

**Handout**

# The Bubbling Cauldron

Artist George Grosz said that the Weimar Republic was like a “bubbling cauldron.” He wrote: “You could not see who was heating the cauldron; you could merely see it merrily bubbling, and you could feel that heat increasing.”<sup>1</sup>

**Directions:** In this activity, you will use a graphic organiser based on Grosz’s image to show your understanding of the Weimar Republic. Label the image of the cauldron below as follows:

- **Who or what added fuel to the fire?** Outside of the cauldron, write the names of people, groups, events, and circumstances that caused tension and conflict in German society during the Weimar Republic (e.g., paramilitary groups).
- **What was the fuel for the fire?** In each log beneath the cauldron, write words and phrases describing human behaviours, feelings, and emotions in German society during the Weimar Republic (e.g., violence). Draw additional logs if you need them.
- **What was in the cauldron?** In the cauldron, write the aspects of German society that were affected by the behaviours and feelings you labelled in the logs (e.g., freedom of speech).

For instance, you might say that “paramilitary groups” added the “violence” log beneath the fire that created enough heat to affect the “freedom of speech” ingredient in the cauldron.

You can use words and phrases from the bank below as you label the image. You do not have to use all of the words provided. You may also add words and phrases that you think of on your own.

Anger	World War I	Weimar Constitution
Humiliation	Treaty of Versailles	Civil Rights
Alienation	Hyperinflation	Freedom of Speech
Anxiety	Great Depression	Women’s Rights
Fear	Unemployment	Frequent Elections
Creativity	Leaders	Article 48
Violence	Artists	Trust in Democracy
Uncertainty	Teachers	Germany’s Universe of Obligation
Education	Paramilitary Groups	Trust in Neighbours
Values	Political Parties	
Hatred	Voting	
Antisemitism	Intimidation	

When you are finished, answer the following questions:

1. What do you think Grosz’s metaphor means? What does it suggest about what it felt like to live in Germany during that time? What might be the result of the increasing “heat”?
2. What was the process like of labelling the cauldron graphic? What challenges did you encounter? What new conclusions did you draw about the Weimar Republic from this activity?

<sup>1</sup> George Grosz, *An Autobiography*, trans. Nora Hodges (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 149–50.

