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HINDSIGHT

September 2012 Volume 23 Number 1

The Berlin Olympics

Nazi propaganda in action

**How to answer questions
on the Treaty of Versailles**

Margaret Thatcher
Iron Lady or great she-elephant?

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HODDER
EDUCATION**

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Paul Short and **Dan Silverman**

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The front cover shows the Hindenburg flying over the opening ceremony of the 1936 Berlin Olympics (Mary Evans Picture Library).

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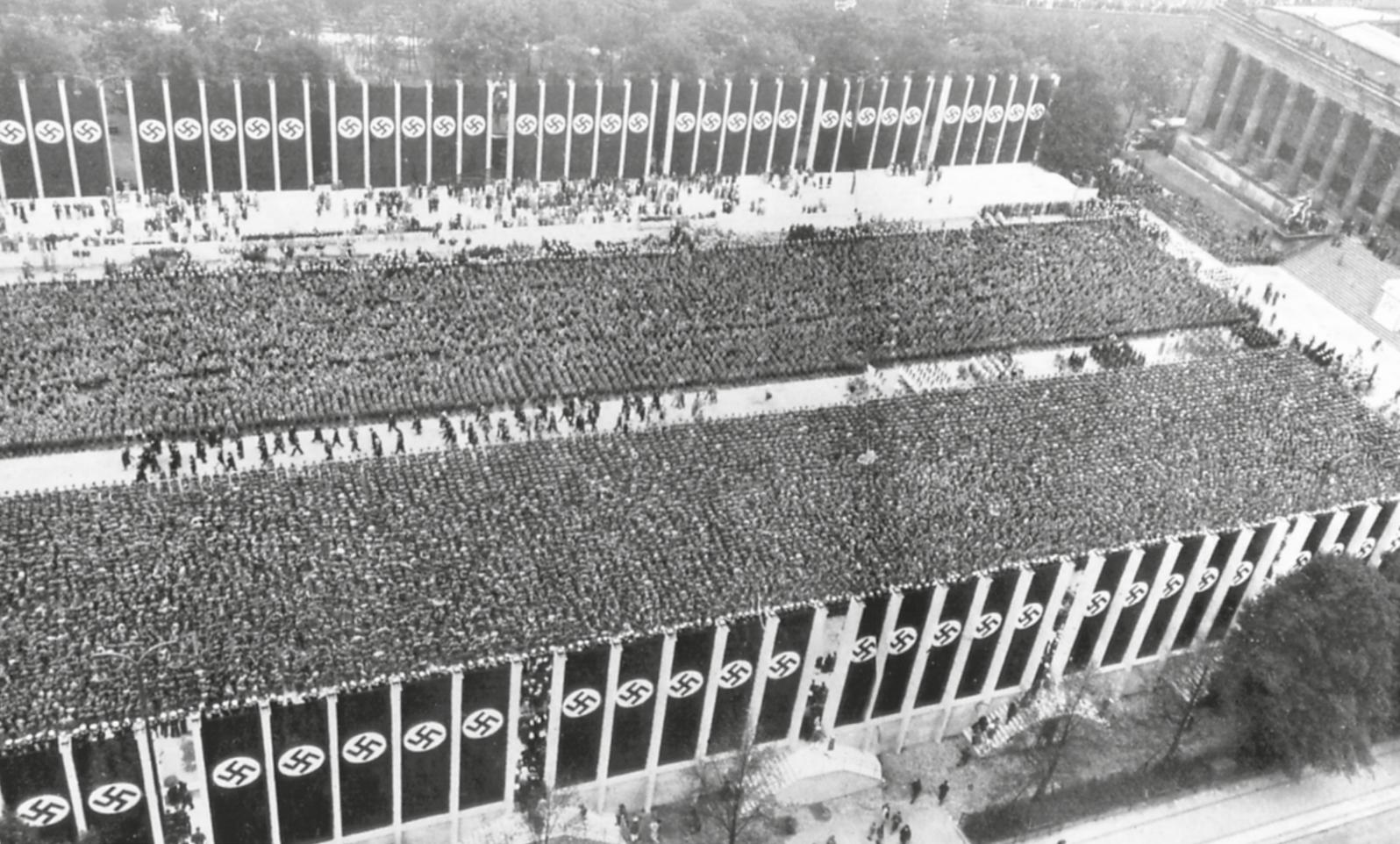
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The Berlin Olympics 1936



In January 1933, 2 years after the International Olympic Committee chose Berlin as the site for the 1936 Olympic Games, Hitler came to power as chancellor of Germany. In the early 1930s he won support by promising a new Germany at a time of hunger, business failure and great political and social unrest. In his speeches he spoke about the importance of racial purity and the superiority of the Germanic Aryan.

These racist beliefs were spread through books, newspapers, radio and posters and yet conveniently hidden during the Olympic Games of 1936. Despite the appearance of a confident Germany the lives of Jewish men, women and children were soon to change dramatically in Nazi Germany and

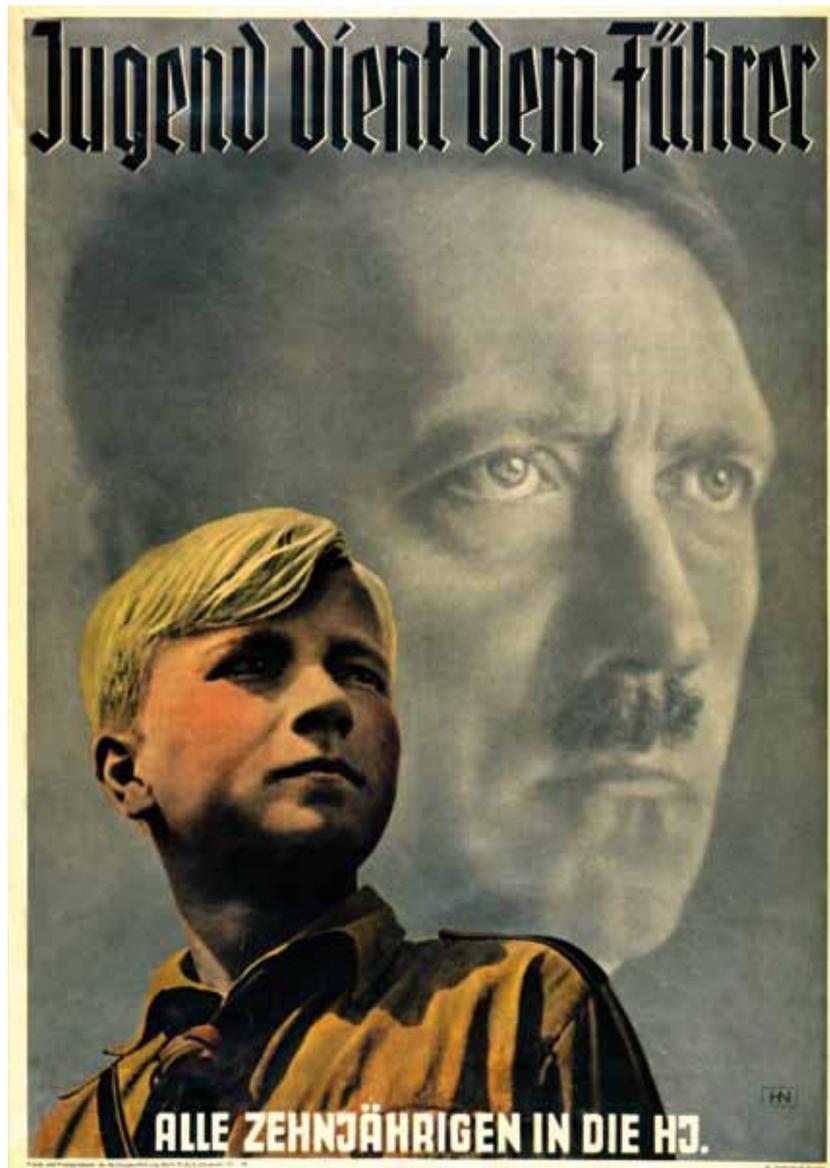
eventually Europe. The Berlin Olympic Games were used as a propaganda exercise for the benefit of the new Nazi regime and provided only a brief interlude in the persecution of the Jewish people.

The Nazification of sport

German public life was brought into line with Nazi ideals and policies from 1933. Even sport did not escape this process of Nazification. Hitler used sport in the drive to purify and strengthen the Aryan race and to prepare the German youth for war. Images of German athletes spread the myth of Aryan racial superiority and physical power. Hitler said, 'I want my youth strong and beautiful, that's the first and most important thing.'

Source A

The opening ceremony of the Berlin Olympics



Source B

'Youth serve the Führer' is the title of this Hitler Youth recruitment poster

1 Study Source B. Why were the Nazis so keen on promoting sport for the youth of Germany?

2 Study Source D. To what extent had discrimination against Jewish people been abandoned by the Nazis during the Games?

Sport was used to support and further the ideals of the Nazi regime and to prepare the nation for war. For example, in 1936 time devoted to sport went from 2 to 3 hours per week in schools and in 1938 to 5 hours, while poor performance in sports could result in a student being expelled from school.

Nazi takeover of the Olympics

Prior to 1933 the Nazis had not thought well of the Olympic Games since ideals about national power and military strength seemed far from the Olympic ideals of international good will. Hitler disapproved, but was soon won over by Joseph Goebbels, his minister of propaganda, who convinced him that the Games would be an excellent opportunity to show the world the new Germany. In March 1933 at a meeting with Dr Theodor Lewald, the president of the German Olympic Committee, Hitler assured him that he would support the Olympics and promised plans for an impressive sports complex.

Olympic officials won over

In April 1933 the Nazi Tschammer und Osten from the Reich Sports Office ordered an 'Aryans only' policy in all German athletic organisations. Non-Aryans were excluded from German sports associations and from public pools, gyms and sports facilities. They were allowed third-class training facilities and their opportunities were limited.

Many Western democracies questioned whether their countries should participate. However, Avery Brundage, the president of the US Olympic Committee, fought hard to send a US team to the Olympics. In September 1934, after a brief tour of German sports facilities carefully controlled by German Karl Ritter von Halt of the International Olympic Committee and other Nazi officials, he stated publicly that Jewish athletes were being treated fairly and that the Games should go ahead.

Support for a boycott

The president of the Amateur Athletic Union, Jeremiah Mahoney, opposed US participation in the 1936 Olympics. In September 1935 attacks on Jews in Berlin and the announcement of the anti-Jewish laws in Nuremberg meant that he began publicly supporting a boycott of the Games. Mahoney said that Nazi ideology based on racial inequality was the direct opposite of the Olympic code which was based on the equality of all races. Mahoney's Committee on Fair Play in Sports published a pamphlet that made the case for a boycott and organised public meetings. However, in the face of growing opposition, Avery Brundage argued that US athletes should not become involved in a Jew-Nazi fight.

At no time did President Franklin D. Roosevelt become involved in the debate. The US ambassador to Germany opposed the decision to go to Berlin and explained that the Nazis had taken over the Olympic ideal. However, the president failed to speak out against the Berlin Olympics and continued a 40-year tradition of the US Olympic Committee operating outside any influence.

The Nazi propaganda machine

The US Olympic team arrived at Berlin in July 1936, a week before the Games, where they received a warm welcome. German organisers carefully planned every event leading up to the Olympics and surrounding festivals. The Games provided a perfect arena for the Nazi propaganda machine.

The organisers aimed to deceive foreign athletes, spectators and journalists by showing only the positive side of life in Nazi Germany. Visitors saw colourful advertising posters and beautifully decorated, clean streets. They attended thrilling athletic events that took place in new well-designed facilities. In the evening they were entertained at lavish parties hosted by welcoming Nazi leaders.

Behind this facade of hospitality was the censorship of German newspapers to make sure that nothing was said to offend the guests. They failed to see the brutal dictatorship in action, imprisonment in concentration camps and rearming of Germany.

Source C

Extract from the diary of Joseph Goebbels, minister of propaganda:

The essence of propaganda consists in winning people over to an idea so sincerely, so vitally, that in the end they succumb to it utterly and can never again escape from it.

Joseph Goebbels and the summer Olympics

Germany skilfully promoted the Olympics with colourful posters and magazine articles, while artists pointed to a link between Nazi Germany and ancient Greece. The myth was used that the superior German civilisation was the rightful heir to an Aryan culture of classical antiquity.

Germany's propaganda machine also made sure that once foreigners arrived in Berlin they would not read or hear any news that would cast Germany in a bad light. The Reich Press Chamber under the minister of propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, strictly censored the German press, radio and film industries.

Berlin, the facade of hospitality

In August 1936 Olympic flags and swastikas hung from the monuments and houses of a festive and crowded Berlin. The Nazi campaign against the Jews

Source D

William Shirer, the US correspondent in Berlin, wrote that in 1936 the Nazis had:

...pulled down all the signs saying that the Jews were unwanted (they're all over Germany) and that the Olympic visitors would thus be spared any signs of the kind of treatment meted out to Jews in this country.

From *The Third Reich in Power* by Richard Evans

Source E

On 13 August 1936 Victor Klemperer noted that:

People at home and abroad are constantly being told that they are witnessing the revival, the blossoming, the new mind, the unity, the steadfastness and glory, of course also the peacefulness of the spirit of the Third Reich, that lovingly embraces the entire world. The slogan-chanting mobs are banned (for the duration of the Olympics), campaigns against the Jews, warlike speeches, everything disreputable has vanished from the newspapers until 16th August, and still, day and night, the swastika flags are flying everywhere.

From *The Third Reich in Power* by Richard Evans

had been suspended. The regime had removed anti-Jewish signs until the Games were over and *Der Sturmer*, an anti-Jewish newspaper, was removed from the stands. Tourists did not know of a police clean up when hundreds of gypsies were imprisoned in a camp in Berlin or about the construction of a huge concentration camp outside Berlin.

The opening of the Games

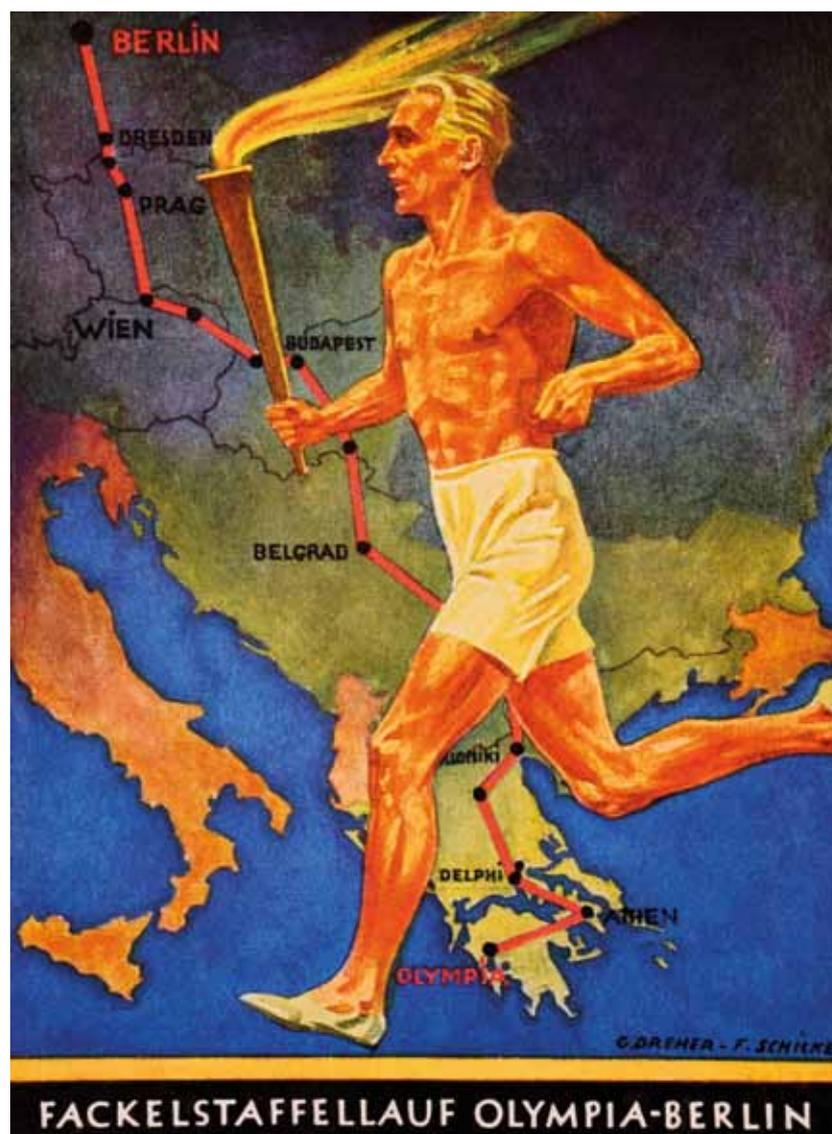
On Saturday 1 August 1936 opening ceremonies took place in the afternoon in a stadium filled with 110,000 people. Musical fanfares directed by the composer Richard Strauss announced Hitler's arrival to the largely German crowd. Inaugurating a new Olympic ritual, the German middle-distance runner Fritz Schilgen arrived bearing a lighted torch carried by relay from the site of the Olympic Games in Olympia Greece. Following a 20-minute speech by Olympic organiser Dr Theodor Lewald, Hitler said only a few words, 'I proclaim open the Games of Berlin, celebrating the eleventh Olympiad of the modern era.'

3 Study Source E.
What image of Germany did the Nazis want to present to the rest of the world?

4 Study Source F. Why did the Nazis want to establish a link between the Berlin Olympics and the Ancient Olympics?

Source F

A map displays the route of the torch relay from the site of the ancient Olympics in Olympia, Greece, to Berlin. The 1936 Games were the first to include the torch run



Source G

Jesse Owens stole the Games with four gold medals

5 Study Source G. In what ways did Jesse Owens challenge the Nazis at the Berlin Olympics?

6 Study Source H. What message did Jesse Owens send to the Nazi regime?



Source H

Jesse Owens:

I wanted no part of politics. And I wasn't in Berlin to compete against any one athlete. The purpose of the Olympics, anyway, was to do your best. As I'd learned long ago from Charles Riley, the only victory that counts is the one over yourself.

African-American success

During the ensuing 2 weeks of competition, African-American athletes gained a total of 14 gold, silver and bronze medals in individual and team events. Many US journalists hailed the victories of James Jesse Owens and other African Americans as a blow to the Nazi myth of Aryan supremacy.

The hero was Ohio state track star Jesse Owens who took home four gold medals. Owens won the long jump and the 100-metre and 200-metre sprints and was a member of the winning 100-metre relay race team. Setting a new world record in the 100 metres run in 10.3 seconds he was called the fastest human being. He was pursued everywhere and cheered loudly by the German audience, but the reception that he received by the Nazi leadership was less than warm.

The newspapers reported that Hitler refused to shake the hand of Jesse Owens. In fact, the Olympic officials had urged Hitler to receive all the medal winners or none, and after the first day's events he chose the latter. Whether he did this to avoid shaking hands with non-Aryans is unclear.

Conclusion

Germany emerged from the Olympics victorious. Its athletes captured the most medals and

German organisation and hospitality won the praise of visitors. Some found reason to hope that the peaceful interlude would last. In fact, the propaganda efforts continued well after the Olympics with the world release in 1938 of *Olympia*, a controversial film documentary of the Games produced by Leni Riefenstahl.

However, the pause in Germany's anti-Jewish campaign was brief. In 1938 German troops marched into Austria and the Nazis stepped up their anti-Jewish activities. On the evening of 9 November 1938 called Kristallnacht (the Night of the Broken Glass) rioters burned more than 1,000 synagogues in Germany and Austria. They looted 7,000 Jewish businesses and killed dozens of Jews in an assault organised by Goebbels, the minister of propaganda.

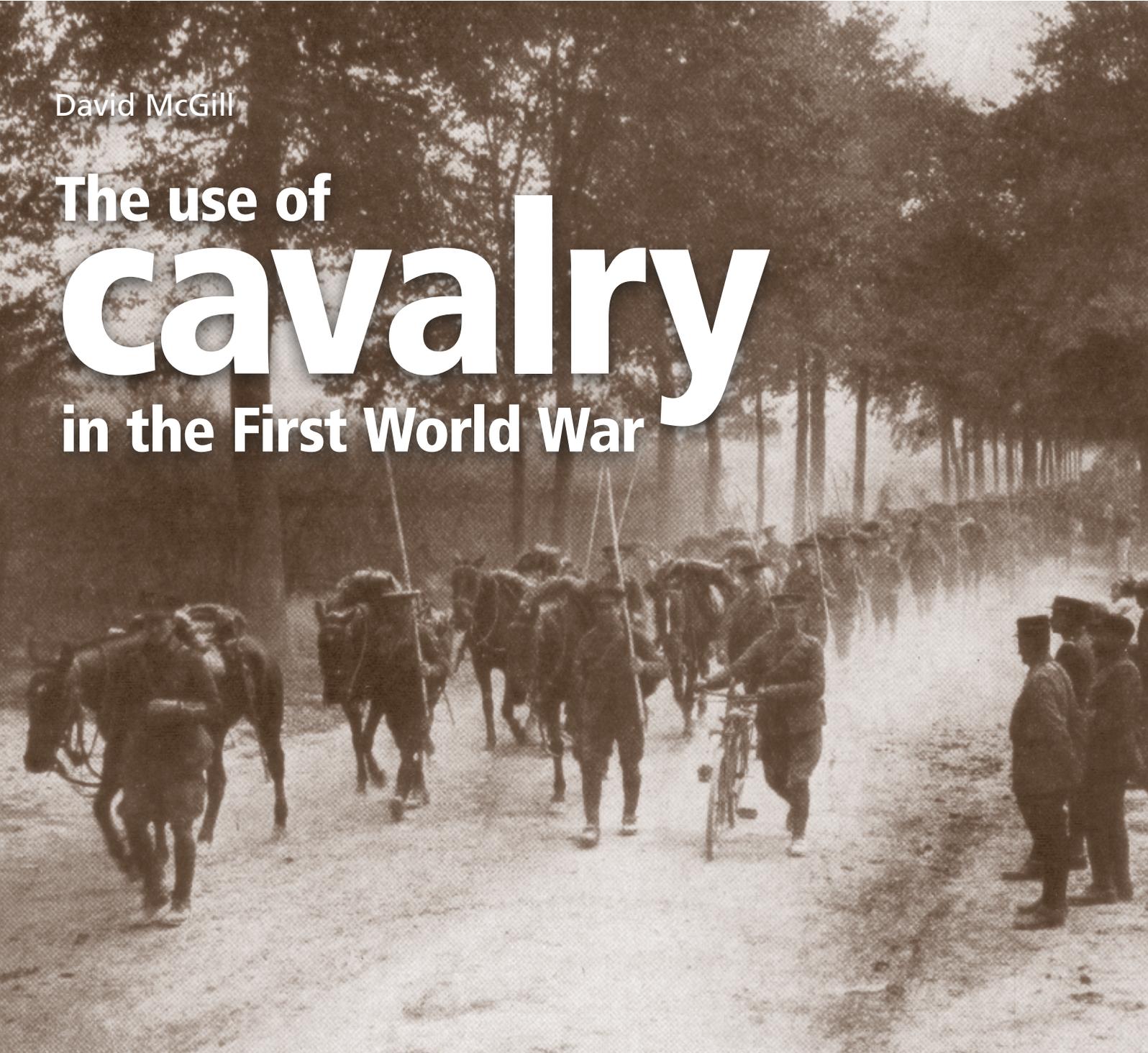
When most think about the 1936 Olympics they remember the accomplishments of Jesse Owens. His performance at Berlin was remarkable and would inspire later African-American Olympians such as Carl Lewis. Only a few writers at the time such as William Shirer regarded the Berlin glitter as merely hiding a racist militaristic regime. On 16 August he wrote:

I'm afraid the Nazis have succeeded with their propaganda. First, they have run the Games on a lavish scale never before experienced, and this has appealed to the athletes. Second, they have put up a very good front for the general visitors, especially the big businessmen.

The Olympics would prove to be a temporary lapse in the persecution of the Jews and an example of the Nazi propaganda machine in action, as Germany's Jewish population was to discover in the terrible murders and arson attacks of Kristallnacht in 1938. **HS**

David McGill

The use of cavalry in the First World War



There is a common perception that the use of the machine gun and massed artillery in the First World War meant the end of cavalry as an offensive weapon and that generals who refused to anticipate this were outmoded and out of touch. Haig has been mocked for hoping for a decisive cavalry breakthrough at the Battle of the Somme in July 1916. However, the assertion that military advances in the run up to the First World War made cavalry a redundant force has been challenged by the evidence, which shows that there were still occasions, even in 1918, when they were used.

Trenches, barbed wire, shell-cratered ground, machine guns and howitzers clearly hindered the kind of Napoleonic charge that many generals are

said to have secretly longed for, but the opening and closing stages of the war saw frequent cavalry operations. Cavalry helped halt the Ludendorff offensive in the Battle of Moreuil Wood on 30 March 1918 and also exploited the British breakthrough at the Battle of Amiens in August the same year. In fact the British Royal Dragoon Guards claim the honour of the last cavalry charge of the war with the capture of the town of Lessines in Belgium on 11 November 1918.

High hopes

In 1914 there was a definite sense that cavalry would be important. All the major powers had large cavalry forces and were expecting a war of rapid movement

Source A

British cavalry lancers, France, 1914

1 Study Source A. It was taken in 1914. How likely would it have been that these soldiers would ever be in a cavalry charge?



Question

How satisfied were the 'Big Three' with the Treaty of Versailles? Explain your answer. (10 marks)

Evidence

The sections highlighted in blue contain generalised points, which are correct, but would benefit from more specific factual support. Answer the following questions using your own notes:

- Which new countries were created in Eastern Europe?
- Who was the French leader?
- What territory was returned to France?
- How much was Germany told to pay in reparations?
- What areas were demilitarised?

Student answer

It was extremely difficult for the 'Big Three' to come to a final agreement at Versailles. The USA, Britain and France had different aims and objectives especially over the future of Germany.

Woodrow Wilson had set out Fourteen Points before the war ended which gave his vision for how Europe was to be run after the war. He wanted to set up the League of Nations and was very committed to peace and self-determination for countries. He achieved quite a lot of his aims. There was a League of Nations and lots of new countries in Eastern Europe were created. He also got Poland a sea port. He did not like what happened to Germany however.

The French leader got most of what he wanted. He was determined to cripple Germany in revenge for what had happened in the First World War. He made sure that France was given back territory, that Germany had to pay reparations to France and that the areas of Germany nearest to France were demilitarised. Germany lost 12% of its land.

Lloyd George was in a difficult position. He did not want to destroy Germany's economy because Britain did so much trade with Germany. But lots of his voters back at home wanted Germany to suffer. In the end he went along with most of France's demands. He helped the USA get the new countries in Eastern Europe. He got what the people in Britain wanted, but not totally what he knew was right.

In conclusion, none of the countries would have been totally satisfied by Versailles, as they all wanted different things, but the one that would have been most satisfied would probably be France, although they probably thought the treaty could have been even more harsh.

Judgement

- The conclusion needs to focus more clearly on the German settlement and its impact on each of the Big Three. Rewrite the conclusion stating clearly why Lloyd George and Wilson would not have been completely satisfied by the treaty's terms in relation to Germany.
- Can you improve the quality of written communication in the sentence highlighted in yellow? Think carefully about what the student is trying to say and how this could be expressed more clearly:
 - Use the past tense.
 - Try to be explicit: who are the 'they' the student refers to?
 - What is a better phrase than 'more harsh'?

Analysis

- Look at the sections highlighted in pink. They attempt to explain reasons why the USA and Britain were less satisfied by the treaty and need to be expanded.
- Write two sentences explaining why Woodrow Wilson did not approve of the treatment of Germany, but was forced to accept it anyway.
- Write a sentence explaining why Lloyd George ended up negotiating for something that he personally did not agree with.

Examiner's comment

- This is a good answer which shows the different aims of each of the Big Three and comes to a clear conclusion:
- The student shows a good understanding of the difference between Lloyd George's personal position and that of his electorate.

- The weakest section relates to France and needs more explicit factual support.
- The conclusion addresses 'how far' but could be improved in terms of quality of written communication.

Questions relying on contextual knowledge

Questions which refer to place and date of publication are asking you to use specific contextual knowledge to explain the creation and purpose of a source. Students are often able to make sound general points by making intelligent deductions from the content of the source and its probable purpose, but general points can only be credited at a lower level in the mark scheme.

If a question contains a date and place of publication, you must use specific knowledge to explain the purpose of the source within its historical period. Such questions are often based on the use of

poster or cartoon sources and you should be very clear about the purpose of particular sources based on your knowledge of the period in question.

Good answers discuss the content of the source and establish the purpose of the author in creating the source in question. To accurately establish why a source has been produced, you should apply specific own knowledge to the date and purpose of production. Examiners do not set questions regarding place and date of publication at random. Including details from the question is key to writing high-level responses.



Source A

A poster published by the Liberal party in 1911

Question

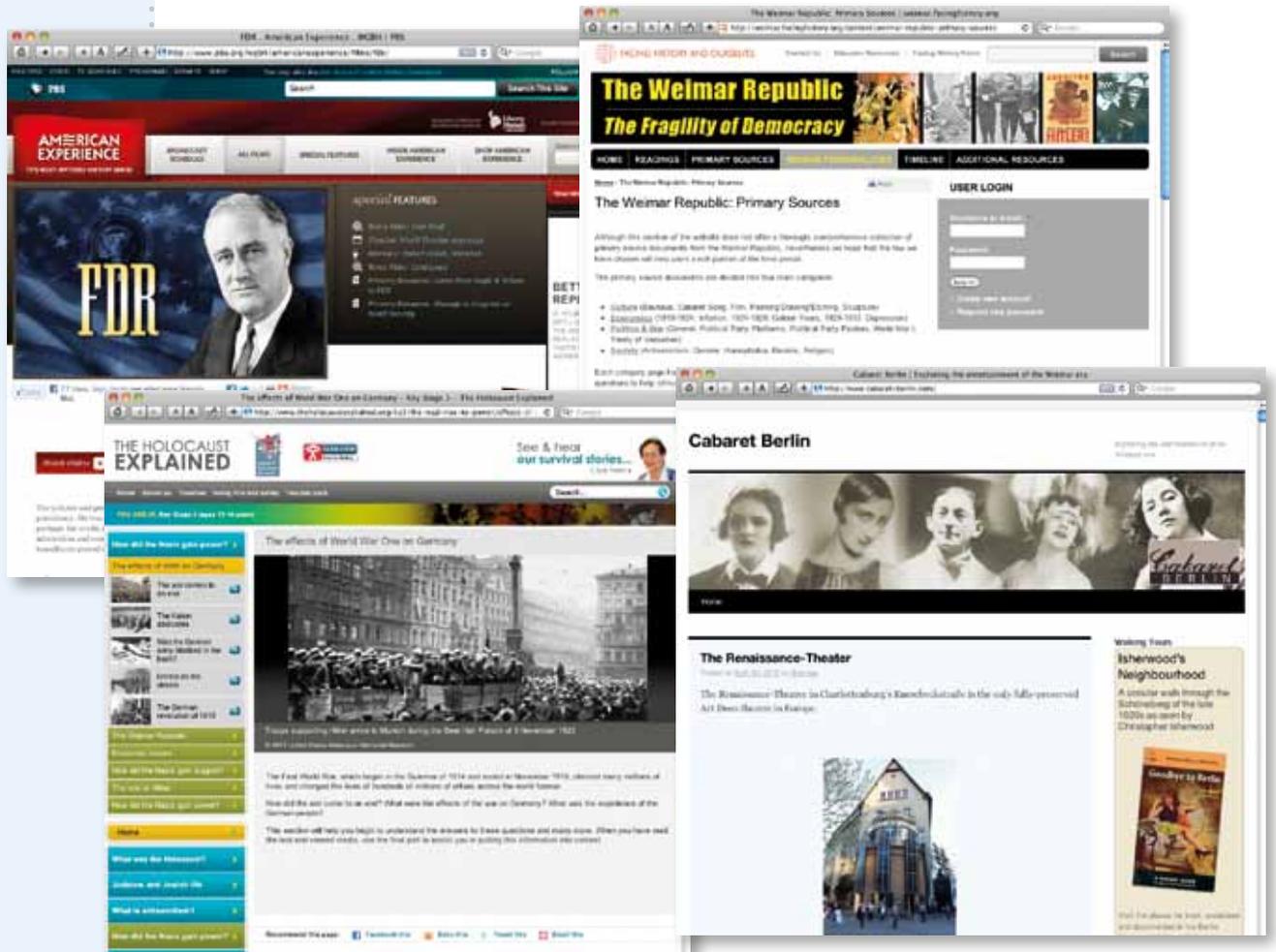
Study Source A. Why was the source published in 1911? Use details of the source and your knowledge to explain your answer.

- Study the source carefully. What does the information in the ticket refer to?
- Look at the background message on the poster. 'The right ticket for you. You are travelling on a safe line and are assured a safe return'. What does this message mean?
- Based on your reading of the content of the source what do you believe the author of the

source is trying to make people think/believe? What information are you given on the provenance of the source? (Look carefully at the information given in the caption.)

- Read the question again. The date you are being asked to consider is 1911. What do you know about 1911, which might help you to explain the poster? Good points to mention include the National Insurance Act 1911, the two general elections held in 1910 and the battle for reform of the House of Lords.

Weimar Germany



1 Watch newsreel of the Spartacists' uprising on Youtube (www.tinyurl.com/cedpvwb). How well organised do you think they were?

2 Do the gap-fill exercise on the Kapp Putsch at www.tinyurl.com/cgee9y8. How much do you know?

Weimar Germany only lasted for 15 years and is often regarded as a failed state, doomed from the start. As time has passed historians have speculated that it might have survived were it not for the Great Depression and a collection of unfortunate events that meant Hitler was handed the chancellorship by an ageing and incompetent President Hindenburg.

If you are studying Weimar Germany you will have to make up your own mind about how far it was doomed to fail, but the good thing about this period of history is that you are spoilt for choice with web resources.

The end of the First World War

Weimar Germany was born at the end of the First World War as a defeated Germany underwent a series of revolutionary changes. The effects of the war on Germany were profound and are discussed at various sites — including at www.tinyurl.com/27hdo2a and at www.tinyurl.com/ca8uo8e. Many Germans could not accept their defeat in the war and one of them, a young corporal called Adolf Hitler, vowed revenge on the victors. Hitler's wartime experiences and their importance are discussed at www.tinyurl.com/52xqwg and at www.tinyurl.com/2476ggk.



Source A

Hitler with fellow soldiers of the German Army in the First World War (Hitler is on the far left as you look at the photo)

Weimar Germany

Conditions in Germany at the end of the First World War were chaotic. The kaiser abdicated and fled leaving the state without effective leadership. In the power vacuum created various factions fought for control. There were Communist rebellions (www.tinyurl.com/cp9odym) and various attempted coups (www.tinyurl.com/csljk33 and www.tinyurl.com/d3o5rao). This violence meant that the Socialist government running Germany at the time had to leave Berlin and relocate to the town of Weimar. This is where the constitution for the new German state was written — hence the name Weimar Germany. There are extensive resources on Weimar Germany at www.tinyurl.com/d95en64.

The 1920s

Weimar Germany suffered from chronic instability in its first few years. Problems with reparations payments and the occupation of the Ruhr led to hyperinflation (www.tinyurl.com/3ctoja), which wiped out the pensions and savings of the middle classes. An attempt by Hitler and his NSDAP to seize power in November 1923 (www.tinyurl.com/pnx9b) was the last major threat to face the Republic until 1929.

The survival of the Weimar government owed much to the skills of one of its leading politicians, Gustav Stresemann. He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1926 and there is a good article on him on the Nobel site: www.tinyurl.com/bv43tsx. His death in 1929 and the Great Depression were twin tragedies that destabilised the republic.

The Great Depression

The stock market crash of 1929 damaged the US economy (www.tinyurl.com/843z35y), which in

turn led to the collapse of the Weimar economy. Germany was the worst affected country in the world. Unemployment rocketed, conventional politics seemed to fail and extremism flourished. The NSDAP went from fringe party to the biggest in the Reichstag (www.tinyurl.com/6rvsuc).

Despite its imminent demise urban culture in Weimar Germany continued to flourish. Weimar Germany was well known for its cultural energy and various movements such as Bauhaus (www.tinyurl.com/bnbuhew) and cabaret (www.cabaret-berlin.com). In fact Berlin was regarded as one of the most metropolitan and tolerant cities in the world.

Source B

Sebastian Haffner recalls the election of 1930:

On 14 September 1930, there were Reichstag elections. At a bound, the Nazis, hitherto a ridiculous splinter party, became the second largest faction in the house; they jumped from twelve seats to 130... From that day on the central figure of Brüning period was not Brüning but Hitler.

From *Defying Hitler* by S. Haffner

The end of Weimar

On 30 January 1933 a deal arranged by Franz von Papen and approved by President Hindenburg brought Hitler into power on the understanding that he would work as part of a coalition government. Hitler soon showed that he had different ideas and spent the next 18 months dismantling the Weimar Constitution and replacing it with a totalitarian regime. There are summaries of this at www.tinyurl.com/c6usvr4 and at www.tinyurl.com/7k9kgs8. [HS](#)

3 Look at the slideshare site on the Weimar constitution (www.tinyurl.com/czlcfk8). What were its strengths and weaknesses?

4 Study Source B. Why do you think people were surprised by the sudden rise of Hitler?

5 Look at the summary of the rise of Hitler at www.tinyurl.com/hyg7f. Do you think the Weimar Constitution was doomed from the start?