

FOCUS TASK

What was the impact of the Treaty of Versailles on Germany?

It is New Year's Eve 1923. You are a German living in Berlin. As a civilian you survived the shortages and the starvation of the war. You are writing to a friend in America describing what your life has been like since the war ended.

In your letter, tell your friend about:

- the general strike in Berlin in 1920 (see page 141)
- the French and Belgians taking over the Ruhr in 1923
- the awful inflation of 1923.

Explain how each of these problems has been caused by the Treaty of Versailles and how each problem has affected your life. Sources 14–18 will help you. You can also find out a lot more about these events on pages 138–45.

Use this sheet to help you with the Focus Task on Walsh page 90.

It contains a list of extra points which you can add to the information you have found on page 90 to use in your letter to your friend in America.

- French invasion was met by passive resistance. Industrial production stopped and Germany's currency collapsed.
- Germany lost 10 per cent of its land and all of its overseas colonies.
- Germany lost 12.5 per cent of its population.
- Germany lost 16 per cent of its coal and 48 per cent of its iron industry.
- The government paid off its debts in worthless marks.
- Hitler was given a very light sentence after the Munich Putsch.
- Hyperinflation gave the enemies of Weimar something else to blame on democracy.
- Industrial production was about two-thirds of what it had been in 1913.
- Kapp Putsch in 1920 resulted in a general strike which paralysed water, power and transport.
- Large businesses and the government did well out of hyperinflation because they were able to pay off their huge war debts with worthless marks. This caused great resentment.
- Middle classes and pensioners had their savings wiped out.
- National income was about one-third of what it had been in 1913.
- Prices went out of control, e.g. 201 thousand billion marks for a loaf of bread in November 1923.
- Reparations were not paid in 1922 so France invaded the Ruhr region of Germany.
- War left 600,000 widows and 2 million children without fathers and these people had to be cared for by the state.