

## School of Humanities

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### Assignment 2: Research Essay

Due Date: September 28 2012

By: Christiaan Dodemont

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#### Assignment Question:

- 4. Why did liberal democracy go into such (seemingly terminal) decline across Europe in the period 1919-1942?**

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## 1. Essay Question

Why did liberal democracy go into such (seemingly terminal) decline across Europe in the period 1919-1942?

## 2. Synopsis

Interwar liberal democracy in Italy, Poland, Germany and Spain was brought down by political instability; civil disobedience and political violence; nationalism; economic crises; and modernity. These elements combined to polarise societies, encouraging the people to seek out alternative ideologies.

## 3. Essay

### 3.1 Introduction

The end of the First World War saw a proliferation of liberal democracy across Europe, yet by 1942 liberal political institutions were in full retreat. Democracy brought anticipation of significant change to many who had suffered under the oppression of the old ruling elites.<sup>1</sup> However Italy between 1919 and 1925, the Polish Second Republic from 1919 to 1926, Weimar Germany from 1919 to 1933, and the Spanish Second Republic between 1931 and 1936, were unable to galvanize the support of their people to unite behind liberalism. As Payne points out, the inability of these democracies to deal with the pressures that polarised their societies made them ripe for exploitation by radicalised left and right, typically with fascism the victor.<sup>2</sup> Using examples from these four nations, this essay asserts five causes for the downfall of these interwar democracies: 1) political instability; 2) civil disobedience and political violence; 3) nationalism; 4) economic crises; and 5) modernity. Other factors such as the threat of communism, class conflict and foreign policy contributed significantly, however these are beyond the scope of the assignment. It will be shown that within Italy, Poland, Germany and Spain, those most who benefitted from democratic freedoms failed to unite to build strong democracies, and looked instead to the stability of the past.<sup>3</sup> Excellent introduction. Really superb.

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**Comment [TK2]:** Numbers are always helpful. Not all markers/academics like them, but you will never be faulted (i.e. marked down) for using them. Clarity is *always* better. You could also use the words: first, second, third etc. OR, In the first instance, second, the third major point ... blah blah blah ... but isolating each point is the key.

<sup>1</sup> John Blake and David Hart (dirs), *The Spanish Civil War*, Grenada Television [UK], 1983, at <http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/spanish-civil-war/>, accessed 24 May 2012, Episode One.

<sup>2</sup> Stanley G Payne, *A History of Fascism 1914-1945*, Wisconsin, 1996, p. 130

<sup>3</sup> Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century*, London, 1998, p. 4

### 3.2 Political Fragmentation

Creating stable coalition majorities in the Reichstag was nearly impossible ~~due to~~ popular politics and economic crises. After World War One (WWI) a coalition of the German Socialist Party (SPD), Centre Party (Zentrum) and German Democratic Party (DDP) was handed control of Germany.<sup>4</sup> Ineffective economic reforms coupled with the unpopular signing of the Treaty of Versailles meant the 'Weimar Coalition's' vote plummeted from 78% in 1919 to 44.6% in 1920, costing the Coalition its parliamentary majority.<sup>5</sup> Votes for the left wing Communist Party (KPD) increased amongst workers, as did the right wing German People's Party (DVP) with middle classes and liberals.<sup>6</sup> Henceforth parties targeted votes from their grassroots supporters instead of working together, and no government lasted its four-year term. The June 1920 ~~the~~ Fehrenbach minority cabinet lasted eleven months, followed eighteen months later by the Wirth cabinet, and finally in August 1923 the Cuno coalition resigned.<sup>7</sup> Even in the 'Golden Years' of economic recovery between December 1923 and 1928, the Reichstag saw six different cabinets.<sup>8</sup> The Weimar Republic suffered political instability that withered the public's confidence in democracy. Good.

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From 1928 onward voters continued to demonstrate their unwillingness to support mainstream political parties. A quarter of voters in the May 1928 election supported parties that claimed less than 5% of the vote.<sup>9</sup> The resulting 'Grand Coalition' encompassed all sides of politics. The Great Depression in 1929 plunged Germany into another economic crisis. Unemployment reached six million by 1933 and desperate for some form of stability, 'an unemployed man either became a communist or a Storm Trooper.'<sup>10</sup> Support for extremist parties skyrocketed and elections in July 1932 saw the National Socialist German Worker's Party (NAZI) hold 230 seats, and the KPD 89.<sup>11</sup> Politics was polarised and with the constant rejection of unpopular economic reforms, then Chancellor Heinrich Brüning was reduced to enacting legislation via Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution, giving the President executive

<sup>4</sup> David Evans and Jane Jenkins, *Years of Weimar & the Third Reich*, London, 2004, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> Eberhard Kolb, 'The Years of Crisis, 1919-1923', in *The Weimar Republic*, trans. P S Falla, London, 1988, p39.

<sup>6</sup> Ruth Henig, *The Weimar Republic*, London, 1998, p. 28.

<sup>7</sup> David G Williamson, *The Age of Dictators*, London, 2007, p. 30; Kolb, 'Years of Crisis', p. 45.

<sup>8</sup> Henig, *Weimar Republic*, p. 39.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>10</sup> Johannes Zahn in Laurence Rees (dir.), *The Nazis – A Warning from History*, BBC, 1997, at <http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/the-nazis-a-warning-from-history/>, accessed 27th February 2012, Episode One.

<sup>11</sup> Rolf Volker Berghahn, 'Table 42. Reichstag Election Results, 1920 - 1933,' in *Modern Germany : Society, Economy and Politics in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge, 1982, p. 284.

powers in times of emergency.<sup>12</sup> Article 48 was used ~~sixty-six~~ times in 1932 alone.<sup>13</sup> Finally in January 1933 business leaders and conservative politicians convinced President Hindenburg to offer Hitler the Chancellorship in the hope of controlling him.<sup>14</sup> Hitler accepted and set about consolidating power. He required a two-thirds majority of parliament to pass an Enabling Act, granting him full executive powers.<sup>15</sup> Exploiting the Reichstag fire on 27 February, Hitler used Article 48 to enact the ‘Decree for the Protection of People and State’ giving the government power to arrest individuals arbitrarily. Opposition SPD and KPD Reichstag members were arrested, leaving Hitler the majority needed to pass the Enabling Act.<sup>16</sup> The Weimar Republic’s fragmented political system meant that the Germany was ruled by decree, allowing Hitler to consolidate power and end democracy. [Good](#).

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Polish politics was [also](#) highly fragmented and forging coalitions within in the ‘Sejm’ (parliament) was extremely difficult. By 1925, there were ~~ninety-two~~ registered parties in Poland, ~~with thirty-two~~ in the Sejm.<sup>17</sup> In 1919, 72% of electorates voted overwhelmingly for a single party; by 1922 this number dropped to ~~nineteen per cent~~.<sup>18</sup> This made establishing government majorities difficult. Fourteen governments came and went in the seven years to 1926 as parties struggled ideologically to form coalitions, inhibiting political action.<sup>19</sup> For example the centre ‘Piast’ (peasant party) refused to work with minority parties preventing an alliance with the Socialist Party (PPS), and disagreements over land reform meant the right-wing ‘Endecja’ (National Populist Association) refused to work with Piast.<sup>20</sup> PPS opposition of wage controls, Endecja shielding of private industry, and Piast desire for food-price regulation ensured that little reform was ever forthcoming.<sup>21</sup> Poland suffered as parties refused to work together, ensuring parliamentary democracy was a failure. [Good](#).

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The clash between the Polish political left and right led to a military coup. The Endecja was opposed to the former war hero, and until 1922 Chief of State Józef Piłsudski. Aware of

<sup>12</sup> Article 48 in German National Assembly, ‘Weimar Constitution’ *PSM-Data Geschichte*, trans. A Ganse, 2001, [http://www.zum.de/psm/weimar/weimar\\_vve.php](http://www.zum.de/psm/weimar/weimar_vve.php), accessed September 24, 2012.

<sup>13</sup> Henig, *Weimar Republic*, London, 1998, p. 65.

<sup>14</sup> Payne, *History of Fascism*, p. 173.

<sup>15</sup> Bruce F Pauley, *Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn, Illinois, 2009, p. 43.

<sup>16</sup> Williamson, *Age of Dictators*, p. 191.

<sup>17</sup> Peter D Stachura, *Poland, 1918-1945*, London, 2004, p. 63.

<sup>18</sup> A J Groth, ‘Polish Elections 1919-1928’, *Slavic Review*, vol. 24, no. 4, December 1965, pp. 654-655.

<sup>19</sup> John Radzilowski, ‘Rebirth, 1914-39’, in *A Traveller’s History of Poland*, ed. Dennis Judd, Northampton, 2007, p. 179.

<sup>20</sup> R J Crampton, *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century*, London, 1994, p. 43.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

Piłsudski's popularity within the army and the left, in 1919 the right set about drafting a constitution to ensure Piłsudski's influence was minimised.<sup>22</sup> The March 1921 constitution gave power to the Sejm, with a new presidency limited to representative duties.<sup>23</sup> Piłsudski left politics in protest, and in December 1922 pro-left Gabriel Narutowicz was elected as President. A week later Narutowicz was assassinated by a right-wing fanatic.<sup>24</sup> This did little to impress Piłsudski, as did the inability under the constitution for the President to dissolve unstable governments that seemed to come and go.<sup>25</sup> In 1925 a 'national concord' of five parties including left and right attempted to tackle Poland's financial crisis.<sup>26</sup> Differences within the concord proved too great and the Socialists withdrew from cabinet in April 1926.<sup>27</sup> Despite fears of right supremacy in the Sejm, head of the concord Aleksander Skrzyński was convinced to form a right-wing government on May 5 1926.<sup>28</sup> A week later Piłsudski led his coup d'état, ending democracy. The weakness of the constitution and perceived ineptitude of disunited right-wing governments led Piłsudski to overthrow democracy. [Good](#).

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<sup>22</sup> Jerry Holzer, 'The Political Right in Poland, 1918-39', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 12, 1977, p. 399.

<sup>23</sup> Joseph Rothschild, 'The Ideological, Political, and Economic Background of Piłsudski's Coup D'Etat of 1926', *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 78, no. 2, June 1963, p. 228.

<sup>24</sup> Radziłowski, 'Rebirth', p. 178.

<sup>25</sup> Józef Piłsudski in the newspaper *Kurier Poranny*, 4 July 1923, reproduced in Stachura, *Poland*, p. 70.

<sup>26</sup> Rothschild, 'Ideological, Political, and Economic', p. 243.

<sup>27</sup> Joseph Rothschild, 'The Military Background of Piłsudski's Coup D'Etat', *Slavic Review*, vol. 21, no. 2, June 1962, p. 260.

<sup>28</sup> Rothschild, 'Ideological, Political, and Economic', p. 243.

### 3.3 Political Violence and Civil Disobedience

Strikes, factory takeovers and political violence undermined the fragile post-war Italian democracy. The desire for better working conditions, land reforms and welfare after victory in WWI fuelled socialist inspired strikes, dominating the 'Biennio Rosso' (Red Biennium) of 1919 and 1920.<sup>29</sup> In 1919, 1663 industrial, and 208 agrarian strikes included over a million workers.<sup>30</sup> In September 1920 the crisis reached its peak when organised socialist labour occupied factories in the north of Italy for three weeks. The government refused to remove the protesters, and ended the occupation through negotiations.<sup>31</sup> The government's refusal to combat socialist activists was not forgotten by the middle classes. This perceived government weakness was further highlighted by the 1920 coup in Fiume. As a victor in [World War One](#), Italians felt harshly treated by the Treaty of Versailles which 'failed' to reward them adequately.<sup>32</sup> In response to this 'mutilated victory', nationalist poet Gabriele D'Annunzio led an armed force into Fiume on the Italian-Yugoslav border, occupying the region for over a year.<sup>33</sup> The government appeared impotent in the face of nationalist and socialist aggression. [Good](#).

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Fearing socialist domination, urban and rural middle classes turned to the fascists. The 'fascio di combattimento' (fascist fighting group) led by Benito Mussolini was a staunchly nationalist, anti-socialist movement comprised predominantly of ex-servicemen.<sup>34</sup> Local landowners invited and often funded 'squadristi' (fascist squads) to carry out punitive expeditions against local socialist offices and activists.<sup>35</sup> Between 1920 and 1921 'squadristi' (fascist violent tactics) extended to local government takeovers. For example in August 1922 the Milanese Socialist City Council was bullied out of office by squadristi and replaced with fascist members.<sup>36</sup> Success of squadristi extended its support to white-collar workers and when the Fascist Party (PNF) was formed in November 1921 it had over 200,000

<sup>29</sup> Dahlia Sabina Elazar and Alisa C Lewin, 'The Effects of Political Violence: A Structural Equation Model of the Rise of Italian Fascism (1919-1922)', *Social Science Research*, vol. 28, 1999, p. 187.

<sup>30</sup> Payne, *History of Fascism*, p. 89.

<sup>31</sup> Dahlia Sabina Elazar, *The Making of Fascism: Class, State and Counter-Revolution, Italy 1919-1922*, Westport, 2001, pp. 55-56.

<sup>32</sup> Payne, *History of Fascism*, pp. 87-88.

<sup>33</sup> Martin Clark, *Mussolini: Profiles in Power*, London, 2005, pp. 40-41.

<sup>34</sup> Philip Morgan, *Italian Fascism 1915-1945*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Hampshire, 2004, pp. 30-31.

<sup>35</sup> Dahlia Sabina Elazar, 'Electoral democracy, revolutionary politics and political violence: the emergence of Fascism in Italy, 1920-21', *The British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 51, no. 3, September 2000, pp. 461-462.

<sup>36</sup> Elazar and Lewin, 'The Effects of Political Violence', p. 188; Morgan, *Italian Fascism*, p. 72.

members.<sup>37</sup> Desperate to reign in right-wing aggression, Mussolini was encouraged to sign the Pact of Pacification by Prime Minister Bonomi in August 1922.<sup>38</sup> Ultimately this meant little; the fascists had control of most of northern and central Italy, allowing Mussolini to threaten the capture of Rome by force. In late October he sent 30,000 squadristi on the 'March on Rome'.<sup>39</sup> In reality the march was poorly organised and government opposition would have overcome the fascists.<sup>40</sup> But the gamble paid off and despite government appeals for martial law, King Alfonso invited Mussolini to become Prime Minister on 29 October. Mussolini had taken power through democratic means, and set about consolidating control of Italy between 1922 and 1926 through a combination of voter intimidation and parliamentary action.<sup>41</sup> Political violence was integral to the fascists' success by terrorising liberal and left-wing opposition. [Good.](#)

Hopes for economic change and security under the Spanish Second Republic were marred by clashes between activists and heavy-handed government forces. 1931 to 1933 saw the 'anarchist' phase of the Republic, dominated by anarcho-syndicalist revolutionary insurrections.<sup>42</sup> The most notable anarchist uprisings were the 'three eights' in Catalonia and Andalusia; 8 January 1932, 8 January 1933, and 8 December 1933. All were suppressed by the 'Benemérita' (Civil Guard) known for their brutal tactics.<sup>43</sup> Peasants demanding economic rights also rose up against the government. On December 31 1931 peasants in Castilblanco lynched four Benemérita after a demonstrator was shot. Benemérita reprisals in Rioja left eleven peasants dead and thirty wounded.<sup>44</sup> The most infamous violent episode was the murder in cold blood of activists in Casas Viejas. After a failed anarchist uprising, members of the 'Asaltos' (Assault Guard) executed twelve peasants and burned the anarchists alive.<sup>45</sup> To many Spaniards, the Second Republic seemed just as brutal as the Monarchy that preceded it. [Good.](#)

<sup>37</sup> Paul Corner, 'State and Society, 1901-1922', in Adrian Lyttleton's *Liberal and Fascist Italy 1900-1945*, Oxford, 2002, p. 42; Clark, *Mussolini*, 2005, p. 54.

<sup>38</sup> Morgan, *Italian Fascism*, p. 59.

<sup>39</sup> Clark, *Mussolini*, p. 59.

<sup>40</sup> Pauley, *Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>41</sup> Payne, *History of Fascism*, p. 115; Williamson, *Age of Dictators*, p. 107.

<sup>42</sup> Stanley G Payne, 'Political Violence during the Spanish Second Republic', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 25, no. 2/3, May 1990, p.275; Julián Casanova, 'Terror and Violence: The Dark Face of Spanish Anarchism', *International Labor and Working-Class History*, vol. 67, April 2005, p. 91.

<sup>43</sup> Payne, 'Political Violence', p. 273.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 274.

<sup>45</sup> Antony Beevor, *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War 1936-1939*, New York, 2006, p. 27.



Between 1934 and 1936, [Spain](#) saw the rise of political violence in response to radicalisation of previously moderate socialists. Elections in November 1933 saw the right-wing Spanish Confederation of the Autonomous Right (CEDA) in government, sparking socialists' fears of imminent fascism.<sup>46</sup> CEDA began repealing reforms, leading to the socialist and anarchist sponsored October 1934 revolutionary insurrection across Spain.<sup>47</sup> The revolution was suppressed everywhere except Asturias where miners held out for two weeks before being overrun.<sup>48</sup> As many as 1500 were killed, and atrocities were committed by both sides.<sup>49</sup> The October uprising polarised Spain, and the elections of February 1936 saw the left in power with a slim majority.<sup>50</sup> The right feared communist revolution. The 'falangists' (fascists), formed in 1933, had been engaged in tit for tat battles with left-wing militants since 1934. In March 1936 four falangists were killed by left-wing workers, leading to the failed assassination attempt of socialist leader Jiménez de Asúa in reprisal.<sup>51</sup> In July the falangists murdered an Asaltos Lieutenant, leading to the revenge assassination of opposition leader Calvo Sotelo.<sup>52</sup> With 269 political killings between February and July alone, violence was out of control, and the government was unable or unwilling to act.<sup>53</sup> On July 17 General Francisco Franco led a military coup, beginning the Spanish Civil War and ending democracy. Strikes, insurrections, and political violence between radicalised left and right wing militants plagued the Spanish Second Republic leading inevitably to the violent overthrow of democracy. [Good](#).

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<sup>46</sup> Excerpt from speech by Calvo Sotelo, 16 June 1936, reproduced in Andrew Forrest, *The Spanish Civil War*, London, 2000, p. 32.

<sup>47</sup> Forrest, *The Spanish Civil War*, p. 20.

<sup>48</sup> Brian D Bunk, 'Your Comrades Will Not Forget', *History and Memory*, vol. 14, no. 1/2, 2002, p. 65.

<sup>49</sup> T D, Sfikas, 'A Tale of Parallel Lives: The Second Greek Republic and the Second Spanish Republic, 1924 - 36', *European History Quarterly*, vol. 29 no. 2, April 1999, pp. 238-239.

<sup>50</sup> Stanley G Payne, *The Collapse of the Spanish Republic: 1933-1936*, New Haven, 2006, p. 176.

<sup>51</sup> Payne, 'Political Violence', p. 280.

<sup>52</sup> Beevor, *Battle for Spain*, p. 51.

<sup>53</sup> J J Linz and E E Malefakis, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Europe*, Baltimore, 1978, p. 188.

### 3.4 Nationalism: Ethnic Minorities and Regional Autonomy

The re-emergence of Poland after 123 years incorporated a large ethnic minority population. The Polish Second Republic included much of former Germany, Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus, as well as a large Jewish population. One third of Poles belonged to ethnic minorities and ethnic Poles' anti-minority attitudes were illustrated through their treatment of the ethnic Ukrainians and Germans.<sup>54</sup> Five million Ukrainians were incorporated into Poland after Piłsudski's campaign in Lwów and Eastern Galicia in 1918 to 1919. This left Ukrainians bitter as it thwarted their own calls for a nation state.<sup>55</sup> Ukrainians were described as 'assimilable', and contrary to duty of care stipulated under the Polish Minority Treaty of 1919, the government enacted the Lanckrona Pact in May 1923.<sup>56</sup> It included limits to legal, cultural and economic ownership by minorities in Poland, and the word 'Ukrainian' was banned from government communications.<sup>57</sup> In 1924, bilingual Polish-Ukrainian schools were established in place of Ukrainian schools, and virtually all [the](#) Ukrainian departments in universities in Lwów were closed.<sup>58</sup> Ukrainians were excluded from land reforms in 1925, leading many to militancy towards the Republic thereafter.<sup>59</sup> Polish leaders attempted to denationalise Ukrainians in order to integrate them into society. [Good](#).

The Endecja in Poland regarded Germans as unassimilable. Endecja rhetoric openly denounced Germans, feeling it was their 'duty to weaken the German nationality.'<sup>60</sup> In a March 1921 plebiscite more than 64% of voters favoured Upper Silesia returning to Germany. Poles complained that 'out-voters' had been brought in to swing the vote, and consequently Upper Silesia was partitioned with Poland receiving key industrial areas.<sup>61</sup> Despite their poor treatment of the minority, when German support was needed Poland was portrayed as a multi-

<sup>54</sup> Eugene Romer, 'The Population of Poland according to the Census of 1921', *Geographical Review*, vol. 13, no. 3, July 1923, p. 399.

<sup>55</sup> Stachura, *Poland*, p. 82.

<sup>56</sup> Articles 2, 7, 8 and 9 of the Minorities' Treaty, 28 June 1919 reproduced in Stachura, *Poland*, pp. 88-89.

<sup>57</sup> Jeffrey S Kopstein and J Wittenberg, 'Beyond Dictatorship and Democracy: Rethinking National Minority Inclusion and Regime Type in Interwar Eastern Europe', *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 43, no. 8/9, 2010, p. 1101.

<sup>58</sup> Nathaniel Copsey, *Public Opinion and the Making of Foreign Policy in the 'New Europe': A comparative study of Poland and Ukraine*, Surrey, 2009, p. 87.

<sup>59</sup> Anita J Prazmowska, 'War and Independence: 1914-1939' in *A History of Poland*, Hampshire, 2004, p. 169; Crampton, *Eastern Europe*, p. 45.

<sup>60</sup> Quote from Police Chief Furvjelm reproduced in Richard Blanke, 'The German Minority in Inter-War Poland and German Foreign Policy - Some Reconsiderations', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 25, no. 1, January 1990, p. 90.

<sup>61</sup> Crampton, *Eastern Europe*, p. 40.

ethnic vision of unity, (for instance during the Polish-German Tariff War in 1925).<sup>62</sup> Yet the government remained committed to marginalising Germans. Under the Lanckorona Pact many German public schools with less than 30 students per class were closed.<sup>63</sup> German minorities approached the League of Nations for help more than any other minority, though success was rare and as Blanke states, Poland tended to see these actions as 'quasi-treasonous'.<sup>64</sup> As many as sixty-five per cent of Germans had voluntarily emigrated from Poland by 1926.<sup>65</sup> Polish attitudes toward minority groups prevented multi-ethnic unity, preferring instead that minorities should 'conform, suffer in silence and in the end either emigrate or undergo Polonisation'.<sup>66</sup> [Ok.](#)

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Spain prior to 1931 was one of the least centralised countries in Europe, and the regionalism that defined it undermined the Second Republic. Autonomy movements demonstrate Spanish regionalism. While numerous regions desired autonomy including Valencia, the Basque Country and Galicia, the strongest case was put forward by Catalonia. Catalan culture originated from the late middle ages, and its nationalistic feeling intensified in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>67</sup> Though a predominantly left wing movement, Catalan autonomy was supported to some extent by the Church and the middle classes.<sup>68</sup> It had been alienated by the previous regime under Primo de Rivera, and the ethnic Catalan speaking population were frustrated by the influx of Castilians since Catalonia's industrialisation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>69</sup> Opposing regional autonomy were national right-wing groups such as CEDA promoting a Catholic, centralist and Castilian Spanish fatherland.<sup>70</sup> These groups were backed by the army who felt it their duty to defend Spanish unity from separatism.<sup>71</sup> While Catalan autonomy via the 1932 Statute of Autonomy ensured pro-Republican support, loyalties remained with Catalonia first.<sup>72</sup> When the civil war broke out in 1936, Nationalist forces fought for a united Spain,

<sup>62</sup> Stefan Norblin, Poster: Upper Silesia, 1925, in *Documents-Inter-war Europe 1918-1930s*, HIST328 Trimester 2, Armidale, 2012, p.2. See Appendix IV.

<sup>63</sup> Kopstein and Wittenberg, 'Beyond Dictatorship', p. 1101.

<sup>64</sup> Blanke, 'The German Minority', p. 92.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>66</sup> Ezra Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe Between the World Wars*, Bloomington, 1983, p. 37.

<sup>67</sup> Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, London, 1986, pp. 43-44.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>69</sup> Diego Muro and Alejandro Quiroga, 'Spanish Nationalism: Ethnic or Civic?', *Ethnicities*, vol. 5, no. 1, March 2005, p. 15.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18; Excerpt the National Front manifesto, December 1935, reproduced in Forrest, *The Spanish Civil War*, p. 31.

<sup>71</sup> David Garrioch, *The Spanish Civil War : a cultural and historical reader*, ed. Alun Kenwood, Providence, 1993, p. 3.

<sup>72</sup> Xosé-Manoel Núñez, 'The Region as Essence of the Fatherland: Regionalist Variants of Spanish Nationalism (1840-1936)', *European History Quarterly*, 31, no. 4, October 2001, p. 506.

whereas the Republican Left of Catalonia prioritised the creation of an independent Catalonia, battling Nationalists on the right and extremists including the National Confederation of Labour on the left.<sup>73</sup> In 1938 Franco annulled the Catalanian autonomy which he felt had been ‘unhappily conceived by the republic’, and Nationalist forces overran Catalonia in early 1939.<sup>74</sup> Regional divisions and loyalties prevented a unified Spanish nationalism, destabilising the Second Republic. [Good.](#)

### 3.5 Economic Crises

Poland after [World War One](#) was economically at ‘year zero’.<sup>75</sup> Sixty-five percent of the population in 1921 were small holding peasants or landless labour, and there was little or no entrepreneurial class.<sup>76</sup> Courtesy of the Treaty of Versailles, Poland received new lands in Upper Silesia from Germany, and was permitted rights to the free port city of Danzig.<sup>77</sup> However this was a mixed blessing. While these were key industrial areas and ports, they were under foreign systems; at one point Poland had six currencies, three rail gauges, and many other foreign legacies.<sup>78</sup> This meant creating uniform economic and legal infrastructures as well as rail, postal and communications systems.<sup>79</sup> Without local or foreign investment, the government struggled to afford war payments, plebiscites, and armaments for eastern conflicts. They unwisely chose to compensate by overprinting money, resulting in the steady rise of inflation.<sup>80</sup> Between 1922 and December 1923 the Polish mark dropped from 17,800 to the US dollar, to over six million.<sup>81</sup> The Polish economy languished under inflation, and governments failed to address the crisis effectively. [Ok. Link to central argument.](#)

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<sup>73</sup> Jordi Getman-Eraso, *Regionalism: Did Regionalism Play a Role in the Spanish Civil War?*, Vol. XVIII, in *History in Dispute*, ed. Daniel Kowalsky and Kenneth Estes, Detroit, 2005, pp. 192-193.

<sup>74</sup> Preamble to the law abrogating Catalan autonomy signed by General Francisco Franco in April 1938, Fraser, Ronald. *Blood of Spain: An Oral History of the Spanish Civil War*, New York, 1979, p. 479, reproduced in Getman-Eraso, Jordi, and Veronica Lasanowski. ‘Regionalism: Did Regionalism Play a Role in the Spanish Civil War?’, Vol. XVIII, in *History in Dispute*, eds. Daniel Kowalsky and Kenneth Estes, Detroit, 2005, p. 195.

<sup>75</sup> Stachura, *Poland*, p. 46.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>77</sup> Michael G Roskin, *The Rebirth of East Europe*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn, New Jersey, 2002, p. 28.

<sup>78</sup> Crampton, *Eastern Europe*, pp. 40-41.

<sup>79</sup> Carsten Trenkler and Nikolaus Wolf, ‘Economic integration across borders: The Polish interwar economy 1921-1937’, *European Review of Economic History*, vol. 9, no. 2, August 2005, pp. 202-203.

<sup>80</sup> Stachura, *Poland*, p. 49.

<sup>81</sup> Carsten Trenkler and Nikolaus Wolf, ‘Economic Integration in Interwar Poland - A Threshold Cointegration Analysis of the Law of One Price for Poland 1924-1937’, EUI Working Paper ECO No. 2003/5, Florence, 2003, <http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/805/ECO2003-5.pdf>, accessed September 26, 2012, p. 8.

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Though the economy briefly recovered, the continuing economic crisis continued to undermine the Polish government. In January 1924 Prime Minister Władysław Grabski was granted extraordinary decree powers to curb inflation. Grabski increased taxation and improved its collection, established the Bank of Poland, and replaced the Polish mark with the złoty.<sup>82</sup> The economy stabilised for a time, however prices began to rise towards the end of 1924, and the situation was made worse when Germany started a tariff in June of 1925 by refusing to renew imports of Polish coal.<sup>83</sup> This caused a split in Grabski's government. The złoty declined and costs again began to rise along with unemployment. In November the President of the Bank of Poland refused to support the złoty; two days later Grabski resigned.<sup>84</sup> In May 1926 the government coalition split over proposed deflationary economic policies and within weeks Polish democracy had ended at the hands of a military coup.<sup>85</sup> Polish governments were destabilized by the need to rebuild the economy amid poorly handled financial crises. [Ok... link to central argument.](#)

The Weimar Republic was beset with numerous economic crises precipitating its eventual downfall. The 1918 parliamentary government inherited economic burdens left by WWI. Wartime production had terminated leaving industry at two-fifths its pre-war production. War debts had to be paid, and the state had commitments to war widows, orphans and injured soldiers.<sup>86</sup> This situation worsened with the imposition of allied war reparations under the London payments plan in May 1921; a total of 132 billion gold deutschmarks.<sup>87</sup> Defaults on reparation payments led to the Franco-Belgian occupation of the Ruhr in January 1923.<sup>88</sup> One strategy to promote reparations renegotiation was to encourage inflation.<sup>89</sup> The government terminated reparation payments in protest at French occupation, and refused to tax the struggling population to make up the income lost from the Ruhr.<sup>90</sup> The government printed more money allowing hyperinflation to send the deutschmark's value plummeting, leaving it

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<sup>82</sup> Trenkler and Wolf, 'Economic Integration in Interwar Poland', pp. 8-9.

<sup>83</sup> Piotr S Wandycz, *France and her Eastern Allies 1919-1925*, London, 1962, pp. 352-353.

<sup>84</sup> Ideological, Political, and Economic', p. 239.

<sup>85</sup> Crampton, *Eastern Europe*, p. 44.

<sup>86</sup> Harold James, 'The Weimar Economy', in *Weimar Germany*, Oxford, 2009, p. 109;

<sup>87</sup> Kolb, 'Years of Crisis', p. 41.

<sup>88</sup> Alfred E Corneise, 'Cuno, Germany, and the Coming of the Ruhr Occupation: A Study in German-West European Relations', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, vol. 116, no. 6, 1972, p. 502.

<sup>89</sup> Marcus Kreuzer, 'Money, votes, and political leverage: Explaining the electoral performance of liberals in interwar France and Germany' *Social Science History*, vol. 23, no. 2, 1999, p.215.

<sup>90</sup> Kolb 'Years of Crisis', pp. 46-47.

virtually worthless.<sup>91</sup> Farmers threatened starvation of the population by refusing paper money for crops, and high unemployment, rising prices, and housing shortages led to social and political unrest.<sup>92</sup> The government backed down and recommenced reparation payments as German society teetered on the brink of revolution. Why? This section on economics is the weakest of this paper. You seem unsure of how to tie it back into your central argument. But, always make sure that you do so that your points aren't just hanging out there unsupported.

Weimar Germany in the mid-1920s saw a period of recovery. Under the new Chancellor Gustav Stresemann, reparations were resumed and the currency stabilised with the creation of the Rentenmark in November 1923, renamed the Reichsmark in December.<sup>93</sup> Foreign investment under the Dawes Plan in 1924 covered the costs of reparations and fuelled the economy.<sup>94</sup> Under what has become known as the 'Weimar Welfare System' (WWS), living conditions improved, housing construction increased, and in 1927 the Act on Labour Exchanges and Unemployment Insurance was enacted to cover benefits for the unemployed.<sup>95</sup> However, these improvements were based on unstable foundations exposed by the Great Depression. The WWS could only support approximately 800,000 unemployed, not six million by 1933.<sup>96</sup> From 1930 new Chancellor Brüning commenced deflationary policies, cutting WWS payments and worker salaries, and freezing wages leaving many disillusioned.<sup>97</sup> Foreign investment dried up and in 1931 the five major German banks crashed.<sup>98</sup> Support for liberal democratic parties diminished, polarising politics and Brüning was only able to enact his policies through Article 48. Hitler had been offered a position in government previous to 1933, but astutely realised that he would be attached to any blame for financial problems that may ensue.<sup>99</sup> In 1931 and 1932 Brüning negotiated the cancellation of reparation payments under the Hoover Moratorium and subsequent Lausanne Conference.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>91</sup> Highest-denomination banknotes of the German Reichsbank, 1922-1923, in *Documents-Inter-war Europe 1918-1930s*, HIST328 Trimester 2, Armidale, 2012, p. 6; Williamson, *Age of Dictators*, p. 151.

<sup>92</sup> Richard Bessel, 'Germany from war to dictatorship', in *Twentieth-Century Germany: Politics, Culture and Society 1918-1990*, ed. Mary Fulbrook, London, 2001, p. 24.

<sup>93</sup> James, 'The Weimar Economy', p. 113.

<sup>94</sup> Piet Clement, '"The touchstone of German credit": Nazi Germany and the service of the Dawes and Young Loans', *Financial History Review* 11, no. 1, April 2004, p. 33.

<sup>95</sup> Bessel, 'war to dictatorship', pp. 27-28.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28; Nicholas H Dimsdale, Nicholas Horsewood and Arthur Van Riel, 'Unemployment in Interwar Germany: An Analysis of the Labor Market, 1927-1936', *The Journal of Economic History*, vol. 66, no. 3, September 2006, p. 778.

<sup>97</sup> Dimsdale, et al., 'Unemployment', p. 779; Williamson, *Age of Dictators*, p. 185.

<sup>98</sup> Rees (dir.), *The Nazis*, Episode One.

<sup>99</sup> James, 'The Weimar Economy', p. 123.

<sup>100</sup> Zara Steiner, *The Lights that Failed: European International History 1919-1933*, Oxford, 2005, p. 652; *Ibid.*, pp. 687-688.

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The way was clear for Hitler. The Nazis exploited political radicalisation caused by the economic crises, leading to the downfall of the Republic.

**Comment [TK7]:** This glosses over a bit too much history. How did the Nazis exploit it??? Why did Weimar collapse???

### 3.6 Modernity

Your sections should flow from each other a little better. This shift to modernity is a bit jarring. Perhaps start by talking about Germany to give greater continuity.

Italian fascist modernity projected an image of unity and strength. The fascists rallied behind ancient imperial Roman heritage or ‘Romanità’.<sup>101</sup> The Roman salute and ‘fasces’, the emblem of birch rods tied together with an axe head, symbolised fascist unity.<sup>102</sup> Fascism promoted itself as the epitome of virility and youth. Over 13% of the PNF’s founders were students and the average age of leaders was 31.8.<sup>103</sup> Youth groups such as the Opera Nazionale Balilla offered ‘colonie’ (retreats) promoting community, while also providing fascist indoctrination.<sup>104</sup> An emphasis on the traditional rural patriarchal family was encouraged, with incentives including tax exemptions and welfare in the form of the National Agency for the Protection of Motherhood and Infancy, to promote increased birth rates.<sup>105</sup> Provocative jazz and dance out of America were discouraged and censored. As Dainotto states, the ‘animalistic lure of certain rhythms [and] the explicit sexual threat represented by modernity’ were targets of traditional artists like Gabré who warned that ‘with this American disease, all is becoming a whorehouse!’<sup>106</sup> In contrast to traditional values, Mussolini utilised technology to project fascism to the masses. He utilised photography to promote himself in various forms such as aviator, strongman or revolutionary.<sup>107</sup> He utilised radio and mass rallies to project his message to thousands simultaneously, and the Italian air force became its symbol of technological prowess.<sup>108</sup> The fascists contrasted traditional and technological imagery to unify Italians under fascism. Ok.

German Nazis and Spanish Nationalists built on Italian fascism’s example to lure support away from liberalism. The Nazis embraced Aryanism as its symbol of heritage and unity,

<sup>101</sup> Jan Nelis, ‘Constructing Fascist Identity: Benito Mussolini and the Myth of “Romanità”’, *The Classical World*, vol. 100, no. 4, 2007, p. 391.

<sup>102</sup> World War Two Italian Fascist Member Badge, *Italian Militaria*, 2010, <http://snyderstreasures.com/eBay/Images/2012/022012/009.JPG>, accessed 20 September 2012.

<sup>103</sup> Payne, *Italian Fascism*, p. 104; Bruno P F Wanrooij, ‘Italian Society Under Fascism’, in *Liberal and Fascist Italy: 1900-1945*, ed. Adrian Lyttelton, Oxford, 2002, p. 175.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 180-181.

<sup>105</sup> Clark, *Mussolini*, 2005, p. 99.

<sup>106</sup> Roberto Dainotto, ‘The Saxophone and the Pastoral Italian Jazz in the Age of Fascism’, *Italica*, vol. 85, no. 2/3, 2008, p. 276; Lyrics from Villico Black Bottom by Aurelio Gabré, 1928, reproduced in Dainotto, ‘The Saxophone’, p. 276.

<sup>107</sup> Images of Mussolini in Robert Schwartz, *Mussolini & Italian Fascism*, 2009, <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/courses/rschwartz/hist260/mussolini.html>, accessed September 27, 2012. See Appendix I.

<sup>108</sup> Wanrooij, ‘Italian Society’, p. 191.



while in Spain the church was the essence of 'Hispanidad' (Spanishness) and an ideal falangist was 'half monk, half soldier'.<sup>109</sup> The Nazis built on the youth movements like the *Wandervogel* whose opposition to decadent democracy inspired the Hitler Youth.<sup>110</sup> In Spain the Popular Action Youth actively advocated violence as an expression of fascist masculinity.<sup>111</sup> Technology played a significant role in Hitler's campaign for power. For example Hitler flew to seven different cities during the 1932 election campaign. Nazi propaganda utilised mass rallies and films such as '*Das Erbe*' to promote its own beliefs of social Darwinism, which would become reality later through eugenics and Nazi attempts at creating a 'super-race'.<sup>112</sup> For populations struggling under financial and political disintegration, fascism's projection of unity and strength attracted supporters from liberalism. [Good.](#)

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Interwar Spain was an underdeveloped country and democracy brought it into conflict with modernity. By the end of WWI Spain was an agrarian society at a level of modernisation equivalent to that of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>113</sup> Agricultural peasants in particular suffered prior to the Second Republic. Large landowners would hire workers 'as cattle in the market... no fixed wages, they paid what they wanted.'<sup>114</sup> Democracy in 1931 brought with it the right to unionise and strike, wage controls and the promise of land reform. As one worker stated, the '...arrival of a democratic Republic... meant the hope that all these aspirations would come true.'<sup>115</sup> However land reforms were often only partially implemented, and the government was unable to compensate landowners for their land.<sup>116</sup> Reform frightened landowners away from the Republican cause, and peasants grew impatient for land reform. Yet the full ramifications would not be felt until it was combined with urbanisation. [Good.](#)

<sup>109</sup> Beevor, *Battle for Spain*, p. 41.

<sup>110</sup> Peter Gay, 'The hunger for Wholeness: Trials of Modernity', in *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider*, New York, 1968, pp. 77-78.

<sup>111</sup> Jordi Getman-Eraso, 'Too Young to Fight: Anarchist Youth Groups and the Spanish Second Republic', *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2011, p. 286.

<sup>112</sup> Rees (dir.), *The Nazis*, Episode One; Anne Frank House, *Nazi party election rally in Frankfurt am Main*, 2011, <http://www.annefrank.org/en/Subsites/Timeline/Inter-war-period-1918-1939/Anne-Franks-birth/1932/Nazi-party-election-rally-in-Frankfurt-am-Main-1932-/#>, accessed September 27 2012. See Appendix III; Clip from *Das Erbe*, Carl Hartmann (dir.), 1935, reproduced in Rees (dir.), *The Nazis*, Episode One; Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991*, London, 2002, p. 118.

<sup>113</sup> Payne, 'Political Violence', p. 253.

<sup>114</sup> Interview with Manuel Vazquez Guillen in Blake and Hart (dirs), *The Spanish Civil War*, Episode One.

<sup>115</sup> Narciso Julian, doco

<sup>116</sup> Sara Schatz, 'Democracy's breakdown and the rise of fascism: The case of the Spanish Second Republic, 1931-6', *Social History*, vol. 26, no. 2 (2001), p. 148.

Spain saw significant urban migration stemming from the agricultural crisis of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. By 1930, twenty-seven per cent of workers were in industry compared with 15.99% in 1900.<sup>117</sup> Urbanisation had different effects. Increased urban populations meant modernisation of cities, creating jobs in building trades, and inspiring modern architecture such as Gaudi's La Sagrada Familia.<sup>118</sup> This also offered the chance for education and future social mobility. This new middle class from working class origins sympathised with workers, in contrast to traditional conservative middle class avoidance of the 'degraded' working class.<sup>119</sup> It also created large working class proletariats in industrial areas such as Asturias and parts of Catalonia. When promised reforms failed to materialise, impatient peasants, and industrial and working classes united with the new middle class via left wing parties and trade unions.<sup>120</sup> Strikes and land seizures were frequent throughout the life of the Second Republic.<sup>121</sup> While modernity brought the hope of individual rights and social mobility, it alienated conservatives and provided impatient citizens the chance to unite in venting their frustrations, disrupting society. Good.

Comment [TK8]: This is fine.

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Another Spanish clash of modernity was that of clericalism and secularism. The Catholic Church had dominated Spanish society for centuries. It monopolised education and owned approximately one third of the total wealth of Spain.<sup>122</sup> The constitution of the Second Republic ended the traditional status of the Church. Under Article 26 the Catholic Church was no longer the state religion, and the Church's hold on education was removed in favour of secular education.<sup>123</sup> The Jesuits were dissolved and the Primate of Spain was expelled after an anti-Republican pastoral.<sup>124</sup> Long repressed anger boiled over into anti-clerical violence in May 1931 with church burnings in Madrid.<sup>125</sup> Yet the left lacked a united ideology. One example was the internal division within the Socialist Party in 1936 between the moderate 'prietistas' (followers of Indalecio Prieto), and revolutionary 'caballeristas' (followers of Largo Caballero).<sup>126</sup> The clash between communists, and anarchists and Workers' Party of

<sup>117</sup> Raymond Carr, *Modern Spain 1875-1980*, Oxford, 1980, p. 34.

<sup>118</sup> La Sagrada Familia, 1930 in La Sagrada Familia Foundation, *The four bell towers of the Nativity façade completed*, [http://www.sagradafamilia.cat/imgs/imgs\\_inst/crono/1930\\_on.jpg](http://www.sagradafamilia.cat/imgs/imgs_inst/crono/1930_on.jpg), accessed September 25, 2012. See Appendix II.

<sup>119</sup> Carr, *Modern Spain*, p. 35.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>121</sup> Schatz, 'Democracy's breakdown', p. 232; Beevor, *Battle for Spain*, p. 44.

<sup>122</sup> Garrioch, 'The Historical Background', p. 5.

<sup>123</sup> Forrest, *Spanish Civil War*, p. 19.

<sup>124</sup> Beevor, *Battle for Spain*, p. 23.

<sup>125</sup> Blake and Hart (dirs), *The Spanish Civil War*, Episode One.

<sup>126</sup> Payne, *The Collapse*, pp. 201-202.

Marxist Unification (POUM) were of particular significance, influencing POUM member and author George Orwell. Orwell's experiences of rivalry within the left in the Spanish civil war inspired many novels highlighting communism's corruption of the workers' revolution.<sup>127</sup> Conversely, conservatives found a unifying cause in Catholicism. Religious belief, the Church's centralist and authoritarian nature, and attitudes towards property were all in accordance with nationalist supporters.<sup>128</sup> In his pastoral letter, Cardinal Plá y Deniel openly praised the nationalist movement as the 'city of the children of God.'<sup>129</sup> Democracy freed Spain from the Church's control, however it unified the Republic's enemies against a fractured left. [Good.](#)

### 3.7 Conclusion

Interwar Europe was unprepared for democracy; the pace of change was too great for societies accustomed to authoritarian rule. The combination of political instability; strikes, insurrections and violence; economic crises; split national loyalties; and modernity all in a short period of time after WWI devastated democratic unity. In Italy the use of force convinced the population that fascism was stronger in dealing with socialism than the government. Fascism's use of traditional values coupled with modern technology enhanced this image. Poland's parliament was split between uncompromising ideologies which were made worse by constant financial difficulties. This conflict was mirrored in society by the [racist](#) attitudes of ethnic Poles towards minorities. Weimar Germany was characterised by governments unwilling to work together to build the nation, fearing voter backlashes. In the end the Great Depression polarised the people, inevitably leading them to the perceived strength of Communism and Nazism. The impatience for democratic change amongst the working classes in the Spanish Second Republic spilled over into violence between the fragmented left, the government, and the right creating a nation ready to explode. Spanish national unity was further fragmented through desires for regional autonomy, and it was the conservative right who united behind the banners of centralism and the Church. [Good.](#)

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<sup>127</sup> George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*, Florida, 1969; George Orwell, *Animal Farm*, New York, 1945.

<sup>128</sup> Beevor, *Battle for Spain*, p. 96.

<sup>129</sup> Excerpt from pastoral letter 'The Two Cities' written by Plá y Deniel, 30 September, 1936, reproduced in Beevor, *Battle for Spain*, p. 96.

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Comment [TK9]: ???

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[This is really excellent work! Absolutely great. You can see my in-text comments for some of the problems. The section on economics is the weakest, but only because you really haven't linked your points to you central argument closely enough. Otherwise, great.](#)

[Structure and Argument](#)

Great.

**Format**

Great.

**Syntax, Style and Grammar**

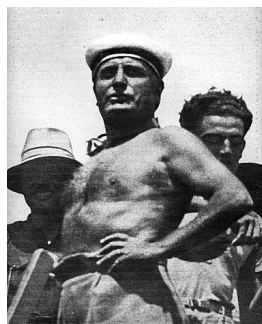
For the most part good, but there are some hiccups. See in-text comments. These are probably just things that you missed during your (clearly extensive) editing process.

Mark: 91

### 3.9 Appendices

#### 3.9.1 Appendix I

Images of Mussolini.<sup>130</sup>



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<sup>130</sup> Schwartz, *Mussolini & Italian Fascism*, accessed September 27, 2012; Rawlings, *Democracy and Dictatorship*, accessed 27 September 2012.

### 3.9.2 Appendix II

La Sagrada Família in 1930.<sup>131</sup>



### 3.9.3 Appendix III

Nazi party election rally in Frankfurt am Main, 1932.<sup>132</sup>



<sup>131</sup> La Sagrada Família Foundation, *The four bell towers*, accessed September 25, 2012.

<sup>132</sup> Anne Frank House, *Nazi party election rally*, accessed September 27 2012.

### 3.9.4 Appendix IV

Poster: Upper Silesia, 1925.<sup>133</sup>



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<sup>133</sup> Norblin, Poster: Upper Silesia, p.2.



### 3.9.5 Appendix V

Lyrics from Villico Black Bottom by Aurelio Gabré.<sup>134</sup>

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>Sul verde monte, inerpicato,<br/> sta il bianco gregge a pascolar<br/> dal sol di porpora, baciato,<br/> Il paesel lontano appar,<br/> Nella capanna il pastorel<br/> allegro suona uno stornel<br/> non piu col vecchio zufoletto<br/> ma col moderno saxofon:<br/> Le pecorelle fanno be<br/> ed anche lor, chissa perche,<br/> van per la china ruminando,<br/> belando, ballando,<br/> Van zompettando indietro e avanti,<br/> con eleganti evoluzion,<br/> e sembran tutte trepidanti<br/> al ritmo stran del Black-bottom.<br/> E di domenica mattina<br/> e tutto in festa il paesel,<br/> suona la banda contadina<br/> un vecchio e allegro ritornel.<br/> E giunto appena il mezzodi<br/> in piazza ancor, son tutti li<br/> ma, a un tratto un forte scampanio<br/> richiama a messa i suoi fedel.<br/> E le campane fan din don,<br/> e gia s'inizia la funzion,<br/> son la, le donne inginocchiate,<br/> scollate, truccate,<br/> Non hanno in capo il velo nero<br/> ma il cappellino coi pompons<br/> e sembran tante belle Otero<br/> con i capelli alia garconne.<br/> Dai farmacista o dai pievano<br/> sia nelle stalle o in mezzo al fien<br/> Con questo morbo Americano<br/> e da per tutto un tabarin!</p> | <p>Stuck on the green mountain<br/> the white flock is grazing.<br/> Kissed by the purple sun,<br/> the village appears at a remote distance.<br/> The shepherd is in his hut<br/> gaily playing folk songs--<br/> no longer with the recorder<br/> but with the modern saxophone:<br/> The sheep bleat,<br/> and they too, who knows why,<br/> while chewing the cud<br/> and bleating, start to dance.<br/> They jump back and forth<br/> with elegant pirouettes,<br/> and they all seem lost<br/> in the strange rhythm of black-bottom.<br/> It is Sunday morning,<br/> and the village celebrates the holy day.<br/> A peasants' orchestra plays<br/> an old, happy refrain.<br/> It is now midday<br/> and everybody is still in the public square,<br/> when, suddenly, the bells toll<br/> calls the faithful for the mass.<br/> The bells go ding dong,<br/> the mass begins,<br/> and the women are there kneeling,<br/> in sexy clothes, her face full of makeup.<br/> They no longer carry the black veil<br/> but a little hat with pompons<br/> and they all look like Madame Otero<br/> with their fancy hairdo.<br/> At the pharmacy and at the parish<br/> in the stable or in the hay<br/> with this American disease<br/> all is becoming a whorehouse!</p> |
|---|---|

<sup>134</sup> Lyrics from Villico Black Bottom by Aurelio Gabré, 1928, reproduced in Dainotto, 'The Saxophone', pp. 275-276.