

Kaiser Wilhelm II and the First World War

KEY WORDS

Prussia: Former Kingdom in Northern Europe and the dominant state of the German Empire stretching from France and the Baltic Sea to Poland.

Militarism: Belief that a country should maintain a strong armed force and be prepared to use it aggressively.

Kaiserreich: A state being ruled by the Kaiser with very little input from anyone else. The Kaiser had final say on what happened in their country.

Weltpolitik: In English means World Policy. The Kaiser built up his army, navy and wanted to grow his Empire. He wanted to turn Germany into a world power.

A place in the sun: The Kaiser wanted to grow his Empire, he started in sunny countries like on the continent of Africa.

Industrialisation: A process by which a country transforms from mainly an agricultural society to one based on manufacturing and factories.

Agriculture: Farming.

Manufacture: Make and create goods.

Trade Union: Association of workers formed to protect their interests.

Socialism: A system of government which supports democracy and greater government involvement in the economy and society.

Nationalism: Identifies with ones own nation and supports the interest of its country. Wants the country to be politically independent from other countries and powerful.

Economy: The state of a country or region in terms of the production and consumption of goods and services and the supply of money.

Patriotic: Supporting your country, especially against its enemies.

Mutiny: Rebellion by soldiers or sailors who refuse to take orders.

Abdicate: Give up the throne of a country.

November Criminals: A nickname given to the German politicians, Jews and Communists who were said to have ended WW1 and signed the hated Treaty of Versailles.

Democratic Republic / Democracy: A system of running a country in which people have the right to vote for the government they want.

Bullet Point Question (12 marks)

- 1) Which of the following was the more important reason why WW1 impacted on Germany.

- Mutiny and Revolution
- The money Germany had borrowed?

Explain your answer with reference to both reasons.

Interpretation B: A portrait of the Kaiser commissioned in 1908

Describe Question (4 marks)

- 1) Describe two problems faced by Kaiser Wilhelm II's governments in ruling Germany up to 1914
- 2) Describe two aims of the Kaiser up to 1914.

KEY INDIVIDUALS AND KEY GROUPS

Kaiser Wilhelm II: Emperor of Germany, King of Prussia and Supreme commander of the German Army 1888 - 1918

Kaiser Friedrich III: AKA 'Fritz' was the Kaisers Father, Emperor of Germany and King of Prussia for only 99 days 9th March 1888- 15th June 1888.

Princess Royal Victoria: Kaisers Wilhelm II mother. She was the first daughter of Queen Victoria I of Britain and Prince Albert of Copenhagen.

Queen Victoria I: Queen of Great Britain 1837 -1901. Kaiser Wilhelm II, King George V and Tsar Nicholas II were her Grandchildren. The Kaiser loved his Grandmother dearly.

King George V: King of the United Kingdom and the British Dominions, and Emperor of India 1910 – 1936.

Tsar Nicholas II: Leader of Russia 1894 – 1917, Kaiser Wilhelm II's cousin.

General Erich Ludendorff: Was a top German military commander in the latter stages of World War I.

Paul Von Hindenburg: Was the German general and statesman who commanded the Imperial German army during WW1 and later became the President of Germany 1925-1933.

Friedrich Ebert: Was the leader of the SPD, temporary leader of Germany at the end of WW1 and later President of Germany 1919-1925.

Social Democratic Party (SPD): One of the largest political parties in Germany. A left wing party that grew under the rule of Kaiser Wilhelm II. It was a party that supported more rights for workers and looking after communities.

Bunderstrat: A group made up of German state representatives who supported the Kaiser (unlike the Reichstag).

Reichstag: The main elected German Parliament who were politicians voted in by the German people. They often challenged the Kaiser.



Interpretation C: A British cartoon of the Kaiser in 1914.

3 PART: Interpretation Question

Part 1 (4 marks)

How does Interpretation C differ from interpretation B about how Kaiser Wilhelm I was viewed by others.

Part 2 (4 marks)

Why might the authors of Interpretation B and C have a different interpretation about the Kaiser?

Part 3 (8 marks)

Which interpretation do you find more convincing about Kaiser Wilhelm II?

In what ways question (8 marks)

- 1) In what ways were the lives of people in Germany affected by the First World War?
- 2) In what ways were the lives of German people affected by industrialisation?

Key Events Timeline

KEY:

Social

Political

Economical

The Unification of Germany (1871)

Prussia was the most powerful Germanic state.

1870

1880

The SPD is created (1883)

It grew stronger and gained more followers when Kaiser Wilhelm II was in power.

Kaiser Wilhelm II becomes Emperor of Germany (1888)

The Naval Race begins (1898)

Germany begins to expand its Navy, building ships to compete with Britain. The Kaiser had a love of war ships because of his love of the British Navy and wanted one for himself. This was also part of his 'Weltpolitik'.

1890

Naval Laws introduced (1898 -1912)

To get money to expand their navy Germany created Naval Law and borrowed money from allies and America. The Naval Laws saw Germany raise taxes. This would leave Germany in 490 billion gold marks.

1900

Germany dominated Europe's industry (1913)

Germany was producing more iron and steel as Britain and equal the amount of coal. Its electrical and chemical industries dominated Europe.

The First World War Began (1914)

Tension in Europe had been building for some time. Austria- Hungary declared war on Serbia and as their allies Germany joined too, declaring war on Russia and France.

1910

1915

Women protest WW1 (1915)

500 women gathered in front of the German parliament (the Reichstag) building and demanded that they wanted their men back.

German Workers protest WW1 (1916)

10,000 workers assembled in Berlin, the capital to shout, 'Down with war. Down with the Government'. The police came in quickly to make arrests and calm the situation.

1916

Turnip Winter and Deadly Flu epidemic (1916-1917)

The British naval blockade was preventing people in Germany from getting any food. People starting starving and dying. In desperation they ate crows, horses and turnips. As well as this a flu epidemic broke too. It spread rapidly and killed many because people were too weak and vulnerable to fight off the disease.

Ludendorff told German leaders they would never win the war (October 1918)

The Ludendorff Spring Offensive had failed, Germany had exhausted its options. Ludendorff suggested that if the Kaiser made Germany a democratic state, Britain, France and America would treat Germany fairly. The Kaiser transferred some power to the Reichstag, and allowed main political parties to form a new government. He hoped that this would also appease the German people, it did not.

1918

1917

Mutiny in Germany (28th October 1918)

Sailors in Kiel refused to follow orders and attack British ships. News of their mutiny spread and other ports started to refuse orders. Soldiers sent to deal with the mutiny joined the protests. They took over towns and set up councils. The Kaiser had lost control and his army Generals refused to follow him.

1919

Friedrich Ebert was made the leader of Germany (9th November 1918)

Ebert became the temporary leader of Germany and promised to hold elections as soon as the time was right.

Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicates (9th November 1918)

The Kaiser was forced to abdicate and had to flee to Holland to live the rest of his life for his own protection.

The Treaty of Versailles (28th June 1919)

The BIG 3 and other country leaders came together to create a treaty full of terms for Germany to abide by. It was signed in Versailles on 28th June 1919. Germany took the blame for the whole of WW1.

WW1 ended (11th November 1918)

In a train carriage German politicians and representatives of the Allies met in a railway carriage. Germany signed the armistice and the first world war ended at 11am on 11th November.

1920