

Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1819-1939

PART ONE: The Weimar Republic 1918-29

The origins of the Republic 1918 – 19

- The German Kaiser abdicated due to the failure of WW1.
- Friedrich Ebert became the first chancellor of the new republic.

Strengths of Weimar Constitution:

- Germany became more democratic.
- Germans had the right to elect their leaders
- Women could vote for the first time
- All Germans over 21 could vote
- Checks and balances prevented any one person having too much power.

Weaknesses of Weimar Constitution:

- A lack of clear leadership and direction.
- Coalition government lead to many disagreements.
- 29 parties in the Reichstag.
- The president had the power to pass laws without the Reichstag.
- Nationalists and communists in the Reichstag.

1914 - 1918: WW1

1918 - 1919: The German Revolution

11th November 1918: Armistice was signed

28th June 1919: The Treaty of Versailles was signed.

Early challenges to the Republic, 1919 - 23

Treaty of Versailles:

Land: Germany lost 10% of it's population, 50% iron and 15% coal resources.

Army: Cut to 100,000 men, no air force, small navy

Money: 6.6 billion marks had to be paid to the allies.

Blame: Germany had to take the blame for causing the war.

Stab in the Back: Some German people think that the army was betrayed by German politicians as they signed the Treaty of Versailles.

November Criminals: German people who were angry with the leaders of the new republic who surrendered in November 1918.

Spartacist Revolt 1919: Left wing uprising, supported by communists.

- Led by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht
- Police chief in Berlin was fired, Spartacists called for an uprising to attack the government.
- 100,000 workers took to the streets and seized newspaper offices.
- Defeated by the Freikorps who hated communists.

The Kapp Putsch 1920: Right wing uprising

- Led by Wolfgang Kapp
- Freikorps were growing very powerful. Ebert sent some units home to prevent their power which made them angry and turn against the government.
- 5000 Freikorps took control of Berlin.
- Wolfgang invited the Kaiser back but the workers rebelled and went on strike. Wolfgang ran away which ended the uprising.

Left Wing

Opposed Capitalism, wanted Germany to be controlled by the people.

Right Wing

Supported Capitalism, wanted a strong government, army and Kaiser.

French Occupation of the Ruhr 1923:

- Germany had no money and could not pay the reparations.
- This made France angry so they invaded the Ruhr and took control of 80% of Germany's coal, iron and steel.
- In protest, German workers went on strike. This is known as passive resistance.

Inflation: The economic problems in early 1923 meant that prices went up.

Hyperinflation: The government printed more money to pay its debts. This made inflation worse. The more prices rose, the more money was printed and it made prices rise again. By 1923 prices were incredibly high.

Price of a loaf of bread

1919	1 mark
1922	100 marks
1923	200,000 million marks

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The recovery of the Republic 1924 - 29

- Gustav Stresemann was appointed foreign secretary in August 1923.
- Stresemann wanted to improve the German economy, stabilize the political situation, build positive relationships with other countries and reduce support for extreme parties.

Rentmark: A new currency created by Stresemann in November 1923 to stop inflation.

Reichsbank: August 1924 a new national bank was given control of currency which was renamed the **Reichsmark**. This solved the problem of inflation.

The Dawes Plan, 1924:

- Reparations reduced to £50 million per year.
- US banks loaned money to German businesses.

The Young Plan, 1929:

- Total reparations reduced from 6.6 billion to 2 billion.
- Germany given 59 more years to pay.

The Locarno Pact, 1925:

- Treaty between Germany, Britain, France, Italy and Belgium. Terms were agreed by **all** five countries.
- France promised peace with Germany
- Agreed to open talks about Germany joining League of Nations

Kellogg-Briand Pact 1928: Germany and 61 countries promised to not use war to achieve aims.

Changes in society, 1924 - 29

Work and Wages:

- Wages and working conditions improved.
- People worked fewer hours
- Wages rose by 25% between 1925 – 1928.

Unemployment:

- Unemployment fell from 2 million in 1936 to 1.3 million by 1928.
- Help for unemployed improved – Unemployment Insurance Act 1927 provided sickness and unemployment benefits.

Housing:

- Private companies built 37,000 new homes.
- New government associations built 64,000 homes.
- But there was still a shortage of housing.

Women:

- Given the right to vote
- Had equal legal rights to men
- Only 36% of women went to work (about the same as before WW1)
- Paid one third less than men for the same work.
- Women could now smoke, drink and go to parties.
- Women could wear make-up and be independent.

Cultural changes:

Art: Paintings to show what it was like living in German society.

Architecture: Futuristic buildings inspired by Bauhaus school of design.

Cinema: This was the golden age for German cinema. German cinema became more popular than ever.

Spellings for PART ONE:

Weimar and Nazi Germany 1918 -1939

Spellings for this part of the unit have been set for you to practise and learn. You will have a test in lesson time at some point during this part of the unit and a test online.

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|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Democracy | 12. Chancellor |
| 2. Monarchy | 13. government |
| 3. Reparations | 14. Versailles |
| 4. Weimar | 15. President |
| 5. hyperinflation | 16. Spartacist |
| 6. Kaiser | 17. Stresemann |
| 7. armistice | 18. Dawes |
| 8. Ruhr | 19. Locarno |
| 9. constitution | 20. Demilitarisation |
| 10. Reichstag | 21. Kellogg-Briand |
| 11. Reichsrat | 22. Communism |