Can you identify these political symbols?
Symbol

1. North Atlantic Treaty Organization
2. Feminism
3. Nazism
4. European Union
5. Anarchism
6. Communism
7. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
8. Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
9. Fascism
10. United Nations Organization
How far do the early problems of the Weimar Republic suggest that it was doomed from the start?

**Political problems faced by the Weimar Republic**

LO: Understand and explain the political problems faced by the Weimar Republic
The **Weimar Republic** was set up in Germany after the **Kaiser** had been overthrown in 1918. At the time, it was the most democratic government in the world – even women could vote. However, only 15 years later it had collapsed into ruins, allowing **Adolf Hitler** to turn the country into one of the most brutal dictatorships the world has ever known.

**What went wrong?**

LO: Understand and explain the nature and significance of political problems faced by the new republic.
One major problem for the Weimar Republic was that its constitution had two serious flaws.

1. **Proportional representation (PR).**
   All votes were counted up centrally to divide seats fairly between parties.

2. **Article 48.**
   This was a clause that gave the president of the Weimar Republic the right to dismiss parliament and rule by himself if he decided there was a ‘state of emergency’.

To learn about the **advantages** and **disadvantages** of these two features, complete the consumable task sheet that accompanies the next slide.

**LO:** Understand and explain the nature and significance of political problems faced by the new republic.
**Proportional representation and Article 48**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Advantage</th>
<th>Disadvantage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>Votes are counted centrally and then converted into seats in the Reichstag</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Article 48</td>
<td>President can dismiss the Reichstag and rule alone if he declares a &quot;state of emergency&quot;</td>
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</table>

President could abuse this and turn himself into a dictator.

**LO:** Understand and explain the nature and significance of political problems faced by the new republic.
Proportional representation made it difficult for one party to get a **majority**. Weimar governments were usually **weak coalitions** of parties who had different ideas about how the country should be run.

Between 1919 and 1932 Germany had **21 different governments**.

It was difficult to pass laws in the Reichstag because the government was so weak. The **president** increasingly used his powers to pass legislation.

In 1930, three times as many laws were passed by the president as were passed by the Reichstag.
Political problems: revolts and rebellions

The first five years of the republic saw riots, strikes, shootings and attempts to overthrow Ebert’s coalition government. Two of the most important opposition groups were the Communists and the Freikorp.

Communists felt that Ebert and the socialists had failed to complete the revolution because they had not abolished private property.

The Freikorps (private armies) felt that Ebert and the socialists had ‘stabbed Germany in the back’ by signing the Treaty of Versailles.
One of the main problems for the Weimar government was the right-wing Dolchstosslegende - the claim that the Army had been 'stabbed in the back' by the government (whom the right called 'the November criminals').

LO: Understand and explain the nature and significance of political problems faced by the new republic.
An illustration from an 1919 Austrian postcard showing a caricatured Jew stabbing the German Army in the back with a dagger. The capitulation was blamed upon the unpatriotic populace, the Socialists, Bolsheviks, the Weimar Republic, and especially the Jews. (1919)

LO: Understand and explain the nature and significance of political problems faced by the new republic.
A 1924 right-wing German political cartoon showing Philipp Scheidemann, the German Social Democratic politician who was the Weimer Republic’s second Chancellor, and Matthias Erzberger, an anti-war politician from the Centre Party, who signed the armistice with the Allies, as stabbing the German Army in the back.

LO: Understand and explain the nature and significance of political problems faced by the new republic.
Political problems: **revolts and rebellions**

Use the virtual interviews on the next slide to help you complete the consumable task sheet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Left-wing</th>
<th>Right-wing</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the group's name?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Who are the leaders?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What do they want?</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What do they do?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How does Ebert react?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LO: Understand and explain the nature and significance of political problems faced by the new republic.
Choose a question to ask Rosa Luxembourg or Wolfgang Kapp.

LO: Understand and explain the nature and significance of political problems faced by the new republic.
Consider what you have learnt about the rebellions, then complete these statements and compare them with a partner:

1. The Weimar Republic did handle the rebellions with some degree of success...
2. However, there were serious flaws in their policies...
3. On balance, Ebert should instead have...

**Discussion point:** What are the main differences between your answers to statement 3? Does this mean that one of you must be wrong?

**LO:** Understand and explain the nature and significance of political problems faced by the new republic.