing the nightmarish quality of life in the Soviet Union. The Roman Catholic Centre Party did much the same. Agency wire services, delegations, travellers and, last but not least, the Menshevik opposition to the Bolsheviks, which even managed to smuggle out accounts of life in Lenin's concentration camps, supplied the factual basis for the SPD newspaper *Vorwärts*' coverage of events in Russia:

> Mass terror against the bourgeoisie had gone much further than the fighting methods of the French Revolution, which condemned individuals for individual actions. Holding a class responsible for the actions of individual persons is a judicial novum, which in another type of social system could well serve as a justification for those seeking to make the working class responsible for the actions of a fanatic, as has already happened so frequently in milder form.

The SPD rejected what *Vorwärts* dubbed Bolshevik 'Socialismus asiaticus', proclaiming, 'We don't want Russian conditions, because we know that under Bolshevik rule the Russian people are dying of hunger, even though Russia is a predominantly agrarian country.' The Prussian Social Democrat leader Otto Braun spoke of the 'Russian madhouse', while Ebert warned: 'Socialism excludes every form of arbitrariness. . . . Disorder, personal wilfulness, acts of violence are the deadly enemies of socialism.'[30] Moreover, luridly accurate reports of Bolshevik atrocities were not confined to the rabid right – with the implication that these reports were unreliable. Thanks to the remarkable American historian Vladimir Brovkin, anyone who wishes to know, and some apparently don't, can easily sample the information sent out to western Europe by persecuted *socialists* within Russia, which another talented scholar, Uwe-Kai Merz, has followed in relation to the Social Democrat press of the Weimar Republic. The Social Democrat press exposed Bolshevik-induced mass starvation, or the violence meted out to recalcitrant workers and peasants, or to dissenting socialists, by what they called 'Chinese and Korean' troops (for the Social Democrats shared a number of prejudices with their fellow Germans) and the crimes of the murderers and torturers deployed by the Bolsheviks' Polish secret police chief Felix Dzerzhinsky. To ascribe these things to the malevolent right is a denial of the enormous courage of socialists of several countries who tried to make the facts of the Bolshevik despotism known at the time.[31]

The vicious international scene affected Germany, where both antisocialism and antisemitism had home-grown roots, as they did in many other European countries. In Bavaria, events centred on Munich, an island of anarchic bohemianism and political radicalism in an otherwise predominantly Roman Catholic rural sea of small towns and timber houses scattered across the foothills of the Alps. These were the sort of places where grudges and hatreds of Scandinavian-epic proportions could germinate and linger. After a hundred days in power, during which Bavaria was plunged into chaos, Premier Kurt Eisner was assassinated by Count Anton Arco-Valley, while *en route* to the state parliament, to offer his resignation more than a month after his party had lost an election. His publication of official documents regarding German diplomacy in the period before the outbreak of war did not increase his popularity in nationalist circles. A member of the Revolutionary Workers' Council retaliated by shooting the Majority SPD leader Erhard Auer and a delegate from the Bavarian wing of the Centre Party, which indicated that the extreme right enjoyed no monopoly on terroristic violence. Unable to master the ongoing turbulence, another Majority SPD figure, Johannes Hoffmann, withdrew the legitimate government

to Bamberg, thus allowing an array of anarchists and bohemian oddities, based in the arty quarter Schwabing, to assume power in Munich for six days. Of these men, only the new Foreign Minister was clinically insane, cabling Lenin and the Pope about the whereabouts of the key to the lavatory door. A Red Army managed to fight off Republican troops dispatched by the legitimate Bavarian government.[32]

Following this eccentric interlude, power was briefly seized by the Communists, who proclaimed a Bavarian Soviet Republic. Their leader, Eugen Levine, received the blessing of Lenin, who characteristically wished to know how many bourgeois hostages had been taken. A 'classist' tone was soon apparent. Milk shortages were rationalised with the argument: 'What does it matter? . . . Most of it goes to the children of the bourgeoisie anyway. We are not interested in keeping them alive. No harm if they die – they'd only grow into enemies of the proletariat.'[33] The exiled Bavarian government received help from Noske in Berlin, in the form of thirty-five thousand Free Corps soldiers, who bore down on the radical Red Army. On 30 April, the Red Army commander Egelhofer ordered the murder of ten hostages held in the Luitpoldgymnasium, including members of the rabidly antisemitic Thule Society and one woman hostage. Entering Munich in early May, the Free Corps embarked on a reign of terror, with summary shootings and perfunctory tribunals. Battlefield niceties went by the board in conditions of a largely one-sided civil war in which 606 people were killed. Officers encouraged their men to set conscience aside, it being better to kill a few innocent people than let the guilty escape. The innocent included twenty members of the Catholic St Joseph Society, dragged from a meeting and shot as 'Communist terrorists'. Levine was tried and executed for high treason; many of his associates were summarily shot. The revolutionaries' dream of a chain of Bolshevik republics, linking Bavaria, Austria and Hungary to the Soviet Union, effectively collapsed. As for the workers' and soldiers' Councils, these disappeared as local governments refused to fund them, or as the Kaiser's army was demobilised.[34]

The threat from the extreme left had been neutralised, albeit in a fashion that soured relations between Social Democrats and Communists up to and beyond the eventual advent of a Nazi government, although a united labour movement was no obstacle to either authoritarianism or fascism elsewhere. Intimate hatreds are often said to be the worst, and that was certainly the case here, at least at the highest rather than at local level, where the 'comrades' sometimes co-operated

with each other in the fight against 'fascism'. The Communists accused the Social Democrats of betraying the revolution and enabling capitalism to survive through reforms; the Social Democrats hated the Communists for being the cat's-paws of sinister Muscovite forces, and for their apparent faith in salvation through absolute immiseration. These mutual dislikes were compounded by the differences in age, background and temperament between their respective constituencies. There were also appreciable differences in mentality and tone, of the sort that led to Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin's remark after his first meeting with Molotov, 'But they are just like the bloody Communists!'

It is sometimes assumed that the Majority Social Democratic government of Germany in those momentous months immediately after the Great War could, or should, have acted otherwise, although none of the alternatives seems especially cogent.[35] The sentimental belief that the working class was a homogeneous repository of untapped virtue, whose revolutionary spontaneity was predestined to betrayal, is an example of wishful thinking, an emotional investment in the allegedly unique value of a largely imagined social class. The Social Democrats might have tried harder to raise their own republican militias, lessening their dependence on the Free Corps, middle-class Home Guard units or the regular army, whose loyalties were tenuous. But the working class, indoctrinated for decades with a pacificism made militant by time in the trenches, did not flock to such formations or were discouraged from doing so. Forces such as the Red Army in the Ruhr were as unstable as the Free Corps, and just as bent on overthrowing the democratic order. Besides, Bolshevik activity in the Baltic and Polish nationalist insurgency in Silesia, not to speak of the real Red Army of the Soviet Union threatening Poland, made this an inauspicious moment for radical experiments in military reorganisation.

Yet at the same time, with remarkable speed, Germany's new government demobilised six million soldiers and returned them to productive life, albeit in a manner which accelerated the inflation inherited from wartime and deferred stabilisation of the German economy. Rather than raising taxes and pursuing rigorous deflationary policies, which resulted in high levels of unemployment in other countries, post-war German governments concentrated on welfare, creation of jobs and fulfilment of obligations they had undertaken to the war wounded, widows and orphans. A fairer social policy became a substitute for deeper 'socialisation'. Deflation and unemployment were not options that the unions were prepared to countenance.[36]

The SPD might have expropriated large landowners or nationalised heavy industry, although neither strategy recommended itself then, any more than it does nowadays, as a panacea for society's ills. Wherever this strategy has been tried, notably in the Soviet Union, it has resulted in backwardness and decay, not to speak of appalling environmental and health costs, mainly inflicted upon the working class in whose name these policies were pursued. Expropriation of land would not have stabilised the food supply, which was critical because of a prolonged Allied blockade designed to force Germany to comply with the peace terms, while nationalisation of industry might have facilitated Allied reparations exactions by simplifying complex lines of ownership of private property, which as good capitalists the Allies respected. Since the extended state controls over the economy during wartime had been inefficient and unpopular, it is unlikely that their peacetime extension would have been widely welcomed. Indeed, the continuance of some of these measures into the 1920s partly accounts for the widespread alienation of the farming community from the major political parties and hence from the Weimar Republic. And it is hard to imagine how a government based on a political version of dual-control driving involving the Soviet Councils would have functioned in practice, even assuming that they would not be fatally prone to subversion by totalitarian parties, as they had been in Russia, where democratic control was the preferred route to despotism.

The Majority SPD might also have edged out the tenured bureaucratic holdovers from the imperial regime, but neither they nor the *ad hoc* Councils possessed the requisite technical expertise to run a complex modern country or its armed forces. Wholesale purges of bureaucrats, judges or university professors can set ugly precedents. Would they have stopped short of the anti-republican Protestant clergy or Bavaria's Michael Cardinal Faulhaber, who in 1922 memorably declared: 'The Revolution was perjury and high treason, and will remain tainted and branded with the mark of Cain'?[37] The nub of the matter was that, for all her flaws, imperial Germany was an advanced industrial country, with a political system which combined a parliamentary franchise that was more democratic than Britain's with an otherwise autocratic form of government. If government ground to a halt in Russia, a nation of peasant farmers would not starve, as we can see today when the former industrial proletariat have reverted to subsistence farming in the absence of wages. This was not true of Germany, where two-thirds of the population lived by industry and

trade. The Majority Social Democrats reasoned that most people had more to forfeit than gain through radical social experimentation, which, it should be noted, included political arrangements that would have represented a regression from a system in which all men and women over twenty now had the vote. They were not going to jeopardise the advances they had made before, during and after the war by going in search of utopia. Germany's new leaders looked backwards as well as forward, and decided not to follow the Russian road to chaos and repression.[38]

Temporarily relieved of the threat of extreme socialist dictatorship, Germany's National Assembly, consisting of delegates elected in mid-January 1919, convened in the small Thuringian town of Weimar to draft and approve a republican constitution, while the government scrutinised Allied peace terms. The two things were connected, in that the choice of meeting place was designed to show the Allies that a new Germany, informed by the town of Goethe, had come into being.

The fundaments of the constitution were established before the Assembly met: there was to be a democratic, federal republic based on the dualism of presidency and parliament. Earlier agreements among political, industrial and military leaders set the limits on what was thought possible, and the constitution effectively enshrined the compromises of the first non-violent phase of Germany's revolution. On 11 February the Assembly elected Ebert president, who in turn called on Philipp Scheidemann to form a government based on a coalition of Majority Social Democrats, the Catholic Centre Party and the liberal German Democratic Party, parties which had a wartime track-record of co-operation and which, in January, had obtained a mandate consisting of over 76 per cent of votes cast. Left-liberal lawyers assumed the main burden of drafting the constitution, although the influence of representatives of the Churches and the federal states made themselves felt for better or for worse. There were sticking points over the national flag, the status of religious education and the rights of the constituent regional states, but these constitutional deliberations were concluded remarkably swiftly between February and August 1919.

Since the liberal drafters of the constitution were historically wary of overweening parliamentary powers, the constitution combined an elected presidency, which was granted emergency powers, with an elected parliament for which all persons over twenty could vote. The electoral cycle for parliament was four years, and seven years for the presidency. The presidency was designed to be a largely honorary

figurehead position, filling the vacuum left by Germany's exiled monarch, although the occupants (only the second of whom, Hindenburg, was popularly elected) showed few signs of charismatic appeal. Apart from the obligation to perform tasks which normally befall heads of state, the president had the power to dissolve parliament, to nominate as chancellors persons either enjoying or likely to enjoy the support of a parliamentary majority (which was by no means a foregone conclusion), and, under Article 48, to issue emergency legislation and to deploy the armed forces to restore order. This last stipulation was ominously vague. Ebert availed himself 136 times of emergency decrees, many of a very technical nature and mostly during the crises that arose in 1923, while Hindenburg, his successor, issued none between 1925 and 1930, and rescinded eight of Ebert's.[39] At the time few thought of the potential misuse of this last power; and Weimar's constitution can hardly be held responsible alone for the advent of a racist, totalitarian dictatorship.

The adoption of proportional representation (without a qualifying 5 per cent threshhold, along the lines adopted in 1952 by the Federal Republic) meant that many fringe parties had deputies in parliament. However, detailed computations using alternative electoral models suggest that a National Socialist victory might just have well have been accelerated rather than delayed by voting according to a British-style 'first past the post' system, given the effect upon voters of factors unrelated to the electoral system. In other words, the Nazis might have come to power in 1930 rather than three years later. At most, the new system of voting for pre-selected party lists may have somewhat diminished the personal bonds between a deputy and electors. On the positive side, proportional representation gave a voice to, for example, Catholic or Protestant diasporas in areas otherwise dominated by the rival creed. Similarly, the baleful influence on Weimar democracy of initiatives and plebiscites, originally designed to provide a democratic outlet between electoral cycles, may have been exaggerated by commentators, not least because none of Weimar's seven plebiscitary initiatives succeeded. The new state favoured neither Protestant nor Catholic Churches, a stance pleasing Catholics rather more than Protestants, who had been part of the previous 'throne and altar' dispensation. And the single concession to the Councils movement, Article 165, which concerned the creation of a Reich Economic Council, had little enduring significance. There was an impressive catalogue

of basic individual rights, including Article 163, guaranteeing every German the right to work.[40]

Significantly, sixty-seven delegates from parties represented in the governing coalition – including a quarter of the SPD, a quarter of the right-liberal DVP and a fifth of the left-liberal DDP caucuses – declined to vote for the constitutional settlement, and subsequent attempts to mobilise popular enthusiasm with lectures on Constitution Day on 11 August proved no crowd puller.[41] The Republic's opening ceremony, the inauguration of Ebert as president, was a maladroit affair, and it was not helped by the Ullstein group newspaper which published photographs of Ebert and Noske, the Defence Minister, in bathing trunks. Harry Count Kessler wrote of the ceremony: 'All very decorous but lacking go, like a confirmation in a decent middle class home. The republic should avoid ceremonies; they are not suited to this type of government. It is like a governess dancing a ballet.'[42] Other contemporaries, such as the publishing magnate Hermann Ullstein, deplored the ways in which the Republic hid its virtues under a bushel. The Republic eschewed military parades, partly because of socialist antimilitarism, but also because the loyalties of the new Reichswehr were too tenuous to march its units safely through the streets. But if the President of France could ride in a horse-drawn coach to Longchamps, flanked by glittering cuirassiers, why couldn't Ebert make the same showing at the German races in Hamburg? Ullstein commented that a failure of propaganda was to 'make one's enemy's bed'.[43] Later, General Schleicher would make a similar point to Heinrich Brüning, Germany's Chancellor in 1930–2, suggesting he ride up and down Unter den Linden, Berlin's main governmental thoroughfare, once a day in a coach with a cavalry escort. President Ebert was a decent patriotic man, but as the distinguished Impressionist artist Max Liebermann put it, 'one couldn't paint him'. Even the Republic's eagle was found wanting, soon acquiring the epithet 'bankrupt vulture' because of its drooping wings. Other symbolic failures, largely attributable to the dogmatism of the left about trivial issues, included a refusal to strike a commemorative medal for survivors of one of the greatest armed conflicts in global history.[44]

The new republican red, black and gold flag also failed to rouse the enthusiasm of those wedded to the imperial black, white and red. A feeble compromise was adopted whereby the old flag was used by merchant ships, because the republican gold was allegedly indistinct at

sea. A deranged minority thought the gold was a 'yellow Jewish blemish' on the new flag.[45] On the extreme right, where the newly founded German Racial Defence and Combat League was the main racist umbrella organisation, encompassing a couple of hundred thousand members, the liberal Jew Hugo Preuss's role in drafting the constitution was another link in an alleged chain of nefarious Jewish activities. This commenced with Social Democratic Party success in the 'Jewish elections' of 1912, then the 'Jewish war' and 'Jewish revolution', and on to the 'Jewish victory' and 'Jewish Republic'. The Versailles peace conference brought further refinement to this self-reinforcing paranoid fiction, with the German bankers Melchior and Warburg allegedly conniving with their New York relatives.[46]

At Versailles in May 1919, the German delegation to the peace negotiations was shocked to discover that President Wilson's principles of self-determination excluded their country. Under the first terms offered, which were bolstered with Allied ultimata, Germany lost all her overseas colonies and the territories claimed by her neighbours; union between Germany and Austria was forbidden; limitations were imposed on the size and nature of her armed forces, and officer cadet academies, the General Staff, tanks and the incipient air force were abolished. There were to be reparations, as yet unspecified, by way of atonement for allegedly causing the war, as reflected in Article 231 ascribing sole 'war guilt' to Germany. Military manpower shrank from 800,000 in April 1919 to 100,000 in January 1921, while 30,000 of the 34,000 officers corps were discharged.[47] If the military restrictions struck at a primary symbol of national prowess, and at the caste personifying it, the 'war guilt' clause and demands that Germany surrender her alleged war criminals seemed unjust and vindictive. The Allied commissions that would monitor both disarmament and reparations payments seemed like a semi-permanent impairment of sovereignty. The latter is a touchy issue now wherever similar arrangements are imposed, and it was a sensitive issue then, especially since Germany had been defeated without a single Allied soldier entering her own territory. German attempts to divide the Allies with counter-proposals and threats of non-compliance only reinforced Allied unity and raised the prospect of further military incursions beyond the bridgeheads and demilitarised zones called for in the treaty. The only minor Allied concession to German sensibilities was the decision to grant a plebiscite to determine the future of Upper Silesia, a vote whose result the Poles tried to overturn by force.[48]

Virtually all sectors of German opinion angrily denounced the Allied peace terms, which differed so radically from expectations built on Wilsonian idealism. German socialists, such as Eduard Bernstein or Kurt Eisner, who tried to spill the beans on the empire's pre-war diplomatic machinations were a tiny minority. Interned in his bugged hotel room, the German Versailles conference delegation leader Foreign Minister Brockdorff-Rantzau played to the domestic gallery, laying his black gloves on his copy of the treaty, and treating his Allied interlocutors to a speech, by turns plangent and strident, while malaroitly remaining seated. His audience was not impressed. The German government's response to the treaty was equally emotive, with Chancellor Scheidemann remarking, 'What hand would not wither that binds itself and us in these fetters?' A nation in chains became the convenient metaphor, and Germany's losses were dramatically illustrated in countless maps and graphics, with once historic regions brutally wrenched away by foreign powers. The Versailles treaty appeared to be the triumph of an Allied conspiracy to enmesh Germany in a network of restrictions and obligations in perpetuity, for the reparations burden was left ominously open-ended. This perception discredited the international institutions and idealistic values of the post-war era, as did the United States Senate's refusal to ratify the treaties or to endorse the League of Nations. Rightist German intellectuals pooh-poohed international law, morality and talk of universal peace, preferring instead doctrines based on the inevitability of conflict among different peoples and races.[49]

Nationality issues were especially likely to be coloured by a sense of historic grievance, even when the peacemakers endeavoured to protect minority rights. In an ethnically complicated post-imperial eastern Europe, efforts to impose a framework of nation states on formerly multi-national empires were bound to lead to injustices for various minorities, including the Germans themselves, yet these problems were ultimately regarded as secondary to France's search for stable allies to replace Tsarist Russia and Poland's two-hundred-year-old quest for independent statehood. Minority ethnic German exclaves in various newly founded eastern European countries were subjected to acts of local chauvinism; Germany made corresponding cultural and economic efforts to keep ethnic Germans where they were.

No German minority in a given territory meant no German territorial claim on it, a strategy realised far more radically in the same region after 1945.[50] As the Balkan joke had it, 'why should I be a

national minority in your state, when you can be one in mine?' Thus around 13 per cent of the German population was now marooned beyond the borders of the former German Reich, and they were sometimes treated in a discriminatory and offensive manner. Ethnic Germans under the thumb of French authorities in Alsace-Lorraine and the Rhineland or Polish troops in West Prussia and Silesia contributed to the emotional intensification of *völkisch* thinking, providing examples of persecution and suffering, and fuelling the belief that all Germans would be better off within an ethnically exclusive 'national community'.

However reasonable the Allied case for Germany's obligation to provide restitution for material damage and loss of shipping, and to pay pensions for veterans, widows and orphans, the political message seemed to be that the Versailles treaty was prolonging the war by economic means. For, beyond a desire to neutralise Germany's military might, there seemed to be an intention to disable permanently the economic power underpinning it, regardless of transformed domestic political circumstances, and despite the deleterious economic and psychological consequences for the stability of the Weimar Republic. All these fears, some of them justified, coupled with the Allies' latent threat of armed intervention to enforce the treaty's terms, contributed to the view that Germany after 1918 was engaged in a sort of cold war.[51]

Superficially speaking, Versailles created unanimity among Germans. But this overworked paradox was more apparent than real. Moderate opponents of the treaty opted for negotiation to obtain revised terms, the line pursued ineptly or shrewdly by successive Weimar chancellors and their foreign ministers from Joseph Wirth via Gustav Stresemann to Heinrich Brüning, but diehard opponents of the Republic convinced themselves that the 'November criminals', as they dubbed the republicans who had toppled the Kaiser and surrendered to the Allies, were responsible for Germany's defeat and this shamefully onerous peace treaty. Once people had worked themselves into a lather, reality counted for nothing. No matter how ingeniously a great statesman such as Stresemann employed reconciliation and an ideology of Europeanism to dismantle the Versailles framework, he could never satisfy appetites whetted since the 1880s by visions of Germany's obtaining both a continental and an overseas empire at one fell swoop, which would redress the grievance Germany felt towards more established colonial powers. The Republic's foreign policy inevitably fell

short of such insatiable expectations, as had also happened during the Wilhelmine empire, whose foreign policy had never been quite strident enough for sections of nationalist opinion.

The German cabinet divided over whether to accept or reject the Allied terms, but it eventually complied. Parliament reluctantly authorised compliance with the treaty, and it was signed on 28 June at Versailles. Germany's Protestant Churches declared a day of national mourning.[52] The treaty was the complex product of such Allied considerations as human and material losses; mutual war debts; minority and nationalist lobbying; and public opinion in Allied countries, and legitimate national security concerns of the 'once bitten, twice shy' variety. Again, as with the Weimar constitution, we should not make automatic connections between the peace settlement and the rise of Nazism over a decade later. Versailles did not irrevocably diminish Germany's long-term existence as a great power, and its terms bore scant resemblance to the sort of vindictive ones imposed by imperial Germany herself in 1918 on Russia's new Bolshevik government in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. As the Belgian Foreign Minister commented, after an intemperate performance by the right-wing liberal German industrialist Hugo Stinnes at the Spa reparations deliberations: 'What would have become of us if such a man had had the chance to emerge as the victor?'[53] If one was to go by the terms of Brest-Litovsk, Germany's defeated opponents would have had to forfeit 90 per cent of their coal capacity and 50 per cent of their industry. Nor did the Versailles terms concerning Germany compare unfavourably with those imposed under separate treaties on Austria, Hungary or Turkey, with Hungary losing 70, as opposed to Germany's forfeiture of 13 per cent, of her pre-war territory. But the comparative perspective was closed to a people focused on their own misery, and so was any rational cost-benefit appraisal of Germany's forfeiting of economically backward eastern agricultural areas, however beguiling (for some) the heavily subsidised aristocratic lifestyle that once thrived there.

Rejection of the Versailles treaty was common across the Weimar political spectrum, including the Communists, who regarded it as part of a wider intra-imperialist plot. There was no distinctive political advantage in opposing it. Many of the most transparently coercive features of the settlement – such as military inspectorates, occupied zones and reparations – had largely unravelled before Nazism became a mass political movement, in a Europe which was by no means universally unsympathetic to Germany's legitimate grievances.

However, the widely acknowledged iniquities of the Versailles treaty were elided by many right-wing Germans with a broader charge of treason against the alleged 'November criminals', which was both inaccurate and preposterous. *Ad hominem* libels and political terrorism which supported and furthered these false accusations were avowedly intended to undermine the newly democratic order. This order was also traduced by the intellectual right as an alien, mechanical, Westernised import, an aberration from Germany's allegedly authoritarian national tradition which had recently transformed myriad sleepy principalities into a great European power. This line simply ignored the vibrant party political culture that had marked the Wilhelmine empire. The fictive 'civic truce', which some Germans claimed had characterised German society during the war, mutated into an imagined 'national community' transcending class conflict, where obligation and order superseded Western liberal notions of individual rights. Of course, in other parts of German life, among Catholics and socialists, there were alternative versions of 'national community' – based on Christian principles, loyalty to the Republic and a desire for social justice – which deserve not to be overlooked. But the unreconciled right was more interested in going forward boldly into the future in search of an imaginary past. Accuracy, fair play and respect for either persons or institutions were not high priorities in its enraged milieu, and their chorus was joined, from the far left, by venomous assaults against the alleged betrayers of the socialist revolution and snide demimondiste attacks on putative German national characteristics which irritated plain provincial people. The so-called intelligentsia which took this line scorned the dull and worthy politicians of the day, and they mocked the armed forces and their fellow countrymen in general, whose stolid values and virtues they despised, just as their right-wing counterparts fulminated against 'the masses' and Germany's new inorganic Weimar political 'system', a word well chosen for insinuating something inauthentically alien and mechanical.[54]

Republican leaders had to resort to the courts to defend themselves against defamatory allegations. In 1920, Matthias Erzberger sued the conservative Karl Helfferich, who had made serious allegations against him. As a signatory to the armistice, and author of major tax reforms which disfavoured the rich, Erzberger was especially hated on the right. The legal action turned out badly for him: though awarded derisory damages of 300 Marks, he was revealed in court to have practised tax avoidance himself, and to have made money from

knowledge gained while in government. Similarly, President Ebert had to bring some 170 libel actions against right-wing journalists who impugned his conduct during a wartime strike by munitions workers. Although a Magdeburg court acknowledged that Ebert had joined the strike leadership with the intention of drawing off its radicalism, it nonetheless implicitly endorsed the charges of treason. By delaying an urgent appendectomy, the trial contributed to the death of the fifty-four-year-old President.[55]

By contrast, considerable latitude was afforded Field Marshal Hindenburg when he condescended to appear before a parliamentary committee investigating the causes of Germany's military collapse in 1918. This was the first time that the new republican democratic Germany confronted a senior representative of the old imperial order. The results were like trying to get answers from a stone wall. Hindenburg read from a prepared statement whose final flourish was a reference to the opinion of 'an English general' to the effect that 'the German army was stabbed in the back'. This was a subtle reworking of the incredulous response of a British officer to claims made by Ludendorff: 'You mean you were stabbed in the back?'[56] But high-level denial of responsibility for Germany's military defeat went far beyond her wartime generals. Ebert himself had joined in the denials when he ostentatiously greeted Germany's returning 'undefeated' demobilised soldiery. Apart from this 'stab in the back' legend, whose reality had been a 'stab in the front', a further explanation for imperial Germany's defeat was the alleged superiority of the British press, notably those newspapers owned by Lord Northcliffe, whose 'horror propaganda' had demonised the 'Huns'. The guileless German Siegfried, a favourite personification of the German nation, had not gone down in a fair fight, but rather to the black arts of the *Daily Mail*.[57]

Allied restrictions on the size of Germany's post-war armed forces had consequences for the Free Corps, whose operations in the Baltic and Poland were abruptly terminated. While a few units were incorporated within the new army, the Reichswehr, or into state police forces, others dissolved into a host of 'athletic societies', 'circuses', 'detective agencies', 'haulage companies' and 'labour gangs' on large estates, taking their 'machine tools' with them to use against aggrieved agricultural labourers or distinguished Weimar politicians. An anti-Weimar assault took the form of political exploitation of mass distress, a putsch and a campaign of assassination.[58]

Disgruntled Free Corps leaders provided the force behind a putsch

in March 1920. Their backers included regular army officers, often noblemen, and the conservative bourgeoisie from the countryside east of the Elbe. Their leaders included Ludendorff and Wolfgang Kapp, both formerly involved in the Fatherland Party, founded in 1917 to mobilise support for extravagant war aims. The putschists' brief occupation of Berlin's government quarter was facilitated by malevolent neutrality within the regular army. Guardianship of the abstract state which the Reichswehr thought it embodied did not extend to defence of its legitimate republican government. The various elements of the so-called Kapp–Luttwitz putsch did not gel. Kapp was yesterday's man, reluctant to follow the Free Corps creed that 'Everything would still have been all right if we had shot more people'. The local Home Guards, though hostile to the Republic, were impressed neither by Kapp's desire to restore the old order nor by Free Corps nihilism. Several leading industrialists, such as Carl Duisberg, were distinctly cool towards the impetuosity of what they dubbed the 'military party'.

The putsch collapsed amid a massive general strike called by the government before it fled to Dresden, but which was masterminded by the socialist trade unions. Since there was full employment, the strike had its optimum effect. Moreover, Social Democrats, Catholics and Communists co-operated, though the latter initially opposed the strike, refusing as they put it 'to lift a finger for the democratic republic'. Ironically, although the putsch was an ignominious failure, forces were unleashed to oppose it which were hard to contain. The unions began to dictate their own terms to the government, including the composition of the cabinet, while a fifty-thousand-strong Red Army roamed the Ruhr. Government attempts to disarm this force through negotiation came to nothing, and in the resulting clashes with the army about a thousand of the rebels were killed.[59] It was indicative of the times that when twenty students from Marburg University escorted fifteen 'Spartacist' captives from a village to Gotha, they shot them all somewhere along a railway line.[60]

Although the Republic survived the Kapp putsch, at elections in June 1920 the electorate decisively rejected the parties of the original Weimar coalition. The Majority Social Democrats and left-liberal DDP lost respectively half and three-fifths of their previous support, while support for liberal conservatives and conservative nationalists and for the radical Independent Socialists swelled. In other words, the middle classes moved more to the right, while some of the working class moved further left.

After the failure of the 1920 putsch, the right adopted other tactics and mutated in complex ways. Bavaria became the 'cell of order', the term the right used to describe local indulgence towards anti-democratic subversion. In March, a conservative regime led by Gustav Ritter von Kahr took over in Bavaria, whose combined particularist sensitivities and right-wing sympathies enabled the extreme right to flourish there. Bavarian rightists took the lead in forming the Escherich Organisation, or 'Orgesch', which combined the vociferous pursuit of middle-class interests with preparations for a military takeover. Its leaders envisaged apocalyptic scenarios, in which strikes by producers and professionals would provoke a predictable 'Red' response that the counter-revolutionary right and the Reichswehr could use to crush the left in general. As it happened some on the left thought along similar lines, for sometimes the extremes were involved in a *pas de deux* in which each depended on the provocations and responses of the other. In 1920, the Independent Social Democrats split, with about 350,000 of their members joining the Communists, who became a mass party for the first time. The old Communist leadership was purged, in favour of those whose task was to take the heat off the Soviet Union by fomenting trouble in Germany. In other words, the Communists were a tool of an alien power. Specifically they sought to provoke the Escherich Organisation into action, although the latter needed little encouragement. In March 1921, Communist agents, including Béla Kun, and domestic desperadoes were responsible for wildcat strikes, bank robberies and acts of terrorism. Government forces had little difficulty in suppressing these externally directed activities.

Shadowy right-wing groups, such as the Organisation Consul, waged a campaign of assassination and terror. Terrorists masquerading as patriots killed Erzberger and threw prussic acid into former Chancellor Philipp Scheidemann's face in 1921; and the following year shot Foreign Minister Walter Rathenau while he was *en route* to his office. This last murder was probably designed to provoke a left-wing uprising, which conservative forces could then crush with impunity. The right-wing press crowed that these men had got their just deserts. Those who had coined such rhymes as 'Kill off Walter Rathenau, The goddamned Jewish sow' had their hopes realised.[61] These were the most notorious examples of more than 350 political murders committed by rightist terrorists during the Weimar years.[62] Although the assassins routinely fled, sometimes aided by the police, or were treated with understanding by anti-republican judges, the government passed

a law in July 1922 for the Protection of the Republic, in order to placate public outrage, which was taking the form of mass demonstrations, in which millions of people participated to reach out, in death at least, to the dead Foreign Minister, the first German Jew to hold such an office. Bavarian particularism stymied republican attempts to counter right-wing extremism in a state which was especially prone to it.

Allied reparations demands occasioned Weimar Germany's next bout of crises. In April 1921 an Allied commission presented the bill. It totalled 132 billion gold Marks or about US$30 billion. This was the scaled-down figure, for only British and American pressure had stymied France's demands for 269 billion Marks. Chancellor Joseph Wirth opted for tactical compliance, if only to demonstrate Germany's incapacity to pay. For the Allies, having imposed reparations on Germany, unhelpfully passed the business of deciding how to raise the money on to the Germans themselves to avoid the costs of military occupation. France threatened to extend the occupation, but this was a bluff waiting to be called, especially since such influential Englishmen as the economist John Maynard Keynes were by no means unsympathetic to equally weighty German descriptions of Germany's alleged plight.[63]

The payment arrangements meant that reparations to the Allies had to compete with the German government's desire to purchase social peace by postponing the stabilisation of the economy, at a time when the Allies were experiencing deflation and high unemployment. The Allies suspected that Germany was exploiting her currency depreciation to minimise her obligations, and to dump export goods, and these suspicions were compounded by the erratic impression left by the 1922 Rapallo agreement between Germany and the Soviet pariah, which in Western eyes threatened to squeeze Poland, France's 'gendarme on the Vistula', between an East–West vice.

When over Christmas and New Year 1922–3 Germany twice defaulted on her reparations obligations, seventy thousand French and Belgian troops occupied the Ruhr, ostensibly to protect engineers seizing telegraph poles and timber, but really to secure the economic edge that France and Belgium had failed to acquire under the Versailles treaty. The new centre-right cabinet of the Hamburg businessman Wilhelm Cuno, whom Ebert had appointed to make an impression of seriousness on the Allies, ironically endorsed a campaign of passive resistance among the Ruhr's inhabitants, having undertaken no

advanced planning or stockpiling for this eventuality. Passive resistance in the Ruhr led to the French authorities expelling or imprisoning recalcitrants. To be precise, about 46,200 civil servants, railwaymen and police were directly affected, together with a hundred thousand of their relatives. Sporadic sabotage and low-level acts of terrorism, which according to some exponents were explicitly modelled on the corrosive acts of Irish Republican terrorism against the British, were countered robustly with shootings, hostage-taking and collective fines. Having already blotted their copybooks by knocking German civilians off the pavements, the occupying forces compounded their errors by aggressive house searches, and identity checks, and summary executions. Courts martial created nationalist martyrs, notoriously Albert Leo Schlageter, who was shot in 1923 by the French occupation authorities.

Exhibiting their usual amoral opportunism, the Communists adopted Schlageter as a hero, with Karl Radek of the Moscow Comintern eulogising the fallen 'fascist' as a martyr. Ruth Fischer, who was half Jewish, dabbled in antisemitism – *'Whoever cries out against Jewish capitalists is already a class warrior, even when he does not know it. . . . Kick down the Jewish capitalists, hang them from the lampposts, and stamp upon them'* – in a cynical attempt to woo nationalist and *völkisch* support.[64] Other solidarities were as surprising. Social Democrat workers rallied around their 'national comrade', the industrialist Fritz Thyssen, when he and various mine owners were tried by a French military court for refusing reparation deliveries of coal. Joint employer–union committees distributed payments to the strikers, and Heinrich Brüning, by now a leading light of the Christian trades union movement, was one of those who brought them suitcases filled with illicit cash. Ironically, the one party not to partake in this national mood of resistance was the ultra-patriotic Nazis, who enjoined Germans not to let themselves be distracted by France, but to concentrate on toppling their own 'November criminals'.

The economic consequences of the Allies' occupation of the Ruhr in 1923 were catastrophic. The German government used deficit spending to subsidise workers summarily dismissed from their posts while purchasing coal from Britain. The cessation of deliveries of raw materials from the Ruhr resulted in waves of cutbacks in production and layoffs elsewhere. Unemployment rose from 2 to 23 per cent. Tax revenue declined to the point where by October 1923 it covered a mere 1 per cent of total government expenditure. The volume of money

circulating in Germany grew astronomically, by the autumn flowing in improbable denominations from nearly two thousand presses operating around the clock. A banknote-printers' bill appeared as 32776899763734490417 Marks and 5 pfennige in Reichsbank accounts. Banks had to hire more clerical workers to calculate these lengthening digits. Production slowed as workers trundled carts laden with a day's pay to the banks, and shops shut as the owners ceased to be able to purchase new stock with yesterday's takings. In a chapter entitled 'The Death of Money', Konrad Heiden tells the following story:

> A man who thought he had a small fortune in the bank might receive a letter from the directors: 'The bank deeply regrets that it can no longer administer your deposit of sixty-eight thousand marks, since the costs are out of all proportion to the capital. We are therefore taking the liberty of returning your capital. Since we have no bank-notes in small enough denominations at our disposal, we have rounded out the sum to one million marks. Enclosure: one 1,000,000-mark bill'. A cancelled stamp for five million marks adorned the envelope.

A barter economy developed and the prudent middle classes began selling their most cherished possessions, although there were only so many Steinway pianos a peasant house could accommodate. Books were devoted to the moral inversions inflation caused.[65]

The perception grew that, as in wartime, the scum rose to the top. Decent hardworking people thought they were being exploited by amoral spivs, flashing their ill-gotten gains in nightclubs and restaurants, while doctors, lawyers and students had to resort to manual labour or soup kitchens. There was an unappetising type abroad in the land:

> Connoisseurs of the time should wander one evening through the parlours and fancy eating establishments – everywhere, in every lousy corner you will smack up against the same plump face of the pot-bellied profiteers of war and peace.

According to the author of this essay, entitled 'Berlin is becoming a whore', the hundred thousand prostitutes who allegedly serviced Berlin were no longer servants who had been dismissed after an upstairs-downstairs liaison, but nice middle-class girls:

> A university professor earns less than a streetcar conductor, but the scholar's daughter was used to wearing silk stockings. It is no accident that the nude dancer Celly de Rheidt is the wife of a former Prussian officer. Thousands of bourgeois families are now being forced, if they want to live uprightly on their budget, to leave their six room apartments and adopt a vegetarian diet. This impoverishment of the bourgeoisie is necessarily bound up with women accustomed to luxury turning into whores. . . . The impoverished noblewoman becomes a bar maid; the discharged naval officer makes films; the daughter of the provincial judge cannot expect her father to make her a present of her winter clothes.[66]

Differentials between earnings were erased, leading to an acute sense of social declassification, which was soon epitomised by a middle-class Militant League of Beggars. People suffering from clinical malnutrition, and unable to afford adequate food or medicine, were susceptible to tuberculosis or rickets. Although the 'Mark is a Mark' policy was endorsed by the courts and enabled farmers and mortgagees to pay off their creditors, pensioners, savers and elderly people living off modest rental incomes were plunged into poverty and insecurity. Sometimes their only escape from indignity was through suicide.[67]

The German government's policy of resistance to French authority in the Ruhr, which prevented France from gaining a permanent foothold there, was abandoned in late September 1923. Gustav Stresemann, the right-liberal German People's Party leader, became the new Chancellor of a 'Grand Coalition' that included his own party as well as the SPD. These arrangements were facilitated by the desire of both left and right to blame each other for having to call off the policy of passive resistance to French occupation. On the extreme right, this abandonment of the Ruhr struggle compounded the republicans' founding treason of November 1918.[68] Stresemann was only chancellor for a hundred days, but he acted as Foreign Minister down to his death in October 1929. He was an extraordinary statesman who transcended his youthful belligerent reputation as 'Ludendorff's young man', and whose statements of 'prudential loyalty' to the Republic and desire for an international fresh start were wholly sincere.

During October and November 1923 Stresemann overcame both extremist and separatist threats to the government. However, some extremists were within the forces of law and order themselves. Since the autumn the Reichswehr commander General Seeckt, the Pan-German leader Heinrich Class and right-wing industrialists within Stresemann's own party had calculated that a Communist uprising

would enable them to mobilise the entire right behind a dictatorial 'Directory', which after being legally installed in power by the President would crush the Communists, suspend parliamentary democracy and abolish the earlier concessions to organised labour.

By way of preparation, the army intensified its links with frontier protection units and with the illegal or 'Black' Reichswehr, which comprised clandestine paramilitaries that had been established with its connivance to circumvent Allied restrictions on German military might. Some of these units stationed near Berlin were not prepared to wait on Seeckt, and they precipitately launched a putsch he disfavoured, for he was notorious as a man who would advance to the Rubicon to fish in rather than cross. They were disarmed by regular army troops acting under Seeckt's orders. Meanwhile, the Communists essayed their next attempted overthrow of the 'bourgeois' Republic.[69]

In October 1923, Communists entered coalition governments with the Social Democrats in Saxony and Thuringia. Various provocative policies ensued, as well as the formation of armed Proletarian Hundreds to carry out a 'German October', a development actively solicited and supported by the Comintern in Moscow, as part of its strategy of stabilising the Bolshevik regime at the expense of stability in Germany.[70] Vicious mobs extracted food from recalcitrant farmers, or assaulted employers and draped red flags and placards around their necks in public degradation sessions reminiscent of what Nazis would later do to Jewish people, although this similarity is seldom remarked on.[71] The government proclaimed an emergency and used regular army troops to disarm the Communists; the only sign of a 'German October' occurred in Hamburg, where thirteen hundred Communists besieged the police stations. Although this rising was crushed, the activities of the former pugilist Ernst Thälmann, in the Barmbeck district, only helped his ascendancy within the Party later in the 1920s, when veterans of this rising, who fled to the Soviet Union, returned to Germany to organise Communist subversion. Whereas the Reichswehr acted swiftly to crush the Communists in central Germany, they were conspicuously indulgent to right-wing plots afoot in Bavaria, so much so that on 3 November 1923 the Social Democrats left the national government, remaining aloof for the next four and a half years. Of course, they shared some of the responsibility too for the coalition arrangements with the Communists in Saxony and Thuringia, which had acted as a red rag to an already enraged extreme-right bull. It was also an unrealistic strategy, since it was commonly known that deals

with Communists were akin to the relationship of a rope to a hanged man.[72]

Communist conspiracies provided a welcome pretext for Bavarian paramilitaries to mass on the state's northern borders, the goal being an Italian-style 'March on Berlin'. The idea of using Bavaria as a launch pad for a strike against the Berlin government was common to both Kahr and the *völkisch* right wing under Ludendorff – for the general had become a politician – and his younger sidekick, a former Bavarian army corporal, Adolf Hitler, an odyssey we will discuss presently. But, once the army had crushed the left in Saxony and Thuringia, the mainstream Bavarian right hesitated. Kahr, despite having offended Seeckt by protecting General Lossow, the Reichswehr commander in Bavaria, when Lossow refused to close down the Munich newspaper the *Völkischer Beobachter* after it attacked the Reichswehr leader, was unwilling to move on Berlin without Seeckt's own involvement, and his involvement was conditional upon Kahr's distancing himself from the putschism of Ludendorff and Hitler. Seeckt explained the army's dilemma to Kahr without concealing his antagonism to the Republic:

> The Reichswehr must not be brought into a position in which it has to fight, for a government which is alien to it, against people who have the same convictions as the army. On the other hand, it cannot permit irresponsible and unauthorized circles to try and bring about a change by force. If the army has to defend the authority of the state on two fronts it will break up. Then we have played the game of France and have offered the last chance of success to Muscovite Communism.[73]

Kahr, Lossow and Bavaria's state police chief, Seisser, awaited events in the north. Hitler, sensing a conservative sell-out and fearful of losing the support he had garnered from an uneasy coalition of *völkisch* paramilitaries, hijacked a Kahr–Lossow meeting in the Bürgerbräukeller, and proclaimed a 'national *völkisch* revolution'. The whole performance reminded one eyewitness of 'Mexico' or 'Latin America'. Having been railroaded into supporting Hitler's precipitate bid for power, Kahr, Lossow and Seisser abandoned ship at the first opportunity. On 9 November 1923, Hitler and Ludendorff led a march of about two thousand extremists through Munich, which was dispersed near the Feldherrnhalle by a few salvoes from the Bavarian state police. A lightly wounded Hitler slunk away, although the events of that day would become part of Nazi mythology, for the confrontation provided the Party's earliest, and hence most holy, martyrs.

This tawdry episode spelled the end of paramilitary putsches against the Weimar Republic. When the extreme right made its next bid for power, it would use much more insidious methods, namely a combination of the ballot box and street violence. But, for the time being, rampant inflation was checked by issuance of a new Reichsmark, backed with gold to a minimum of 40 per cent, which was exchanged for bundles of worthless paper. Under the 1924 Dawes Plan, the emotive reparations issue was transformed into a technical problem involving international experts concerned with the wider stabilisation of European capitalism. Elections in Britain and France in 1923–4 brought to power governments which were not so overtly ill-disposed towards Germany as their predecessors. The United States of America's positive involvement on the continent of Europe was also crucial. A loan of 800 million gold Marks promoted confidence in the new currency, and acted as a priming aid for a regularised schedule of payments on the reparations. Since these stretched into the infinity of the late 1980s, and involved foreign control of Germany's railways and central bank, they did not allay nationalist resentments, any more than currency stabilisation placated the struggling middle classes, or the industrial working class, which had also suffered grievously through inflation. But the Republic appeared to have weathered its greatest hour of crisis.

There was even a lucky break to the East, although that was soon not so evident to the Russian people: Stalin's ascendancy within the troika which dominated the Soviet Communist Party after the death of Lenin. One consequence of Stalin's hatred of Trotsky was that the latter's insistence on endemic world revolution was replaced by the doctrine of building 'socialism in one country' and coexistence with the 'imperialist' states. Since the German Communists were little more than tools of the Comintern and Soviet foreign policy, this meant that there were to be no more 'German Octobers'.[74]

THE POLITICAL PARTIES AND WEIMAR SOCIETY

It takes an effort of the imagination, in a contemporary developed world where liberal democracy and free- or social-market capitalism appear to have seen off most alternatives, to envisage a time when liberalism was regarded as a waning force, rapidly being superseded by authoritarianism, Communism, fascism and Nazism – the alleged forces of the future. Liberal democracy was in danger of becoming an extinct species in inter-war Europe, where by 1939 undemocratic regimes already outnumbered constitutional democracies by sixteen to twelve. Before turning to the rise of the Nazis, it may be helpful to say a little about politics in the Weimar Republic in general.[75]

By pre-1914 or post-1945 German standards, Weimar politics were highly unstable, although some nations have experienced comparable political instability without degenerating into totalitarian dictatorship. But instability combined with chronic economic problems was liable to engender a sense of despair and hopelessness, though there was no simple correlation between acute economic distress and extremist politics. Some background factors were beyond human agency. Although the war and a massive influenza epidemic in 1918 – which killed more Europeans than had died in the war – meant that the German population had contracted, a pre-war population increase still surged on to the labour market in the 1920s, so that by 1925 there were five million more workers than jobs available. This trend decelerated only in 1931–2.[76] The surplus of workers was matched by the loss of jobs, for competition with the United States, and an obsession with technology and scale, encouraged machine-driven rationalisation in certain industries such as coalmining and automobile production. Assembly lines and coal-cutting machines may have resulted in dramatic productivity gains, but they also entailed structural unemployment and the latent threat of over-production. Because of simultaneous inflation, there was an understandable disinclination to save, and the corollary was an inordinate reliance on foreign sources of investment