

other countries, even France, were willing to make some compromises with Germany although they would not have agreed to major revisions of Versailles. But Hitler's speeches made it seem as if the Germans were isolated in their attempt to become an important country again.

Another example of the way in which Hitler exaggerated the hostile attitude of foreign countries was in his constant references to Russia and the communists. In the 1920s, and for much of the period until Germany and Russia went to war, Stalin had no intention of gaining power in Germany. His policy was concerned with 'socialism in one country'. The communists in Germany were hated by the ruling classes and Hitler took advantage of this but they did not present a real threat and were not supported by Stalin.

The Wall Street Crash of 1929 in America affected many European countries because trade suffered but Germany was particularly hard hit by the Depression because its economy was more dependent on loans and investment from America. The government cut expenditure and raised taxes but these measures only made the situation worse for many people who lost their money and jobs in the Depression. The Weimar republic had recovered to some extent from the currency collapse of the early 1902s, when the mark became worthless but 1929 caused a revival of hardship, especially among the middle classes who turned to Hitler.

Therefore, in conclusion, there were many reasons why Hitler came to power but the main reason was the effects of the Great Depression.

Examiner's comments

The answer is given 65 marks out of 90 (Band B). Peter is given credit for writing an answer that is relevant. Each of his points deals with reasons why Hitler came to power. The answer avoids unnecessary background and narrative. Higher marks are given to answers like Peter's that explain or analyse issues than to answers that only tell a story.

Each paragraph deals with important issues: the weakness

of Weimar, Hitler's personal appeal, hatred of the Versailles settlement and the Great Depression. Some candidates will have discussed other factors, such as the role of politicians such as von Papen. A weakness of the answer is that it could have examined further the events of 1930-33 but this is not an important fault because examiners do not expect 'complete' answers. They know that you only have a limited time in which to write and first give credit to the important points that you have made before looking for gaps.

Peter has written a good introduction. It outlines the points that are to be discussed and makes a particularly useful point that Germans did not expect Hitler to become a dictator in 1933.

The answer is worth a good B grade. But why did it not deserve an A grade and how could it have been turned into an A grade answer? The question asks whether the Great Depression was 'the main reason for Hitler coming to power'. This means that the importance of the Depression should have been judged in comparison with other factors. Peter has only written about the various factors and he has not tried to put them in order of priority. The conclusion is weak. It claims that the Great Depression was the most important reason but does not explain why. Peter's answer would have been stronger if he had written, 'The Great Depression was more important than the other reasons because ...'

The answer could be organised better. Peter writes about important issues but he should have discussed the Great Depression first because this is mentioned in the question. It is possible to disagree with the claims in questions but Peter agrees that the Great Depression was the most important factor. Very good answers begin by discussing what is most important. The links between the points made in different paragraphs could have been better.

Overall, this is a good solid answer that is let down by its organisation and lack of comparison.

Russell Williams, latterly Lecturer, University of Gloucestershire, is an AS/A Level Chief Examiner.

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