

Weimar Republic: Establishment:

Key words: Spartacists, Freikorps, Occupation of the Ruhr, Hyperinflation, Gustav Stresemann, Beer Hall Putsch, Dawes Plan, Young Plan, Hoover's Moratorium

- 10 November 1918: Kaiser **Wilhelm II** abdicated and left Germany
- WWI: 28 July 1914 – 11 November 1918
- Paris Peace Conference: *Treaty* signed on 28 June 1919

Weimar Republic: February 1919 – January 1933

| Germany : 1871–1918 | | Weimar Republic 1919 – 1933 |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political system: • Federation • Head of the state: • Dynasty: • Parliament: Bundestag + Bundesrat (2 chambers) • Capital: | X | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political system: • Federation • Head of a state: • Parliament: Reichstag + Reichsrat (2 chambers) • Capital: (Weimar - city where the constitutional assembly took place) • Constitution from 1919: first democratic constitution in German history • democracy |

Political system:

- **Reichstag**: Elected by **representation** (= *number of seats in parliament is worked out as a proportion of the number of votes the party wins*). Leader of the largest party in Reichstag appoints **Chancellor**, in Slovak:
- As a result of this system, German governments were always **coalitions** made up of **several** parties.

*Do you know **different** system of representation other than proportional?*

Problems of Weimar Republic:

- **Anger**:

Treaty of Versailles: Germany lost all the colonies, territories in Europe, the army was reduced, Germany was blamed for causing the war, had to pay huge reparations - in 1921 the amount was set = £ 6600 million.

- **Despair:**
- **Flu:**
- **Weak governments:**
- **Huge reparations:**
- **Opposition to Weimar republic: 1, 2: See the table**

Opposition to Weimar republic: 1, 2

1. The German Revolution of **left-wing** parties: (from November 1918 until August 1919):

- **1a. Spartacists:** From December 1918, *Spartacists* (Marxist group similar to the Bolsheviks in Russia), tried to organize a **Bolshevik-type revolution** in Berlin.
 - Army and *Freikorps* (*para-military group of right-wing soldiers who served as a squad against left-wingers*) crushed the Spartacists, leaders were murdered.
- **1b. The Soviet Republic:** part of the German Revolution of 1918-19, the short-lived attempt to establish a socialist state “Free State of Bavaria”. Crushed in May 1919 by the army and Freikorps.
- The revolutionaries, **inspired by communist ideas, failed** to take control as the Bolsheviks had in Russia. **The political fragmentation among the left-wing** was a significant factor in the failure of the left to seize power.

2. The German Revolution of **right-wing** parties:

- **Right-wingers:**
- Many people were used to **more authoritative** system of Kaiser, and tended to see **democracy as a foreign idea**, which was **forced on German people** by the victorious Allies.
- **..... Putsch (March 1920):** Captain Wolfgang Kapp and his followers from Freikorps wanted to overthrow government. **Kapp’s Putsch was defeated** by the workers who paralyzed Berlin by organizing general strike.

The Occupation of the Ruhr:

- **Economic problems** stemmed from

The Occupation of the Ruhr:

After Germany failed to pay its second reparations installment, decided to invade the **Ruhr**,, in order to take food, coal, iron ore and steel as payments. The French and Belgian troops **left the Ruhr in 1925**.

Hyperinflation:

- The German government tried to cope with the Ruhr crisis by **printing more money** to make up for the loss of income. This led to **hyperinflation**.

- High rates of inflation and hyperinflation are caused by an excessive growth of the money supply
- **Hyperinflation**: is when the prices rise so quickly that paper currency rapidly becomes worthless. In 1921, £ 1 was worth 500 marks, by November 1923, it was worth 14 billion marks. German workers had to be paid twice a day, because the prices were going up so quickly. Banknotes were so worthless that they were even used to light fires.

1 egg: in 1918: 0,25 mark, in November 1923: **80 million mark**

1 bread: in 1918: 0,63 marks, in November 1923: **201 000 000 000 marks**



Stresemann.

Weimar Republic under Gustav Stresemann (+1929):

Gustav Stresemann:

- Position:
- **cooperation/non-cooperation** (*choose the correct one*) **with the Allies**
- “**Golden Age**” under Stresemann in the 20s.
- In 1923 Stresemann replaced the old mark with a new currency known as the Rentenmark. However, this was extremely unpopular with German nationalists. Nazi Party, led by **Hitler**, **decided to use the crisis as an opportunity to overthrow**

- Beer Hall Putsch (= Munich Putsch = Hitler-Ludendorff-Putsch) in November 1923:**
- The Nazis led by Hitler decided to organize a “national revolution” against the Weimar government. It was to start in, **where the Nazis were the strongest**. The idea was to take control of Munich and then begin march on Berlin.
 - **The Putsch itself**: The Nazi march of 3000 SA members led by **Hitler** and General **Ludendorff** attacked the **beer hall in Munich** where the **local elites** met in November 1923. The fighting lasted **only 1 day**. On 9 November 1923 the **putsch was crushed**. Hitler fled but was later captured.

Consequences of the Putsch for Adolf Hitler:

- Hitler was sent to prison for 5 years. While he was there, he wrote in which he set down his beliefs and plans.
- In December 1924, he was released early from prison by the sympathetic authorities in Bavaria, **after only 9 months of his sentence**.

Other events:

- From 1924: return to **more stable** economic and political circumstances.

- **1925: Paul von Hindenburg** - Germany's Chief of the General Staff in the WWI - was elected as the second President of Germany in 1925.

Stresemann improved Germany's diplomatic position in Europe:

- 1925: Locarno Pact: for the efforts in this field he won the **Nobel Peace Prize in 1926**.
- 1926: Weimar republic enters the League of Nations
- 1928: Weimar republic signs the Briand-Kellogg Pact

Stresemann negotiated reparations with the Allies on easier terms: Dawes Plan, Young Plan

..... Plan in 1924:

1. The payments were lowered and the period to pay off the reparations was **prolonged/shortened** (*choose the correct one*)
2. The agreed to provide loans to help restart German industry.

The Plan made German economy **dependent on**

..... Plan in 1929:

- Reduced further payments to 112 billion Gold Marks (= US\$ 103 billion in 2010) over a period of 59 years (until 1988).

As a result of these agreements, foreign investments in Germany increased and, by 1929, Germany was the world's second most advanced industrial nation.

..... Crash in 1929:

- In October 1929 Stresemann died and a few weeks later, the USA's stock market on Wall Street crashed.

The USA stopped loans to Germany. Industry soon went into depression as world trade declined and unemployment grew rapidly.

..... moratorium 1931:

- Called for a one-year halt in reparations payments by Germany to France and of Allied war debts to the United States.