

**Spelling, punctuation, grammar, and use of specialist terminology will be assessed in part (d).**

**Interpretation 1:** From *The Weimar Republic, 1918-24* by M. Rathbone, published in 2013.

**Interpretation 2:** From *Alpha History*, a history website.

(d) How far do you agree with Interpretation 2 about the challenges facing the Weimar Republic in the years 1919-23?

Explain your answer, using both interpretations and your knowledge of the historical context. (16+4)

Some democratic parties did support the Weimar Republic. However, powerful political groups on both the Left and the Right refused to accept the existence of the Weimar Republic. They were prepared to destroy it by force and replace it with their own form of government. They took action against the Republic very soon after it was created. This made it difficult for the new government to maintain order and govern Germany.

The hyperinflation which happened in 1923 forced the Weimar government to fear for its own existence.

After the French had occupied the Ruhr, the industrial workers had gone on strike. The Weimar government supported the strikers by printing more paper money in order to pay them. As the strike continued, the government could not find a solution and simply printed even more money. This ruined the economy. People talked openly about removing the government by a popular revolution or a military putsch.

Start with your judgement. HOW FAR do you agree with the interpretation. Give reasons for your judgment.

I partly agree that with interpretation 2 when it says hyperinflation forced the Weimar Republic to fear for its own existence but the challenges from the right and left were also serious challenges to the new republic, and it was the combination of these challenges that truly threatened the Weimar Republic.

This should be one sentence outlining what the paragraph will be about.

Aim for 2 sentences. You should give the facts here. What do you know about the event? What happened? Who was involved? When did it happen?

This is where you are linking back to the question. How does the interpretation link to the focus? How does your evidence link to the interpretation?

Here you need to judge HOW IMPORTANT the factor in the interpretation is. Compare it to your own knowledge of the event. Has the author missed anything? Have they over or underplayed a factor?

Finally you need to judge how the author has presented the information. Have they been positive/negative? Have they highlighted any particular issue? Do you agree with their emphasis.

**Paragraph 1**

**Point:** Interpretation 1 clearly states from the beginning that the hyperinflation forced the Weimar government to fear for its existence.

**Evidence:** Following the Wall Street Crash, many businesses went bust and by 1932 6 million Germans were unemployed. There was a huge increase in violence and theft and many Germans were left homeless.

**Explain:** For the majority of German's, the hyperinflation showed them that the Weimar Republic couldn't run the country and "people talked openly about removing the government by a popular revolution or a military putsch".

**Analysis:** However, not everyone in German felt this way. Some, including farmers and manufacturers of essential goods, profited from the hyperinflation. Additionally, although many did indeed talk about overthrowing the government no such attempt was actually made until November 1923 by the Nazis in the Munich Putsch. The Nazi's attempted putsch gained little public support which suggests that the German population in fact did not want a popular revolution.

**Language:** The interpretation does not say that the Hyperinflation was a real threat to the Weimar Republic only that it caused" the Weimar Republic to fear" I would agree with this assessment because the people were certainly angry, but no action was taken by them.

**Paragraph 2**

**Point:** Interpretation 1 makes the argument that the violent challenges from the right and left "made it difficult for the new government to maintain order and govern Germany"

**Evidence:** In the early years of the Weimar Republic the government faced a number of challenges from political groups, most notably from the Spartacists on the left in 1919 and the Kapp Putsch on the right in 1920. Both groups were successful in taking over Berlin. However, the Spartacist uprising was ended when the Freikorps (unemployed, right wing, ex-soldiers) were employed to violently crush the opposition and the Kapp Putsch was ended by a general strike of the citizens.

**Explain:** This was a challenge to the Weimar government; these two groups were not the only attempts and political assassinations were taking place on an almost daily basis. The attempted uprisings made the government look weak and people began to question whether they could control Germany.

**Analysis:** However, both attempts were successfully ended, the Kapp Putsch with the support of the population. This suggests that although the government did face violence and attempted take overs, they did have popular support.

**Language:** I agree with the interpretation that the uprisings "made it difficult for the new government to maintain order and govern Germany" however, although the government was forced to take steps to end these uprisings ultimately, they were unsuccessful, therefore the threat was not as great as it may have been.

**Paragraph 3**

**Point:** Finally, I do not agree with Interpretation 2 when it says, "after the French had occupied the Ruhr, the industrial workers had gone on strike." Because it implies the government had no control over these events.

**Evidence:** The occupation of the Ruhr occurred because the German's had missed reparation payments, then to try to defend themselves against the occupation the Weimar government instructed the workers to strike. As a result of this the Weimar government printed money to pay the strikers which ultimately led to the hyperinflation.

**Explain:** These events were not something that happened to a passive Germany but a consequence of deliberate policy. The German's missed their reparation payment despite the threat of invasion from the French, then they chose to order the workers to strike and to pay them by printing more money. Thereby, leading to people discussing overthrowing the government.

**Analysis:** However, the interpretation goes on to say that this ruined the economy, and this is true in the short term, but Stresemann's economic policies were able to fix the economy and Germany became a prosperous nation in the late 1920s.

**Language:** It is wrong to suggest that Germany were a passive victim of circumstances in 1923. Hyperinflation was a consequence of the actions of the government, and it was these actions that caused the people to begin talking about overthrowing the government.

**Now write your conclusion, pull all the threads from your paragraphs together then write a sentence which sums up your argument.**

In conclusion, I partly agree with interpretation 2's view that the hyperinflation was serious threat to the Weimar Republic, the increasing cost of living brought many people into severe poverty and people did speak about overthrowing the government. However, this followed a period of violence and rebellion in the form of uprisings from those on the extreme left and right. Many people were already questioning the Weimar Republic and hyperinflation just made it worse. Ultimately though, the Weimar Republic survived all of the upheaval between 1919-23, although the events caused people to question the effectiveness of the government and caused problems in managing the uprisings, the Weimar Republic continued, and faith was restored by Stresemann's foreign and economic policies.