AQA GCSE

HISTORY

Paper 1 Section A/B: Germany, 1890-1945: Democracy and dictatorship

Interpretations Booklet

Interpretations A and **B** for answering Questions 01, 02 and 03

Interpretation A

Adapted from William Shirer, 'The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich' (1960). Shirer was an American journalist who first came to Europe in 1925 and reported from several German cities. Here he describes the effect of American investment on Germany after the First World War.

> Under Stresemann, American loans poured in making Germany prosperous. The German government borrowed money to pay reparations and build sport stadiums, theatres and swimming pools as well as improve social services. In 1923, industrial production had fallen to half its pre-war level. However, by 1927, it had recovered to well above the pre-war level. Unemployment fell to below a million for the first time since the war. The middle classes benefited with consumer spending up by 20% in 1926. Life seemed freer, more modern and more exciting.

Interpretation B

Adapted from Hjalmar Schacht, 'Account Settled' (1948). Schacht was an economist and President of the German Reichsbank who introduced the Rentenmark in 1923. He resigned in 1930 in protest at Germany borrowing yet more American money, and later served as Hitler's Economics Minister until 1937.

> From 1924 to 1929, German governments borrowed millions. These loans were dangerous because they were often used for luxuries and non-essentials. German factories had also relied on these loans but could not sell enough to repay them. Eventually many businesses failed and, as a result, this created unemployment. The short-sightedness of such a policy was incredible.