Study Source C. Do you think this source was published by a supporter or opponent of the Weimar government? Use the source and your knowledge to explain your answer.

6 marks

This source appears to be opposed to the Weimar government. He lists only the troubles Germany suffered in 1919 under Weimar. Of course it is possible that this is not actually the case, that the author supports the Weimar Republic and believes that Germany's problems are not at fault, though this is somewhat hard to believe when one reads the middle sentence - 'the government lacks authority and is incapable of overcoming danger'. It is possible that the author does not blame the Republic for this but rather merely feels that it has been rendered impotent by the current situation. That is, until one realises that the author is Dr Kapp and that it was Dr Kapp who, in the early twenties, took over Berlin and attempted to overthrow the government.

In the source, Dr Kapp does not mention any of the freedoms now enjoyed by the people under Weimar in art, literature and politics. He mentions only the bad things, which, it has to be said, at this stage, did outway the good things but Kapp is not in the least bit complementary about any aspect of Weimar and he did the later rebellion; details which lead me to believe that the author of this source was an opponent of the Weimar Republic.

Study Source D. Explain why the German people were angered by events in the Ruhr in 1923. Use the source and your knowledge to explain your answer.

7 marks

In 1923 Germany defaulted on reparations payments because it was suffering from inflation and simply did not have the money to pay them. The German people hated reparations anyway and, to them, the idea that German taxes and industrial profits were to be spent on Germany and not given to foreign powers that many still perceived as the enemy could only be a good thing. The French and Belgians, however, disagreed and invaded the Ruhr region of the Rhineland and started taking German coal and raw materials as payment. This must have angered the German people as, not only was it a blatant violation of German sovereignty, but it was also theft and what were being stolen were the only things with which Germany could re-build her shattered self. The French felt it was justified but the Germans, who saw reparations as quite the opposite, could have had no such thought.
In resistance the German government chose to employ passive resistance, which triggered hyper-inflation and caused even greater suffering for the German people, giving them even greater reason to resent the invasion.

The source shows a French soldier standing on and exerting his power over German materials, which cannot resist. This seems to sum up the Ruhr invasion and how, to the Germans, the French were kicking them while they were down.

Study Source D. How far does this photograph explain why Germany faced difficulties in 1923? Use the source and your knowledge to explain your answer.

7 marks

This photograph does not really explain why Germany faced difficulties in 1923 but it does give us the general idea of what they were caused by hyper-inflation. In 1923 German’s savings were wiped out, they suffered food shortages and there were all sorts of problems that were triggered by hyper-inflation. This source does show how many banknotes there were around and that they were useless, but it does not show why this was the case. It does not show how the German government’s policy of passive resistance during the Ruhr invasion meant it had to print more and more money to pay the workers to strike and that this caused hyper-inflation. There are three stages in reasoning why Germany was in difficulties in 1923. 1. there were serious problems because of hyperinflation because of 3. Passive resistance and then you could say 4. the French invasion of the Ruhr. The source goes some way to stage 2, though it does not confirm it but it does not go any further.

Describe the political problems in Germany in 1918-1920.

4 marks

Kaiser Wilhelm had fled and there was the Spartacist uprising in 1919 which was crushed by the Freikorps. Also in 1920 the Freikorps led by Kapp tried to set up a right wing government.

What were the main features of the Weimar Constitution?

4 marks

All Germans could vote. They also set up a system of proportional representation – if a party gained 20% of the votes they gained 20% of the seats. It had a Chancellor
who was the leader of the largest party represented in the Reichstag. The Reichstag was their Parliament.

**Explain why Germany suffered from hyper-inflation in 1923**

*6 marks*

Germany had hyper-inflation because from 1921 Germany had to send large quantities of goods to France and Belgium as part of their reparations payment. As a result there was not enough goods in Germany and prices rose. Then when Germany was unable to pay their reparations in 1922 the French occupied the Ruhr. The Germans organised passive resistance in response to this. This meant there was no industrial production and Germany had no goods to sell. Instead the government printed more money.

**Explain why 1923 was a difficult year for the Weimar Republic.**

*6 marks*

1923 was a difficult year for Germany because this was the year of the Munich Putsch. This was an attempt by Hitler to overthrow the Weimar government. However, he and his stormtroopers were defeated and the people did not rise to support him.

It was also the year of the French invasion of the Ruhr. This happened because Germany failed to make their reparations payment in 1922 and the French took over the rich industrial area of the Ruhr to seize the goods directly.

Hyper-inflation also occurred in 1923 as a result of the invasion of the Ruhr. Many people lost huge amounts of money as the German currency became worthless. This made German people very angry with the government.
How far had the Weimar Republic recovered from its problems by 1928? Explain your answer.

10 marks

The Weimar Republic began to recover from 1924 with the policies of Stresemann. Stresemann had negotiated the Dawes plan which gave loans to Germany so as to rebuild industry. He also scrapped the old currency and introduced a new one, the Rentenmark which stabilised the German currency and stopped hyperinflation. This allowed the German economy to recover and big business boomed and German industrial production went up. As a result, Germany also had a cultural revolution in cinema and in architecture. Germany was also accepted back into the international community as an equal member with the Locarno treaties and the Kellogg-Briand Pact. As a result, support for extremist parties like the Nazis went down.

Although it looked as if the Weimar Republic was doing well there were many problems beneath the surface. Peasant farmers were over producing and could not sell all their food. Small shopkeepers were hit badly by large department stores which took their business away. In fact the whole German economy was controlled by a small number of big industrialists which made them dangerously powerful. Also, the German economy really depended on loans from America. If these stopped it would be in serious trouble.

Therefore, by 1928 the Weimar Republic had recovered to a large extent, however, it was precarious. As Stresemann stated, Germany was “dancing on the edge of a volcano”. Indeed any recovery that was achieved by 1928 was wiped out with the Wall Street crash and the world wide depression that followed.
How far was the Weimar Republic a failure? Explain your answer.

10 marks

Germany had been a Nationalist State previous to the Weimar system of democracy and many people were set against the new system form the start. It could be said therefore that the Weimar system of government was not given a chance. It could be seen as a failure since the proportional representation, the 24 different parties of which few were national caused every government to be a weak coalition so decisions were hard to come by in the Reichstag. The Weimar system also allowed Hitler and the Communists to both gain a lot of power by democratic means and in Hitler and the Nazis' case to gain total power and form a dictatorship. However, this was largely due to the effects of the depression and the economic and social problems that this caused in Germany.

The Weimar Republic did see off the political unrest of 1919-23 however, and its influential Chancellor/foreign secretary Gustav Stresemann solved the problem of Hyperinflation with the introduction of the Rentenmark in 1923. Stresemann also arranged the power plan (1924) and the Locarno treaties (for which he received a noble peace prize) in 1925. Germany entered the League of Nations in 1926 and enjoyed a time of cultural prosperity and political stability during the Locarno honeymoon of 1925-29. the Dawes plan however, made the country more dependent on American loans which hit Germany hard when they were withdrawn after the Wall Street Crash, therefore causing historians to see the Republic as a failure in the end.

Although constitutionally the Weimar Republic had weaknesses, generally it was not a failure and the reasons for its demise are largely not its fault. Many Germans were happy during the Locarno honeymoon and it is difficult to see many ways in which the government could have acted to reduce the problems more than they did in the early period of government.