**Exam Question**

*Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in these three extracts are in relation to the rise of Hitler between 1919 and 1933.*

***[30 marks]***

**Source 1**

There was nothing inevitable about Hitler’s triumph in January 1933. Five years earlier, the Nazi Party had been a fringe irritant in German politics, but no more… External events, the Young Plan to adjust German reparations payments, the Wall Street Crash, and Brüning’s entirely unnecessary decision to have an election in summer 1930 – put the Nazis on the political map. Though democracy had by that time an unpromising future, a Nazi dictatorship seemed far less likely than some other form of authoritarian dictatorship or even a reversion to a Bismarckian style of government, possibly under a restored monarchy. In bringing Hitler to power, chance events and conservative miscalculation played a larger role than any actions of the Nazi leader himself.

**British Historian, I. Kershaw, *Hitler* (1991), p. 38.**

**Source 2**

It would be wrong to conclude that Nazism grew inevitably from the German past. This theory would imply fatalism [that an event must happen] which is entirely out of place in any study of history. A careful analysis of the events of 1932-1933 shows that at that time a substantial majority of the German people favoured an extraordinary increase in governmental authority necessary to solve their problems but opposed National Socialism, that this majority was increasing, and that the recession [lessening] of the economic crisis would have entailed further losses of Nazi popular support. A relatively small group of Junkers, industrialists, and militarists actually achieved Hitler’s appointment as chancellor and utilized the senility of President von Hindenburg to accomplish its purpose. The group expected to control the Nazis and to exploit the Nazi power for its own purposes; but the National Socialists proved too clever and too ruthless for it.

**American Historian, E. Anderson, ‘The Struggle for Democracy in Germany’ (1959), p. 194.**

**Source 3**

The mind and the passion of Hitler – all the aberrations [mental disorders] that possessed his feverish brain – had roots that lay deep in the German experience and though. Nazism and the Third Reich, in fact, were but a logical continuation of German history…

Acceptance of autocracy, of blind obedience to the petty tyrants who ruled as princes, became ingrained in the German mind. The idea of democracy, or rule by parliament … did not sprout in Germany. This political backwardness of Germany … set Germany apart from and behind the other countries of the West. There was no natural growth of a nation. This has to be borne in mind if one is to comprehend the disastrous road this people subsequently took and the warped state of mind which settled over it. In the end, the German nation was forged by naked force and held together by naked aggression…

There thus arose quite artificially a state born of no popular force nor even of an idea expect that of conquest, and held together by the absolute power of the ruler, by a narrow-minded bureaucracy which did his bidding and by a ruthlessly disciplined army … The State, which was run with the efficiency and soullessness of a factory, became all: the people were little more than cogs in the machinery…

In contrast, to the development of other countries, the idea of democracy, of the people SOVEREIGN, of the supremacy of parliament, never got a foothold in Germany even after the twentieth century began… The middle classes, grown prosperous by Bismarck’s policy of force and war, had traded for material gain any aspiration for political freedom they may have had. They accepted the Hohenzollern autocracy. They gladly knuckled under to the Junker bureaucracy and they fervently embraced Prussian militarism. Germany’s star had risen and they – almost all the people – were eager to do what their masters asked to keep it high.

**William Shirer, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich (1960), p. 29.**