

Worksheet 1 – The Last Years of the War

Recall

Answer these questions after watching the video lecture to check how much you remember.

1. Alongside Paul von Hindenburg, who was the most significant German 'high commander' at the end of the war?
a) Hugo von Freytag-Loringhoven c) Wilhelm Groener
b) Erich Ludendorff d) Fritz von Loßberg
2. What was the name of the newly-formed minority political faction that objected to the war?
a) The SDP c) The NSDAP
b) Independent Social Democrats d) Spartacists
3. In an attempt to convince the Americans they were serious about peace, which set of policies did German High Command support?
a) Blitzkrieg c) October Reforms
c) League of Nations membership d) Schlieffen Plan
4. According to the lecture, who was seen as the greatest single impediment to productive peace talks among Germans?
b) Woodrow Wilson c) The Kaiser
c) Ludendorff d) Hindenburg

Analysis

1. Why did the German government struggle to stifle the dissent of urban women?
2. What measures did Germany take to appease the Americans, who they'd previously helped drag into the war through the implementation of unrestricted submarine warfare?

Evaluation

1. **Were Germans right to blame the Kaiser for acting as the main impediment to the peace process?**

Answer with reference to the factors described in the video lecture, which may also include the High Command of the forces, nationalists and politicians, and the actions of external actors.

Be sure to include the following:

- a. An **introduction** that provides an overview of the points you intend to make and your final judgement;
- b. A first paragraph in which you **argue for one position**;
- c. A second paragraph in which you **argue against that position**;
- d. A **conclusion** which links back to the question, and which summarises your evidence and overall judgement.

“The revolution from below broke out in November 1918 because the October Reforms proved to be nothing more than a piece of paper: Large parts of the military were unwilling to subordinate themselves to political control by Reich leaders that were responsible to Parliament. However, the German Revolution of 1918/9 cannot be considered as one of the major or classic revolutions of world history: Germany around 1918 was already too “modern” for a radical break with its political and social fabric along the lines of the French Revolution of 1789 or the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia. In a country that at a national level had enjoyed universal and general suffrage for men for some 50 years, the issue could not be to establish a revolutionary educational dictatorship but more democracy. In concrete terms that meant: the introduction of women’s suffrage, making suffrage democratic in the individual states, districts and communities and the establishment of governments answerable to parliament.”

[Excerpt from Deutschland.de, the German government’s internet portal;
<https://www.deutschland.de/en/topic/politics/the-first-world-war.>]

Challenge: With reference to the above passage, do you think the October Reforms **would have made much of a difference in the long-term, if they had been implemented earlier?**

Glossary

- **Dissent** - the holding or expression of opinions at variance with those commonly or officially held.
e.g. the protest was seen as a clear symbol of popular dissent.
- **Constitutional monarchy** – a system of government in which a country is ruled by a king and queen, whose power is limited by a constitution (and often is functionally democratic).
e.g. The United Kingdom in its modern form is perhaps the quintessential constitutional monarchy.
- **Abdicate** – Of a king or queen, to leave their post before their death.
e.g. The Kaiser did, eventually, abdicate – albeit reluctantly.
- **Impediment** – A hindrance; something that prevents an event or process from happening properly.
e.g. The lack of reform was seen as an impediment to the peace process.