

Europe 1918–2000

Three essays · 2h30 · 15 marks each. HL only. Pick three topics from a regional option (here: Europe). Top-band marks demand: precise dates, named historians/views, sustained argument with counter-points, conclusion that re-engages the question. **Compare-and-contrast across topics scores well** — e.g. Versailles peace failure (T15) ↔ Weimar collapse (T14) ↔ Nazi-Soviet Pact (T15+T16).

14 · Inter-war Europe 1918–1939

IB requires. Paper 3 Topic 14. Three essays in 2h30m. Evaluate: economic and political conditions after WWI; reasons for democratic breakdown and authoritarian rise; domestic policies (economic, social, cultural, religious) of interwar regimes. Compare regimes (Weimar/Nazi Germany, Italy, Spain, plus survivors — Britain, France). HL depth: historiography, regional variation, gendered/religious dimensions.

Timeline CORE DATES THE MARKER EXPECTS

1918–11	Armistice & revolution — German Revolution. Kaiser abdicates. Weimar Republic proclaimed. Italy: 'mutilated victory' sentiment.	1929–10	Wall Street Crash — US loans called in. German unemployment rises 1.4m (1928) → 6m (1932). Reparations reneged.
1919–06	Treaty of Versailles — Germany: 132bn gold marks reparations, War Guilt Clause, Army limited to 100k, Rhineland demilitarised. Italy gains Trentino/Trieste but denied Fiume/Dalmatia.	1929–02	Lateran Pacts — Mussolini and Pius XI. Vatican recognises Italian state; Catholicism as state religion; compensates Church.
1919–1920	Biennio Rosso — Italy's 'Two Red Years' — factory occupations, peasant unrest. Mussolini founds Fasci di Combattimento (Mar 1919).	1931	Spain — Second Republic — Alfonso XIII abdicates; Republic proclaimed. Land reform, church-state separation, Catalan autonomy.
1922–10	March on Rome — Mussolini appointed PM by Victor Emmanuel III — a coup dressed as constitutional process.	1933–01–30	Hitler Chancellor — Appointed by Hindenburg; Papen: 'we have hired him'.
1923–01	Ruhr occupied — France and Belgium occupy Ruhr over reparations default. Hyperinflation peaks Nov 1923 (1 USD = 4.2 trillion marks).	1933–03–23	Enabling Act — Reichstag dissolves itself. Dictatorship legal.
1923–11	Munich Beer Hall Putsch — Hitler's putsch fails. Trial propaganda gold; Mein Kampf written in Landsberg.	1934–06–30	Night of Long Knives — SA leadership and old enemies purged. SS rises.
1924–1929	Weimar 'Golden Years' — Dawes Plan 1924, Young Plan 1929, US loans stabilise economy. Locarno 1925, League entry 1926. Stresemann's diplomacy.	1936–07	Spanish Civil War — Nationalist (Franco) vs Republican. Germany/Italy aid Franco; USSR aids Republic; Western non-intervention.
1924–1926	Matteotti & dictatorship — Matteotti murdered June 1924; Mussolini takes responsibility Jan 1925; Leggi Fascistissime 1925–26 destroy opposition.	1938–03	Anschluss — Austria annexed — domestic consequence for Austria as much as foreign policy event.
		1939–04	Franco victory — Madrid falls. Franco's authoritarian state established; lasts until 1975.

Weimar Germany 1918–1933

Democracy born in defeat. Constitutional weaknesses (Article 48, proportional representation) plus economic shocks (1923 hyperinflation, 1929 Depression) and elite hostility killed it — not Nazi inevitability.

- **Foundations (1918–23)** — Weimar Constitution — proportional representation produced fragmented parliaments; Article 48 presidential emergency powers; oath from Reichswehr to state (not constitution).
- **Crisis (1919–23)** — Spartacist rising (Jan 1919, crushed by Freikorps — SPD's original sin), Kapp Putsch (1920, crushed by general strike), assassinations (Rathenau 1922), Ruhr occupation (Jan 1923), hyperinflation (trillions to the dollar by Nov 1923), Munich Putsch (Nov 1923).
- **'Golden Years' (1924–29)** — Stresemann as Foreign Minister (briefly Chancellor). Dawes Plan 1924 restructures reparations; Young Plan 1929 reduces total. Locarno 1925 normalises Western borders. League of Nations entry 1926. Kellogg-Briand 1928.
- **Collapse (1929–33)** — Wall Street Crash cuts US loans. Brüning's deflationary policy (March 1930–May 1932) deepens Depression — unemployment 1.4m to 6m. Ruled by presidential decree from 1930. Nazi vote: 2.6% (1928) → 18.3% (Sept 1930) → 37.3% (July 1932). Schleicher–Papen intrigues hand Hitler the Chancellorship Jan 1933.
- **Historiography** — AJP Taylor — Weimar fatally flawed; Kershaw — not inevitable but elite collusion fatal; Peukert — 'classical modernity in crisis'; Evans — defeat-driven.

Nazi Germany 1933–1939 (domestic)

Gleichschaltung destroyed pluralism in 18 months. Economic recovery by rearmament and autarky. Racial state: Nuremberg Laws 1935, Kristallnacht 1938. Women, church, workers all constrained.

- **Consolidation (1933–34)** — Reichstag Fire (Feb 1933), Enabling Act (March 1933), trade unions abolished (May), other parties banned (July), Concordat with Vatican (July), federal states dissolved (Jan 1934), Night of the Long Knives (June 1934), Hindenburg dies and offices of President/Chancellor merged (Aug 1934).
- **Nazi state** — Polycratic — overlapping agencies competing for Hitler's favour ('working towards the Führer', Kershaw). SS under Himmler absorbs police (1936). Gestapo, SD. Concentration camp system (Dachau 1933, Buchenwald 1937).
- **Economy** — Schacht's 'New Plan' (1934), Mefo-Wechsel (hidden rearmament). Four-Year Plan under Göring (1936) — autarky. Unemployment crushed by rearmament, public works (Autobahn), RAD, conscription. Wages stagnant, consumer goods restricted.
- **Society** — Hitler Youth/BDM compulsory 1936. Church: Concordat then struggle (Confessing Church, Niemöller, Bonhoeffer). Women: 'Kinder, Küche, Kirche' — marriage loans, Motherhood Cross, but female workforce actually rose.
- **Racial state** — Nuremberg Laws (Sept 1935), Aryanisation, Kristallnacht (Nov 1938) — ~100 dead, 30,000 Jewish men arrested.
- **Opposition** — limited. SPD underground (Sopade reports), Communists crushed, White Rose (1942–43), Edelweiss Pirates, 20 July Plot (1944).
- **Historiography** — Intentionalist (Bullock, Dawidowicz) vs Structuralist (Broszat, Mommsen); Kershaw's synthesis ('charismatic authority'); Mason (economy drove war by 1939).

Fascist Italy 1922–1939

Mussolini's 'revolution' was slow and compromised — dictatorship by 1925, corporatism by 1927, autarky after 1935 Abyssinia. Church courted via Lateran Pacts. Not the totalising project of Nazi Germany.

- **Rise (1919–22)** — Biennio Rosso panic among middle classes and landowners. Fasci di Combattimento 1919; blackshirts — squadristo — terrorised socialists. 1921 Pact of Pacification briefly, then broken. March on Rome (28 Oct 1922) — Mussolini invited to form government. PR ruled with coalition initially.
- **Consolidation (1922–25)** — Acerbo Law (1923) — party winning 25% takes 2/3 seats. Matteotti murder (June 1924) — Socialist deputy kidnapped/killed after denouncing fraud. Aventine Secession fails. Mussolini's 'I alone' speech Jan 1925 — dictatorship proclaimed. Leggi Fascistissime (1925–26): opposition parties banned, press censored, local government nazified, OVRA secret police.
- **State** — Dopolavoro, Balilla youth, Ministry of Popular Culture. Not totalitarian in Nazi sense — King remained, army retained identity, Church powerful.
- **Economy** — Battle for Grain (1925), Battle for Births (1927), Battle for Lira ('Quota 90', 1926, overvaluation hurt exports). Corporate State (Labour Charter 1927, 22 corporations by 1934) — façade for state-capital-labour co-ordination. Autarky after 1935 sanctions.
- **Church** — Lateran Pacts (1929) — Vatican City sovereignty, state religion, state pays clergy. Pius XI publicly supportive until 1938 racial laws.
- **Women** — Battle for Births — prolific mothers decorated, contraception banned, quotas on female workers.
- **Race (1938)** — Manifesto of Race, anti-Semitic laws — seen as German-driven, unpopular even with Fascist leaders.
- **Historiography** — Mack Smith (fraud and improvisation); De Felice (consensus in middle years); Bosworth (squalor beneath myth); Knox (ideological revolution).

Spain's Second Republic 1931–1939

Democratic experiment in a deeply unequal society. Reforms alienated the right; slow pace alienated the left. Civil war (1936–39) killed Republic, produced Franco's authoritarian state.

- **Republic proclaimed April 1931** after municipal elections defeated monarchists. Alfonso XIII goes into exile.
- **Reformist biennium (1931–33)** — Republican-Socialist coalition under Azaña. 1931 Constitution — secular state, female suffrage, regional autonomy (Catalonia 1932), land reform (slow), Army reform, Church disestablished. Anticlericalism (church burnings) alienates moderates.
- **Right biennium (1933–36)** — CEDA (Gil Robles) and radicals under Lerroux. Asturias rising (Oct 1934) crushed by Franco's Army of Africa — ~2,000 dead. 'Two Black Years' from Left perspective.
- **Popular Front (Feb 1936)** — wins narrowly. Civil unrest, political murders, military plot under Mola.
- **Civil War (July 1936 – April 1939)** — Nationalists (Mola, Franco, Church, Carlists, CEDA, Falange) vs Republic (Socialists, Communists, anarchists, POUM, Basque/Catalan). Foreign intervention: Germany (Condor Legion — Guernica April 1937), Italy (~80,000 CTV troops), USSR (arms for gold). International Brigades. Western non-intervention. Internal Republic fragmented (POUM crushed by Communists May 1937). Franco wins April 1939.
- **Franco's state** — one-party, Catholic, conservative — less totalising than Nazi Germany, more durable (to 1975). White Terror (~150,000 killed during/after war).
- **Historiography** — Paul Preston (Franco as ideologically driven dictator, scale of repression); Stanley Payne (pluralist account, Republic's own failures); Helen Graham (Republic's resilience).

Democracies that survived — Britain and France

Neither was serenely democratic. Britain: National Government, appeasement, unemployment. France: parliamentary instability, Stavisky crisis, Popular Front. Both fragile — Britain survived, France fell to Vichy 1940.

- **Britain 1918–39** — Coalition → Conservative/Labour alternation. General Strike (1926). 1929 Labour minority. Depression: unemployment peaked 3m (22%). National Government (from 1931) — Conservative-dominated, deflationary to 1932, then modest recovery. Means Test deeply unpopular. Appeasement as much domestic as foreign policy (Chamberlain's fiscal caution). BUF (Mosley) electorally insignificant. Why Britain survived: moderate two-party system, relatively healthy finance, no post-war defeat trauma, reformist Liberal/Labour options absorbing discontent.
- **France 1918–40** — Chronic instability — ~40 governments 1918–40. Cartel des Gauches, Poincaré stabilisation (1926). Depression arrives late (1931) but persists longer. Stavisky Affair (Jan 1934) → 6 February 1934 right-wing riot (~15 dead, ~1,500 injured) — thought by Left to be a fascist coup attempt. Popular Front (1936–38, Blum) — 40-hour week, paid holidays, Matignon Accords — but franc devalued, capital flight, business hostility. Split by Spain non-intervention. Fragmented by 1940; Vichy 1940–44.
- **Comparison** — Britain's two-party system and financial strength vs France's multi-party coalition-dependent Third Republic. Both show that economic depression alone did not determine democratic fate.

Ready-made theses REHEARSE THESE STEMS

Compare and contrast the domestic policies of Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany.

Both regimes used propaganda, single-party rule, corporatist economics, and cults of personality — but Nazi Germany was more ideologically total, racially driven, and institutionally invasive; Fascist Italy was more compromised (monarchy, Church, elites) and less transformative.

- Similarity: single-party states, secret police (Gestapo/OVRA), youth orgs (HJ/Balilla), propaganda ministries.
- Similarity: corporatist economics — autarky, public works, rearmament.
- Similarity: pronatalism — mother cults, marriage loans/medals.
- Difference: Nazi racial state (Nuremberg Laws 1935) vs Italian late/imported anti-Semitism (1938).
- Difference: Nazi Gleichschaltung eliminated federal states; Italy retained monarchy, elites, Church power.
- Difference: Nazi violence (Night of Long Knives, KZ system) systematic and escalating; Italian violence more limited after 1926.
- Historiography: Kershaw (polycracy, ideology) vs Mack Smith/De Felice on Italian consensus.
- Conclusion: shared toolbox, different depth of penetration.

Examine the reasons for the collapse of the Weimar Republic.

Weimar collapsed from the conjunction of structural weakness (constitution, defeat legacy), economic shock (hyperinflation, Depression), and elite miscalculation — not Nazi irresistibility.

- Structural: proportional representation, Article 48, Reichswehr loyalty to state not constitution.
- Legitimacy: 'stab in the back' myth; Versailles as permanent grievance.
- Economic: 1923 hyperinflation destroyed middle-class savings; 1929 Depression crushed recovery.
- Political: Brüning's deflation deepened crisis; rule by decree from 1930.
- Nazi growth: 2.6% (1928) → 37.3% (July 1932) tracks unemployment.
- Elite collusion: Papen/Schleicher intrigues; Hindenburg's appointment.
- Historiography: Evans (structural); Kershaw (elite failure); Peukert (modernity in crisis).
- Conclusion: contingent collapse, not inevitable Nazi triumph.

To what extent did economic conditions determine the success or failure of inter-war European democracies?

Economic conditions were necessary but not sufficient — states with similar depressions diverged (Britain survived, Germany and Spain fell). Political institutions, elite choices, and historical trauma determined outcomes.

- Case for economics: German unemployment and Nazi vote correlation; US loan dependence.
- Britain: similar unemployment, survived — two-party system absorbed discontent.
- France: late Depression, chronic instability, Popular Front shock.
- Spain: Depression modest but agrarian inequality and Church-Army power fatal.
- Italy: fascism arose before Depression — economic determinism fails.
- Historiography: Overy (economic); Payne (political choices); Kershaw (elite miscalculation).
- Conclusion: economics loaded the gun; politics pulled the trigger.

Key figures & named historians DROP THESE NAMES

Gustav Stresemann — *Weimar Foreign Minister* — Dawes/Young Plans, Locarno, Nobel Peace Prize 1926. Died 1929.

Heinrich Brüning — *German Chancellor 1930–32* — 'Hunger Chancellor' — deflation in Depression. Ruled by decree.

Benito Mussolini — *Italian PM / Duce* — Founder of Fascism; Lateran Pacts 1929; Abyssinia 1935; German alliance 1936/39.

Pius XI — *Pope 1922–39* — Signed Lateran Pacts (1929), Reich Concordat (1933); later critical of Nazism (Mit Brennender Sorge 1937).

Manuel Azaña — *Spanish PM / President* — Leading Republican; reformist biennium.

Francisco Franco — *Nationalist leader* — Led Army of Africa; won Civil War 1939; ruled Spain to 1975.

Léon Blum — *French PM 1936–37* — Popular Front. First Jewish French PM. Matignon Accords.

Stanley Baldwin — *British PM* — Dominant inter-war figure; handled General Strike, abdication, rearmament.

Ian Kershaw — *historian* — Weimar collapse not inevitable; Nazi rise required elite collusion. 'Working towards the Führer' synthesis.

Richard Evans — *historian* — Weimar died of defeat, Depression, and constitutional weakness; Nazi state chaotic but ideologically driven.

Martin Broszat — *historian* — Structuralist — Nazi polyocracy produced 'cumulative radicalisation'.

Renzo De Felice — *historian* — Mussolini consolidated genuine consensus in middle years (1929–36).

Denis Mack Smith — *historian* — Mussolini's rule marked by fraud, improvisation, and mediocrity.

Richard Bosworth — *historian* — Fascist Italy's 'squalor' and ordinary violence beneath the myth.

Paul Preston — *historian* — Spanish Civil War driven by Nationalist ideology; scale of White Terror deliberate.

Stanley Payne — *historian* — Republic's failures as much as Nationalist aggression produced Civil War.

15 • Diplomacy in Europe 1917–1945

IB requires. Paper 3 Topic 15. Evaluate: the peace settlements (Versailles and others), the League of Nations' successes and failures, collective security and its alternatives, appeasement, the outbreak of WWII, and wartime diplomacy (Tehran, Yalta, Potsdam). Use at least two historiographical positions.

Timeline CORE DATES THE MARKER EXPECTS

1918–01–08 Fourteen Points — Wilson's address: self-determination, open diplomacy, League of Nations, freedom of seas.

1919–06–28 Versailles Treaty — Germany: War Guilt (Article 231), 132bn gold marks reparations, army 100k, Rhineland demilitarised, colonies lost, lost Alsace-Lorraine/Polish Corridor.

1919–1920 Other treaties — Saint-Germain (Austria), Trianon (Hungary, -2/3 of territory), Neuilly (Bulgaria), Sèvres (Ottoman)→Lausanne 1923 (Turkey).

1920–01–10 League of Nations — Comes into being. US Senate rejects membership (Nov 1919/March 1920) — fatal to League's credibility.

1922–04 Rapallo — Germany and USSR — mutual diplomatic recognition, secret military cooperation. Pariahs ally.

1923–01 Ruhr crisis — France/Belgium occupy Ruhr. Passive resistance. Hyperinflation. Stresemann ends passive resistance.

1924 Dawes Plan — Restructures German reparations; US loans flow.

1925–10 Locarno — Germany, France, Belgium, Britain, Italy: Western borders guaranteed. 'Locarno spirit'. Germany enters League 1926.

1928–08 Kellogg-Briand Pact — 63 states renounce war as instrument of policy. Symbolic — no enforcement.

1929 Young Plan — Further reparations reduction. Ended up moot when Depression hit.

1931–09 Mukden / Manchuria — Japan invades Manchuria. Lytton Commission (1932) criticises both sides; Japan leaves League (1933).

1933–10 Germany leaves League — And Disarmament Conference. First open challenge.

1934–09 USSR joins League — Litvinov's 'collective security' line.

1935–03 Rearmament announced — Hitler announces Luftwaffe and conscription — open breach of Versailles.

1935–04 Stresa Front — Britain, France, Italy condemn rearmament. Broken June 1935 by Anglo-German Naval Agreement.

1935–10 Abyssinia — Italy invades. League sanctions feeble; Hoare-Laval Pact (Dec 1935) discredits League further. Italy annexes May 1936.

1936–03–07 Rhineland — Hitler remilitarises. France does not resist; Britain sees 'Germans walking into their own back garden'.

1936–07 Spanish Civil War — Non-intervention fiction. Axis aids Franco; USSR aids Republic. Confirms League irrelevance.

1936–10–11 Rome-Berlin Axis — Mussolini's word. Anti-Comintern Pact Nov 1936.

1938–03–12 Anschluss — Austria absorbed. Britain/France protest only.

1938–09–30 Munich — Chamberlain, Daladier, Hitler, Mussolini — Sudetenland ceded. Czechs not present. 'Peace for our time'.

1939–03–15 Prague — Hitler enters Prague — rest of Czechoslovakia. Appeasement dies. British guarantee to Poland (31 March).

1939–08–23 Nazi-Soviet Pact — Molotov-Ribbentrop. Secret protocols divide Poland and Baltic.

1939–09–01 War begins — Germany invades Poland. Britain/France declare war 3 September.

1941–08 Atlantic Charter — Roosevelt-Churchill — no territorial aggrandisement, self-determination, UN in embryo.

1943–11 Tehran — First Big Three. Second Front agreed for 1944.

1945–02 Yalta — Germany's occupation, Poland's eastern border (Curzon Line), UN design, Soviet entry into Pacific war.

1945–07–08 Potsdam — Truman replaces Roosevelt (died April); Attlee mid-conference replaces Churchill. Reparations, German zones, demilitarisation, denazification, democratisation.

Themes & sub-topics ESSAY-READY BLOCKS

The peace settlements 1919–1923

Versailles was a compromise that pleased none of the Big Three and alienated Germany. Eastern settlements drew artificial frontiers. Sèvres overthrown by Kemal. A peace to end all peace (Fromkin).

- **Paris Peace Conference** (Jan–June 1919). Big Four (Wilson, Clemenceau, Lloyd George, Orlando) then Big Three.
- **Wilson** — Fourteen Points — self-determination, League, open diplomacy.
- **Clemenceau** — security, reparations, dismemberment of Germany.
- **Lloyd George** — a Germany strong enough to trade, not threaten; 'Germany must pay' domestically.
- **Compromise** — Germany disarmed and punished economically, not partitioned; reparations to be determined later (132bn gold marks, 1921). War Guilt (Article 231).
- **Eastern treaties** — Saint-Germain broke Austria-Hungary into successor states — 'Balkanised' Central Europe. Trianon took 2/3 of historic Hungary's territory and 1/3 of Hungarians to neighbours — grievance for inter-war. Sèvres on Ottoman Empire partitioned Anatolia; Kemal's national movement overthrew it; replaced by Lausanne 1923 — the only settlement negotiated at the point of a sword.
- **Legacy** — 'a Carthaginian peace' (Keynes, *Economic Consequences of the Peace*, 1919) or 'a missed opportunity' (Mantoux rebuttal)? Historians now see Versailles as too harsh to conciliate, too mild to disarm. Self-determination contradicted by Sudeten Germans, Polish Corridor, South Tyrol.

The League of Nations

Wilsonian instrument without its creator. Worked on technical matters; failed on the tests that mattered — Manchuria, Abyssinia. Dead by 1939.

- **Structure** — Assembly (all members), Council (permanent: UK, France, Italy, Japan; later Germany, USSR), Secretariat, ILO, PCIJ. Unanimity required — decisions consensual. No army.
- **US absence** — fatal. Senate rejected membership Nov 1919 and March 1920 — isolationism, Lodge reservations on Article X.
- **Successes (1920s)** — Åland Islands 1921 (Finland v Sweden), Upper Silesia plebiscite, Mosul settlement, Greece-Bulgaria 1925 border. ILO labour standards. Refugees (Nansen passports).
- **Failures** — Corfu 1923 — Mussolini bombarded; Conference of Ambassadors overruled League. Vilna — Poland seized it 1920, League did nothing. Disarmament Conference 1932–34 collapsed. Manchuria 1931–33 — Lytton Commission too slow; Japan simply left (1933). Abyssinia 1935–36 — sanctions without oil; Hoare-Laval Pact publicised December 1935 proposed carve-up to Mussolini. Rhineland 1936 — not even discussed.
- **Why failed** — (a) no US; (b) Big Powers put national interest first (Britain/France at Hoare-Laval); (c) unanimity paralysed decisions; (d) economic interdependence of sanctions Britain would not enforce.
- **Historiography** — Ruth Henig (League did well given constraints); Zara Steiner (*The Triumph of the Dark*) — structural weakness plus 1930s great power revisionism.

Collective security and appeasement

Collective security died 1931–36. Appeasement as policy had many roots — economic, military, moral (Versailles guilt), imperial overstretch — not just Chamberlain's naiveté.

- **Collective security tested** — Manchuria 1931 — revealed impossibility of non-European enforcement. Abyssinia 1935 — revealed Britain/France unwillingness to enforce against a potential ally against Germany. Rhineland 1936 — French 200-division army did not move; British position, 'no vital interest'. Spain 1936–39 — Non-Intervention Committee a transparent fiction. By 1936 collective security was rhetoric; bilateral balance-of-power returned.
- **Appeasement's roots** — (1) **Economic** — Depression-era Britain could not afford rearmament without damaging recovery; Neville Chamberlain as Chancellor 1931–37. (2) **Military** — British general staff 1937 memorandum said fighting Germany, Italy, Japan simultaneously was beyond capacity. (3) **Moral** — widespread view Versailles was unjust; Germans had 'legitimate grievances' (Lloyd George 1936 on Hitler: 'the George Washington of Germany'). (4) **Anti-communist** — many conservatives preferred Germany as Eastern bulwark. (5) **Pacifist public opinion** — Peace Pledge Union, Oxford Union 1933 ('we would not fight for King and country'), 1935 Peace Ballot. (6) **Empire** — Dominions unwilling to fight over Central Europe. (7) **USSR distrusted** — purges had destroyed Red Army's reputation; Western suspicion of Soviet intentions.
- **Course** — Rhineland accepted; Anschluss accepted; Munich negotiated; Prague shattered illusions. **Did it buy time?** British radar, Spitfire/Hurricane production scaled up 1938–39; dominions brought along; moral credit of 'having tried peace'. Against: German rearmament accelerated faster; USSR alienated and turned to Pact.
- **Historiography** — A.J.P. Taylor (*Origins of the Second World War*, 1961) — Hitler was opportunist, war was accident, Munich defensible. Martin Gilbert / Richard Overy — appeasement logical given constraints. Andrew Roberts — Chamberlain's self-deception. Frank McDonough — appeasement failed on its own terms.

The road to war 1936–1939

Rhineland, Anschluss, Munich, Prague, Pact — each step passed 'last chance'. Historians argue whether Hitler had a plan (Hossbach, Mein Kampf) or improvised (Taylor).

- **Rhineland (March 1936)** — German troops into demilitarised Rhineland. Hitler's own generals feared French response — had orders to retreat if challenged. France did not move; British attitude decisive.
- **Spain (1936–39)** — Condor Legion (Guernica April 1937), 80,000 Italian CTV; USSR aid to Republic; Western Non-Intervention. Confirmed Axis military cooperation.
- **Anschluss (March 1938)** — Austrian Chancellor Schuschnigg planned plebiscite; Hitler pre-empted with invasion. Mussolini acquiesced (a reversal from 1934 Dollfuss crisis).
- **Sudeten crisis (summer 1938)** — Henlein's demands for Sudeten autonomy orchestrated from Berlin. Runciman Mission. September crisis: Berchtesgaden, Bad Godesberg, Munich (29–30 Sept) — Chamberlain, Daladier, Hitler, Mussolini. Czechoslovakia not invited; Benes accepted. 'Peace for our time'.
- **Prague (15 March 1939)** — Hitler enters Prague — rest of Czechoslovakia. Clear evidence Hitler's aims went beyond German ethnic revision.
- **British guarantee to Poland (31 March 1939)** — Chamberlain's volte-face; guarantee to a state Britain could not defend.
- **Triple Alliance talks (spring–summer 1939)** — Britain/France/USSR — failed. British caution, Polish refusal to allow Red Army transit, Soviet distrust.
- **Nazi-Soviet Pact (23 Aug)** — Molotov-Ribbentrop. Secret protocols divide Poland and Baltic. Shocked world.
- **War** — 1 Sept Germany invades Poland; 3 Sept Britain/France declare war.
- **Historians on intention** — Trevor-Roper/Hildebrand — Hitler followed programme (Mein Kampf, Hossbach Memo 1937, Four-Year Plan). Taylor — opportunist, same as any German statesman. Kershaw — synthesis: ideological goals, opportunistic means. Mason — economic crisis forced war by 1939.

Wartime diplomacy 1941–1945

Atlantic Charter (1941), Casablanca (1943) unconditional surrender, Tehran (1943) Second Front, Yalta (1945) Europe's future, Potsdam (1945) occupation details. The Cold War's seedbed.

- **Atlantic Charter (Aug 1941)** — Roosevelt-Churchill, before US entry. Eight principles — no territorial aggrandisement, self-determination, free trade, disarmament of aggressors, UN in embryo.
- **Arcadia (Dec 1941–Jan 1942)** — Germany-first strategy confirmed; Combined Chiefs of Staff.
- **Casablanca (Jan 1943)** — Unconditional surrender formula — FDR's innovation, Churchill reluctant. Reassured Stalin.
- **Tehran (Nov 1943)** — First Big Three. OVERLORD for May 1944. Curzon Line for Poland-USSR border. USSR to enter Pacific war. Roosevelt's 'UN Four Policemen'.
- **Yalta (Feb 1945)** — Germany in 4 zones (French added). UN Security Council veto. Declaration on Liberated Europe — 'free elections'. Poland: Lublin + London governments to merge. Soviet entry into Pacific war in 90 days. Secret concessions to Stalin in Far East (Sakhalin, Kuriles, Dairen, Port Arthur).
- **Potsdam (July–Aug 1945)** — Truman instead of FDR (died 12 April); Attlee replaces Churchill mid-conference after Labour election victory. Germany: 5 Ds (demilitarisation, denazification, democratisation, decartelisation, decentralisation). Reparations in-kind from own zones + 25% from West to USSR. Oder-Neisse line for Polish-German border (pending peace conference that never came). Potsdam Declaration to Japan. Truman hints about 'new weapon' to Stalin (already knew via espionage).
- **Tensions by Potsdam** — evident. Spheres-of-influence thinking versus universalism. By Aug 1945 Grand Alliance already fracturing.
- **Historiography** — Feis (mutual misunderstanding); Gaddis (Stalin knew what he wanted, Westerners less clear); Plokhy (Yalta as Stalin's triumph but also Roosevelt's calculated bet); Roberts on Stalin's pragmatism.

Ready-made theses REHEARSE THESE STEMS

To what extent was the Treaty of Versailles responsible for the outbreak of the Second World War?

Versailles created legitimate German grievances and structural instabilities, but responsibility for WWII rests more on the policies of the 1930s — Hitler's ideological aims, Depression-era economic crisis, and Anglo-French choices — than on the 1919 settlement.

- Case for Versailles: War Guilt, reparations, lost territory, self-determination contradictions.
- Keynes thesis (1919) vs Mantoux counter (1946) — was it Carthaginian?
- 1920s Weimar governments worked within Versailles (Locarno, Young Plan) — system was adaptable.
- Depression destabilised, not Versailles per se — 1929 > 1919 as proximate cause.
- Hitler's aims exceeded revision of Versailles (Lebensraum, racial war).
- Appeasement's 'legitimate grievances' framing gave Hitler diplomatic cover.
- Historiography: Taylor (continuity of German foreign policy); Weinberg (Hitler's novelty); Steiner (structural).
- Conclusion: Versailles loaded the rifle; Hitler and the 1930s pulled the trigger.

Examine the reasons for the failure of the League of Nations.

The League failed because it combined Wilsonian universalism with great-power-based enforcement, and lost both — the US never joined, and Britain/France prioritised national interest in Manchuria, Abyssinia, and Rhineland.

- Structural: no US, unanimity rule, no army, dependence on members.
- Early successes: Åland, Upper Silesia, Greece-Bulgaria, Nansen passports.
- Manchuria 1931–33: distance, Japan's willingness to leave; demonstrated Asian failure.
- Abyssinia 1935–36: Hoare-Laval publicised; sanctions without oil.
- Rhineland 1936: not discussed — League irrelevant in Europe.
- Spain 1936–39: Non-Intervention Committee a sham.
- Historiography: Henig (did well given constraints); Steiner (structural failure meets 1930s revisionism).
- Conclusion: failed when great powers stopped using it.

Discuss the view that the wartime conferences (1943–45) sowed the seeds of the Cold War.

The conferences did not create the Cold War but institutionalised the choices that made it likely — territorial concessions to Stalin, spheres of influence disguised as 'free elections', and the Truman-Stalin gulf at Potsdam.

- Tehran 1943: Poland's Curzon Line; Soviet Pacific entry confirmed.
- Yalta 1945: Germany in zones, Poland government compromise, Declaration on Liberated Europe.
- Potsdam 1945: reparations, Oder-Neisse, Truman's changed tone.
- Stalin's interpretation: 'free elections' = friendly governments.
- Western interpretation: betrayal (charges of Yalta 'sell-out' in US politics).
- Alternative view: conferences reflected military reality, did not create it.
- Historiography: Feis (mutual misunderstanding); Gaddis (Stalin knew what he wanted); Plokhy (Yalta as calculated bargain).
- Conclusion: institutionalised the fracture military facts had already produced.

Key figures & named historians DROP THESE NAMES

Woodrow Wilson — US President 1913–21 — 14 Points, League architect; failed to secure US membership.

Georges Clemenceau — French PM — Wanted German dismemberment; got reparations and demilitarised Rhineland.

Gustav Stresemann — German Foreign Minister — Locarno, Kellogg-Briand, Young Plan. Nobel Peace 1926.

Aristide Briand — French Foreign Minister — Locarno, Kellogg-Briand, Briand Memorandum on European union 1930.

Maxim Litvinov — Soviet Foreign Minister 1930–39 — Collective security line; Jewish, replaced by Molotov before Pact.

Neville Chamberlain — British PM 1937–40 — Architect of Munich; guaranteed Poland; resigned May 1940.

Édouard Daladier — French PM 1933, 1934, 1938–40 — Signed Munich without illusions: 'the fools, cheering'.

V.M. Molotov — Soviet Foreign Minister 1939–49 — Pact with Ribbentrop; Yalta and Potsdam. 'Iron-arse' — legendary negotiator.

A.J.P. Taylor — historian — Origins of the Second World War (1961) — Hitler opportunist; Munich defensible given constraints.

Zara Steiner — historian — The Lights that Failed / Triumph of the Dark — structural weaknesses of inter-war system.

Richard Overy — historian — Economic constraints on British rearmament; appeasement logical if not moral.

Andrew Roberts — historian — Chamberlain's self-deception and moral failure — but also his military constraints.

Gerhard Weinberg — historian — Hitler had consistent ideological programme from 1920s; World in the Balance.

Ian Kershaw — historian — Intentionalist-structuralist synthesis — ideology set goals, context shaped means.

Sergei Plokhy — historian — Yalta as Stalin's pragmatic triumph within Roosevelt's calculated concessions.

Vladislav Zubok — historian — Stalin's diplomacy driven by revolutionary-imperial paradigm.

16 • Soviet Union & Post-Soviet Russia 1924–2000

IB requires. Paper 3 Topic 16. Evaluate: Stalin's rise/consolidation/policies; WWII impact; Khrushchev's de-Stalinisation and reforms; Brezhnev-era stagnation and foreign policy; Gorbachev's glasnost/perestroika and USSR's collapse; Yeltsin's Russia — economic shock, Chechnya, 1993 crisis, rise of Putin. Use at least two historians per period.

Timeline CORE DATES THE MARKER EXPECTS

1924–01 **Lenin dies** — Succession struggle opens.

1928 **First Five-Year Plan** — Stalin's 'Second Revolution' begins — collectivisation and rapid industrialisation.

1932–33 **Holodomor** — Ukrainian famine. 3–5m dead.

1936–38 **Great Terror** — Show Trials, Red Army purge, ~700,000 executions documented in Khrushchev's secret speech.

1939–08 **Nazi-Soviet Pact** — Molotov-Ribbentrop with secret protocols.

1941–45 **Great Patriotic War** — 27m Soviet dead. Stalingrad, Kursk, Berlin.

1953–03–05 **Stalin dies** — Collective leadership: Beria, Malenkov, Molotov, Khrushchev.

1953–06–26 **Beria arrested** — Khrushchev leads coup against Beria; executed December.

1956–02–25 **Secret Speech** — Khrushchev to 20th Party Congress: Stalin's 'cult of personality' and crimes. Leaked globally.

1956–11 **Hungary** — Nagy's reforms; Soviet tanks crush rising. ~2,500 Hungarian dead.

1961–08 **Berlin Wall** — Khrushchev ends refugee haemorrhage.

1962–10 **Cuba** — Missile Crisis. Khrushchev's retreat central to his 1964 fall.

1964–10 **Khrushchev ousted** — Politburo coup; Brezhnev succeeds. 'Peaceful' transfer of power — a first.

1968–08 **Prague Spring crushed** — Warsaw Pact invasion ends Dubček's 'socialism with a human face'. Brezhnev Doctrine.

1972 **SALT I** — Nixon-Brezhnev. ABM Treaty. Détente peak.

1975 **Helsinki Accords** — Final Act: borders, human rights basket.

1979–12	Afghanistan — Soviet invasion. 'Soviet Vietnam' — 15,000 Soviet dead by 1989.	1991–12–25	USSR dissolved — Gorbachev resigns. Red flag lowered over Kremlin.
1982–11	Brezhnev dies — Andropov (to 1984), Chernenko (to 1985).	1992–01	Shock therapy — Gaidar's liberalisation. Inflation 2500% in 1992. Oligarchs rise.
1985–03	Gorbachev — Becomes General Secretary. Glasnost, perestroika, 'new thinking' in foreign policy.	1993–10	White House shelled — Yeltsin vs Supreme Soviet; tanks fire on parliament. New constitution December.
1986–04–26	Chernobyl — Nuclear disaster. Discredited the system and accelerated glasnost.	1994–12	Chechnya I — First war. Grozny devastated; Russian army humiliated. Peace 1996.
1989	Eastern Europe falls — Berlin Wall 9 November. Brezhnev Doctrine abandoned. Soviet empire dissolves in months.	1999–08	Putin PM — Second Chechen war; apartment bombings (disputed); Putin's rise begins.
1991–08–19	August coup — Hardliners attempt coup against Gorbachev. Yeltsin's defiance at White House turns tide; coup collapses in 3 days.	1999–12–31	Yeltsin resigns — Hands presidency to Putin, who wins March 2000 election.

Themes & sub-topics ESSAY-READY BLOCKS

Stalin's USSR 1924–1953

Covered in detail in Paper 2 Stalin file. Collectivisation, Five-Year Plans, Terror, WWII, early Cold War. For Paper 3 depth: emphasise long-term transformations — industrialisation, literacy, urbanisation — set alongside human cost.

See stalin.json for full treatment. Paper 3 angle: (1) measure transformations over time — USSR 1924 was 80% peasant, literacy ~40%; by 1953 was 50% urban, literacy ~94%, second industrial power. (2) Wartime legitimacy — Stalin's victory in Great Patriotic War re-founded the regime in popular memory and made de-Stalinisation politically difficult. (3) Late Stalinism (1945–53): Zhdanovshchina cultural purge, anti-cosmopolitan (anti-Semitic) campaign, Leningrad Affair, Doctors' Plot. (4) Historiographical contrast: Totalitarian (Conquest), Revisionist (Fitzpatrick), archival (Kotkin, Khlevniuk). Paper 3 essays typically ask to compare Stalin with successors or assess legacies across decades.

Khrushchev 1953–1964

Secret Speech 1956 cracked the Stalin myth. Economic reform (Virgin Lands, Sovnarkhozy), cultural Thaw (Solzhenitsyn), foreign adventurism (Berlin, Cuba). Ousted 1964.

- **Rise** — Post-Stalin collective leadership. Khrushchev outmanoeuvred Beria (June 1953, executed Dec 1953), Malenkov (demoted 1955), Molotov-Kaganovich-Malenkov 'Anti-Party Group' (June 1957).
- **Secret Speech (25 Feb 1956)** — 'On the Cult of Personality and Its Consequences' to 20th Party Congress. Denounced Stalin's crimes (against Party cadres specifically, less on collectivisation/famine). Leaked by Polish CP to Israel and onwards globally.
- **Consequences of Secret Speech** — Poznan rising (June 1956); Hungary (October–November 1956) — Nagy, Soviet tanks, ~2,500 dead, Nagy executed 1958.
- **Economics** — Virgin Lands Campaign (Kazakhstan/Siberia, 1954–) — ploughed 40m hectares, initial boom, then soil exhaustion. Sovnarkhozy (1957) — economic decentralisation to regional councils; reversed after his fall. Consumer goods stressed.
- **Cultural Thaw** — Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (1962) published with Khrushchev's approval. Limits: Pasternak's Nobel (1958) forced refusal.
- **Foreign policy** — 'Peaceful coexistence' doctrine. Berlin ultimatums 1958–61; Wall Aug 1961. Cuba Missile Crisis Oct 1962. Sino-Soviet split widens — Mao calls him 'revisionist' and 'capitulationist'. Withdrew Soviet advisers from China 1960.
- **Fall** — 14 Oct 1964 Politburo coup while Khrushchev on holiday. Charges: Cuba humiliation, agricultural failures, 'harebrained scheming'. First peaceful transfer of power in Soviet history.
- **Historiography** — Taubman's *Khrushchev: The Man and His Era* (2003) — improvisational, brave in Secret Speech, limited by Party constraints. Zubok — erratic but genuinely reformist. Tompson — reform hamstrung by need to stay within Leninist orthodoxy.

Brezhnev 1964–1982

Stagnation (zastoi). Stability for cadres, declining growth, strategic nuclear parity, Afghanistan quagmire, gerontocracy.

- **Style** — collective leadership (Brezhnev with Kosygin, Podgorny). 'Stability of cadres' — promotions frozen, gerontocracy entrenched.
- **Economy** — Kosygin reforms (1965) introduced profit-based incentives; reversed after Prague Spring (August 1968). Growth slowed from ~5% (1960s) to ~1–2% (late 1970s). Oil price boom (1973–79) concealed stagnation temporarily. Agriculture chronically inefficient; grain imports from US from 1972.
- **Society** — real consumer gains — TVs, fridges, cars (Lada from Fiat). But chronic shortages, nomenklatura privilege deeply resented, corruption endemic (Rashidov's Uzbekistan cotton fraud). Dissent: Sakharov, Solzhenitsyn (expelled 1974), samizdat, refuseniks.
- **Foreign policy** — Brezhnev Doctrine (after Prague Spring 1968) — limited sovereignty for socialist states. Détente peak: SALT I (1972), Helsinki Accords (1975) — third basket on human rights bit back via CSCE monitoring (Charter 77, Moscow Helsinki Group). Afghanistan invasion (Dec 1979) — intended as short propping of Karmal; became 'Soviet Vietnam': ~15,000 Soviet dead, ~1m Afghan dead, economic cost colossal. US under Reagan (from 1981) exploited — arms to Mujahideen, Stinger missiles from 1986.
- **Succession** — Brezhnev died Nov 1982. Andropov (former KGB) to Feb 1984. Chernenko to March 1985. 'Three funerals in three years' showed system frozen.
- **Historiography** — Kotkin (later work): Soviet system doomed by its own inability to innovate. Zubok: period of 'managed peace' with West, imperial overstretch in Third World. Suny: social stagnation corroded legitimacy long before economic collapse.

Gorbachev and collapse 1985–1991

Glasnost, perestroika, 'new thinking'. Lost control of reform. Eastern Europe freed 1989; USSR dissolved Dec 1991. Reform intended to save the system destroyed it.

- **Gorbachev's project** — revive Soviet socialism through reform. Three arms: (1) **Glasnost (openness)** — from 1986, press restrictions loosened. Chernobyl (April 1986) exposed the cost of secrecy; accelerated glasnost. Historical reckoning (Rybakov's *Children of the Arbat* 1987, full Bukharin rehabilitation 1988). (2) **Perestroika (restructuring)** — economic reform. Law on State Enterprise (1987), cooperatives (1988), joint ventures. Half-measures destabilised the command economy without building a market — shortages worsened. (3) **New thinking** (Foreign Minister Shevardnadze) — INF Treaty 1987, withdrawal from Afghanistan (1988–89 complete Feb), renunciation of Brezhnev Doctrine (Sinatra Doctrine, Oct 1989 — 'they do it their way').
- **Eastern Europe 1989** — Poland (Solidarity wins partially-free June elections), Hungary (open border with Austria May), East Germany (Wall opens 9 Nov), Czechoslovakia (Velvet Revolution Nov–Dec), Bulgaria, Romania (Ceausescu executed Christmas Day). Entire Soviet bloc dissolved in ~6 months without Soviet intervention.
- **Internal strain** — Baltic independence movements (Baltic Way Aug 1989). Armenia–Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh. Russian nationalism under Yeltsin (elected RSFSR President June 1991). Referendum March 1991 — 76% for preserving renewed union.
- **August Coup (19–21 Aug 1991)** — Hardliners (Yanayev, Kryuchkov of KGB, Yazov Defence) try to seize power while Gorbachev in Crimea. Yeltsin atop a tank at White House. Coup collapses in 72 hours.
- **Dissolution** — Ukraine votes for independence 1 Dec. Belovezha Accords (Yeltsin, Kravchuk, Shushkevich, 8 Dec) — USSR dissolved, CIS created. Gorbachev resigns 25 Dec 1991.
- **Historiography** — Brown (*The Gorbachev Factor*) — personal agency was decisive; system could have evolved otherwise. Kotkin (*Armageddon Averted*) — long-term structural decay; Gorbachev accelerated inevitable. Zubok (*Collapse*, 2021) — combination of Gorbachev's reforms, elite defection, and Yeltsin's nationalism. Plokhy — importance of Ukraine's decisive role.

Yeltsin's Russia 1991–1999

Shock therapy, asset-stripping, 1993 constitutional crisis, Chechnya, 1996 re-election, 1998 default, Putin's rise. A decade of simultaneous state-building, collapse, and criminalisation.

- **Economic** — Gaidar's shock therapy (January 1992) — price liberalisation, currency devaluation, privatisation. Results: hyperinflation 2500% (1992); GDP collapse ~40% by 1998; life expectancy for men fell from 65 to 57. Voucher privatisation (1992–94) transferred state enterprises cheaply. Loans-for-shares (1995) created oligarchs (Khodorkovsky, Berezovsky, Potanin) who funded Yeltsin's 1996 re-election campaign.
- **Political** — September–October 1993 crisis — Yeltsin dissolved Supreme Soviet (unconstitutional); parliament barricaded itself in White House; tanks shelled the building 4 Oct. ~150 dead. New constitution December 1993: strong presidential system.
- **Federalism** — 89 regions; 'asymmetric federalism' with Tatarstan/Bashkortostan bilateral treaties.
- **Chechnya I (1994–96)** — invasion Dec 1994; Grozny devastated; Russian army humiliated. Khasavyurt Accords 1996.
- **1996 election** — Yeltsin re-elected despite ~3% approval earlier, via oligarch-funded campaign, TV monopoly, and anti-communist framing against Zyuganov.
- **1998 default** — August — rouble devalued 75%, state defaulted on domestic debt. Kiriyenko government fell. Primakov stabilised.
- **1999** — Apartment bombings (Moscow, Buynaksk, Volgograd) — blamed on Chechens, kickstarted Second Chechen War; some evidence points to FSB, disputed. Putin appointed PM August; Yeltsin resigned 31 Dec, handed presidency to Putin.
- **Assessment** — survived as democracy in name; criminalised economy, weakened state capacity, geopolitical humiliation — fertile ground for Putin's authoritarian restoration.
- **Historiography** — McFaul (*Russia's Unfinished Revolution*) — democratic impulse real but institutionally weak. Sakwa — superpresidentialism baked in from 1993. Stephen Cohen — shock therapy a Western-imposed disaster. Stoner / Aslund — reforms necessary if badly executed.

Ready-made theses REHEARSE THESE STEMS

To what extent did Khrushchev succeed in de-Stalinising the Soviet Union?

Khrushchev partially de-Stalinised — breaking the personality cult, releasing millions from camps, opening cultural space — but did not dismantle the core Leninist-Stalinist structures (one-party rule, command economy, empire) and his own methods remained authoritarian.

- Secret Speech (1956) — broke the cult; effect on Eastern Europe (Poznan, Hungary).
- Gulag releases; rehabilitations (partial).
- Thaw — Solzhenitsyn published, new writers, limited.
- Economic reform — Virgin Lands, sovnarkhozy — but still command economy.
- Foreign: Hungary 1956 crushed; Berlin Wall 1961; Cuba.
- Limits: one-party rule untouched; Pasternak affair; Novocherkassk 1962 shooting.
- Historiography: Taubman (genuine but constrained); Tompson (reform bounded by Leninist orthodoxy).
- Conclusion: partial thaw, not transformation.

Examine the reasons for the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Collapse resulted from the interaction of long-term structural decay (economic stagnation, ideological exhaustion, imperial overstretch) with Gorbachev's reforms, which aimed to save the system but triggered its dissolution once glasnost delegitimised it and 'new thinking' released the satellites.

- Structural: growth collapsed after 1970s; agricultural failure; technological lag; oil price fall 1986.
- Ideological: generation of 1960s disillusioned; human rights basket of Helsinki; samizdat.
- Imperial: Afghanistan drain; Eastern European subsidies.
- Gorbachev's reforms: glasnost undermined legitimacy; perestroika destabilised economy; new thinking released satellites.
- 1989: Eastern Europe liberated without Soviet intervention (Sinatra Doctrine).
- Nationalism: Baltics, Ukraine, Russia itself (Yeltsin).
- August Coup 1991 — Gorbachev weakened, Yeltsin strengthened.
- Ukrainian independence 1 Dec 1991 — the decisive blow (Plokhy).
- Historiography: Brown (Gorbachev decisive); Kotkin (structural); Zubok (interaction).
- Conclusion: structural decay + Gorbachev's agency + Yeltsin-Ukraine nationalism.

Discuss the successes and failures of Yeltsin's presidency of Russia.

Yeltsin presided over Russia's transition from Soviet communism but its successes (breaking the Party's monopoly, avoiding civil war in 1991, preserving a constitutional framework) were mortgaged by shock-therapy inequality, the 1993 constitutional crisis, and Chechnya — bequeathing Putin's authoritarian restoration.

- Successes: coup defiance 1991; dissolved Party monopoly; constitutional framework 1993; managed succession.
- Economic failures: shock therapy hyperinflation; GDP -40%; life expectancy collapse.
- Political failures: 1993 shelling of parliament; superpresidential constitution.
- Chechnya I (1994–96) military humiliation; 1999 return.
- Oligarch capitalism: loans-for-shares 1995; 1996 election rescue.
- 1998 default exposes fiscal weakness.
- Putin's handover 1999 — Yeltsin's final act.
- Historiography: McFaul (impulse real but weak); Sakwa (superpresidentialism); Cohen (shock therapy disaster).
- Conclusion: survived transition at cost that made restoration likely.

Key figures & named historians DROP THESE NAMES

Nikita Khrushchev — *Soviet leader 1953–64* — Secret Speech, Virgin Lands, Berlin Wall, Cuba. Ousted 1964.

Leonid Brezhnev — *Soviet leader 1964–82* — Stagnation; Brezhnev Doctrine; détente; Afghanistan.

Yuri Andropov — *Soviet leader 1982–84* — Former KGB; discipline campaign; died in office.

Mikhail Gorbachev — *Soviet leader 1985–91* — Glasnost, perestroika, Nobel Peace 1990. Resigned 25 Dec 1991.

Boris Yeltsin — *Russian President 1991–99* — Tank-top defiance 1991; 1993 shelling; oligarch-funded 1996 re-election; handed off to Putin.

Eduard Shevardnadze — *Soviet Foreign Minister* — 'New thinking' architect; resigned December 1990 warning of dictatorship.

Yegor Gaidar — *Russian acting PM 1992* — Shock therapy architect. Liberalised prices January 1992.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn — *Writer, dissident* — Gulag Archipelago 1973; expelled 1974; returned 1994.

William Taubman — *historian* — Khrushchev improvisational but genuinely reformist; Secret Speech brave within Leninist limits.

Vladislav Zubok — *historian* — Soviet foreign policy framework — revolutionary-imperial paradigm; Gorbachev's collapse (2021).

Archie Brown — *historian* — Gorbachev Factor — personal agency decisive; system could have survived otherwise.

Stephen Kotkin — *historian* — Structural decay inevitable by 1980s; Gorbachev accelerated rather than caused collapse.

Robert Service — *historian* — Biographical — Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev, Trotsky, Yeltsin. Synthetic view of Soviet arc.

Serhii Plokhy — *historian* — Ukraine's independence vote was decisive in ending USSR.

Michael McFaul — *historian* — Russia's democratic impulse real but institutions weak; 1993 legacy constrained 1990s.

Richard Sakwa — *historian* — Yeltsin-era superpresidentialism produced Putin's regime type.

How to write Paper 3

Three essays in 2h30. 50 minutes per essay including planning. 15 marks each (45 total). Same markscheme as Paper 2 — but HL examiners expect **more depth, more historiography, and tighter chronological control.**

ESSAY ANATOMY — 50 MINUTES, FOUR MOVES

1. **Plan (5 min):** three-word thesis · 4 paragraph spines · 2 historians earmarked.
2. **Intro (~80 words):** define key terms, state thesis, signpost three argument lines.
3. **Body × 4 (~32 min):** each paragraph — claim, 2–3 dated facts, named historian, mini-conclusion linking to thesis. Include a counter-paragraph that you defeat.
4. **Conclusion (~80 words):** answer the exact question, re-rank factors, one provocative final line. Never end with summary.

MARKSCHEME BANDS

- **13–15:** focused, sustained argument; precise own knowledge; clear awareness of historiography; nuanced.
- **10–12:** clear argument; mostly relevant; some historiography or alternative views.
- **7–9:** descriptive with some analysis; uneven knowledge.
- **4–6:** descriptive, generalised, limited evidence.
- **0–3:** barely addresses the question.

COMMAND TERMS

- **To what extent** — judge degree; weigh factors against each other.
- **Evaluate** — strengths and weaknesses; both sides; conclude.
- **Examine** — argument with supporting evidence.
- **Compare and contrast** — both similarities and differences; thematic structure.
- **Discuss** — multiple viewpoints; balanced.

HISTORIOGRAPHY — MINIMUM BAR

- Two named historians per essay, at least one with a contrasting view.
- Format: "*Kershaw argues ..., but Mommsen contends ...*" — never "*some historians say*".

- Don't outsource the argument — historians support YOUR thesis, not replace it.

CROSS-TOPIC LINKAGE (HL SKILL)

- T14 ↔ T15: Versailles → Weimar collapse → appeasement.
- T14 ↔ T16: Stalin's collectivisation can serve a domestic (T14) or Soviet (T16) essay — pick the better fit, never double-dip.
- T15 ↔ T16: Nazi-Soviet Pact, Yalta, Cold War origins.

FORECAST — LIKELY 2026 STEMS

- **T14:** "Why did democracy fail in inter-war Europe — economic or political reasons?"
- **T14:** Compare Mussolini and Franco's regimes (or Mussolini and Hitler — domestically).
- **T15:** "Versailles caused the Second World War" — discuss.
- **T15:** Evaluate the success of the League 1920–1939.
- **T15:** Appeasement — necessity, miscalculation, or ideology?
- **T16:** Was Khrushchev a reformer? / Did Brezhnev cause stagnation?
- **T16:** Examine the reasons for the collapse of the USSR.
- **T16:** Compare Stalin and Khrushchev as Soviet leaders.

NAMES & DATES CHECKLIST

- **Versailles:** 28 Jun 1919, Article 231, 132bn marks.
- **Weimar:** 1923 hyperinflation, 1924 Dawes, 1925 Locarno.
- **Italy:** Acerbo 1923, Matteotti Jun 1924, Lateran 1929.
- **Spain:** Republic Apr 1931, Civil War Jul 1936 – Apr 1939.
- **League:** Manchuria 1931, Abyssinia 1935, Hoare-Laval 1935.
- **Diplomacy:** Munich Sep 1938, Pact 23 Aug 1939, Tehran Nov 1943, Yalta Feb 1945, Potsdam Jul 1945.
- **USSR:** Secret Speech Feb 1956, Berlin Wall Aug 1961, Brezhnev Doctrine 1968, Afghanistan Dec 1979.
- **Collapse:** Gorbachev Mar 1985, Wall falls Nov 1989, August Coup 1991, USSR ends 26 Dec 1991.

EXAM-DAY CHECKLIST

- **Night before:** rehearse 3 thesis sentences for the 3 most likely topic stems each.
- **First 5 min:** mark the 3 you'll do; plan the easiest first to bank confidence.
- **While writing:** watch the clock — 50 min hard cap per essay.
- **If running out:** tight conclusion now; finishing > partial argument.
- **Skip risk:** never < 4 paragraphs — examiners assume you didn't plan.

Paper 3 cheat sheet · gayib.com · IB History HL · May 2026 · Topics 14 (Inter-war Europe), 15 (Diplomacy in Europe), 16 (Soviet Union and post-Soviet Russia). 2h30 · 3 essays · top-band requires named historians, precise dates, sustained argument.