

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross ☒. If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒ and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

Chosen question number: Question 2 ☒

Question 3 ☒

Germany in the years 1870-79 was following a state of unification following significant events, such as <sup>successful</sup> wars, in recent decades. By contrast, Germany in the period 1918-1924 was victim to the first World War and suffering distinct political crises despite reformation from the hierarchy, ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> through the actions of Prince Max von Baden. It is probable that Germany became more democratic over the 6 decades in the time frame, but the extent to which it was unified is questionable; below I will explore the extent to which both these characteristics may be fairly attributed.

The Kaiserreich constitution was formed in 1870, and its distribution of powers was to a large extent improper. The Kaiser ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> Wilhelm I at the time, was given considerable powers in that he could appoint and dismiss Chancellors at his whim, and dissolve the Reichstag at any given moment and ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> with no democratic consensus. It should be noted that both of these powers are independent of democracy, if not directly opposed to it. In addition, Prussia remained dominant over the Kaiserreich in its early years. Prussia accounted for 60% of the population, returning 235 (more than half) of the Reichstag.



deputies, giving it considerable power of the passing of legislation. In addition, the Bundesrat, or the upper house of the Reichstag, had the power to veto any law passed by the Reichstag, democratically. In order to do so, 14 members of the Bundesrat had to veto the proposed legislation. Prussia had 17 representatives in the Bundesrat, whereas most other provinces only had 1 (Bavaria had 5), and so Prussia could effectively veto any law. ~~Given the lack of Prussian dominance in the~~ The Prussian voting system is also worthy of criticism in regards to democratic values. Prussia elected its Reichstag members via a 3-tiered franchise system, where ~~only~~ although all males over 25 had suffrage (broadest voting franchise of the time), only aristocrats were eligible to run to represent the Reichstag, and the votes were heavily weighted to the amount of tax one paid. Given the elitist principles of the Prussian ~~by~~ voting franchise and the constitutional bias of the Kaiserreich ~~as~~ To make the Prussian Prussian dominance was not only extremely apparent, but it was in direct contradiction of the idea of democracy, 'power for the people, by the people', with only a select few having their voice disproportionately heard.

The degree to which the Kaiserreich was unified is, however, a separate to democracy in some ways. Although in retrospect we may not view the 2nd Reich



as democratic or fair, of its time it was arguably the most democratic European system; universal suffrage for males over 25 was the broadest elective franchise in Europe. In addition was the 'Burgfrieden', national pride, or so apparent ~~upon~~ upon the creation of the early years of the Kaiserreich. The '7 weeks war' against Austria (allied with Italy) was incredibly popular, and the military power of ~~Prussia~~ the (mainly) Prussian army of 1.4 million was displayed ~~at~~ (1866). In addition the later defeat of the Danes in Schleswig-Holstein and more significantly, success in the Franco-Prussian war in 1870 ~~was~~ were to a similar effect. The Franco-Prussian war was seen to be initiated by the French thanks to Bismarck's manipulation of the Ems telegram, and so the Germans came together in a 'defensive' war against the aggressor neighbours. The final battle at Sedan in 1872 was decisive, and General von Moltke's skilful use of encirclement, artillery, and new advanced weaponry (French still relied on the Chassepot rifle). The national pride following this particular victory was palpable, and although democracy was not at the forefront of conversation by the end of 1879, Germany was undoubtedly unified.

Contrastingly, in 1918, Germany was at the brink of losing WWI ~~against~~ against the Allied Powers. However, the traditional



right-wing elite was somewhat in denial of this. Following years of leadership (political + military) by Hindenburg and Ludendorff, ~~after~~ the issue of a war aim created a rift in German politics. The Centre Party, in favour of an offensive war with land acquisition was at loggerheads with the increasingly-popular view that a WWI was a defensive war. As a result, when the war was seen to be lost, a centre politician, Matthias Erzberger, presented Erzberger's peace resolution, which passed in the Reichstag 252-134. This vote had shown the democratic consensus that the war was to be concluded at 'peace without victory'. However, Michaelis, the current Chancellor, chose to 'respect the bill as I interpret it'. Not only was this in direct ~~and~~ opposition of the calculable ~~of~~ democratic consensus, but it displays the disunity that had taken over Germany during the first World War.

As to whether Germany was more democratic in 1918-1924, ~~as~~ as previously mentioned it is hard to argue such until the years of Prince Max von Baden's reforms in 1919. Prince Max ~~for~~ announced the Kaiser's ~~was~~ abdication after his previous refusal to do so voluntarily created a general strike. Effectively, Max forced the Kaiser's abdication, following which, he asked President Wilson of the US for an armistice - in accordance with



Erzberger's resolution a year earlier. In addition, Prince Max made democratic reforms such as: ~~as~~ abolishing the Prussian 3-tiered franchise, making the Chancellor and Kaiser accountable to the Reichstag, and more. This shows that, at least in principle, the years 1919-1924 were made more democratic than ~~before~~ in comparison with ~~1870-79~~ 1870-79.

However, it must also be mentioned that <sup>in</sup> the nature of both periods, there was repression and dissent. From 1872 on to 1879 Bismarck launched his attack on the Catholic Church, the Kulturkampf, which ~~was~~ failed and resulted in dissent, as seen in the Centre Party's vote increasing ~~to~~ 17%. In addition, Bismarck repressed national minorities, especially <sup>Franks</sup> ~~Franks~~ in Alsace-Lorraine, which was placed under imperial control, Danes in Schleswig-Holstein, who could not vote in elections, and Poles in the East, who saw their language outlawed in schools and courts. In regards to this, 1870-1879 was ~~as~~ arguably a time of serious dissent.

In addition, the years 1918-1924 were years of ~~many~~ many uprisings and attempted revolutions, Putsch's. In 1919 on January 1, in response to Michaelis' ~~but~~ unwillingness to end the war, the Spartacist League, led by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg founded the German Communist party. On January 6, ~~ended~~



armed communists occupied government offices in Berlin. Although the uprising was ended by the ~~20th~~ before the end of the month, the ~~sympathy~~ desire for an uprising can be used as evidence for severe disunity. Other left-wing, attempted revolts with mentioning are the Bavaria uprising where right-wingers were rounded up and killed, and the Red Ruhr uprising. In addition, there were a number of right-wing 'Putsch's. ~~The~~ In 1920, Hitler led what has come to be known as the Munich Beer Hall Putsch, and received 5 years for high treason because of it. This is notable not only in that it showed discontent with the ~~the~~ ~~Reich~~ political scene in 1918-1924, but also, in the one year Fechenbach (a left-wing reporter) received 11 years in prison for violating press laws. The clear disparity in sentence here is testament to the judicial bias against the new, emerging left wing. Finally, and perhaps most notably, the Kapp Putsch. Kapp led a Freikorp uprising in Berlin, demanding control over the country. ~~When the army~~ The army refused to intervene in both right-wing revolts, the words of the army General von Seeckt, "the ~~the~~ Reichswehr does not fire upon the Reichswehr" show this institutional bias further, thus it is clear, ~~also~~ with such a fragmented political climate and inherently biased institutions, the years 1918-1924 saw great disunity.





On first analysis, it is reasonable to suggest the years 1870-1879 saw more unity than 1918-1924. There were far fewer attempted seizures of power, there was a democratic system in place which was very democratic in comparison to what ~~has~~ some historians had seen before. ~~Whereas~~ In contrast, 1918-1924 saw the loss of a war, massive debt and privation (Treaty of Versailles), and disunity in the form of attempted coups, or, 'Putsch's. It is true that on paper, the years 1918-1924 had years of a more democratic constitution thanks to Prince Max, but, the practice of these ~~years~~ laws was not fully realised due to the 'Silent dictatorship' and institutional biases. Therefore, 1870-79 was certainly more unified than 1918-1924, but perhaps ~~but~~ more democratic in practice.

