

## Paper 3: Germany, 1918-39: Core Knowledge 1/4 Weimar Germany, 1918-33

### Impact of the First World War on Germany

1.7 million German men died + 4.3 million were wounded.

1918-19: there had been a revolution after the Germany navy mutinied at Kiel followed by the Spartacist Uprising (see 'threats to Weimar').

Prince Max of Baden temporarily took charge until a new government could be created.

Ex-soldiers (Freikorps) returned to Germany and caused chaos, they used violence to gain control of cities and fought with the Spartacists.

### Weimar Constitution

Before the First World War, power was concentrated in the hands of the Kaiser of Germany, Wilhelm II. Once he left Germany, at the end of the war, Germany needed a new government.

It was **democratic** - men and women aged 20+ could vote.

It was led by a **President** who was elected every 7 years. The President chose the **Chancellor** from the **Reichstag**.

**Article 48** gave the President and Chancellor the power to rule by **decree** (without the Reichstag) during an emergency. **Proportional representation** meant that parties would struggle to get a **majority**.

### Treaty of Versailles - GARGLE

**Guilt** - clause 231 made Germany take the blame for the war.

**Armed forces** - 100,000 men in the army; 6 battleships only; no submarines or airforce

**Reparations** - Germany had to agree to pay for the damages of the war, set at £6.6 billion in 1921

**Germany lost land** - lost all colonies; Alsace-Lorraine given back to France; Saar coalfields given to France for 15 years;

Polish corridor used to form part of Poland.

League of Nations formed but Germany was not allowed to join.

Extra - Germany was not allowed to join with Austria.

### Unpopularity of the Weimar Government

**Reason 1 - stab in the back myth:** a rumour circulated that the army had been winning the war and ministers had stabbed the army and Kaiser in the back by signing the Armistice. This rumour became worse after the Treaty of Versailles had been signed.

**Reason 2 - Treaty of Versailles (see above)**

**Reason 3 - Weaknesses of constitution (see above)** - people thought the problems in Germany were caused by the weak democratic system as things had been better under Kaiser Wilhelm II.

### Threats to Weimar

**1918-19:** 5000 Spartacists (communists/workers) led by Liebknecht and Luxemburg tried to seize control of Berlin by occupying public buildings and organising a strike. It was stopped by 4000 Freikorps.

**1920:** **Dr Kapp** led 5000 nationalist Freikorps (ex-soldiers) to seize control of Berlin in March. It was stopped by workers going on strike which ground Berlin to a halt, Kapp was forced to leave.

**1923:** 60,000 French/Belgian troops entered the Ruhr after Germany failed to pay reparations. The workers were ordered to use passive resistance (not go to work) but the government had to pay them which led to **hyperinflation**.

Adolf Hitler led 3000 Nazis (incl. 600 stormtroopers) to take control of Munich on 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> November. They were stopped by 100 policemen. 16 Nazis and 4 police were killed.

### Recovery/Golden Years **Success; Failures**

**1924:** The USA provided Germany with \$3000 million under the Dawes Plan over the next 6 years.

Money was invested in building projects e.g. 2 million homes were built 1924-31; homelessness was reduced by 60%.

Wages rose by 10% making German workers the best paid in Europe.

The French left the Ruhr which helped Germany to stabilise its economy and regain control over industry.

The Deutschmark became worthless so it was destroyed and replaced with a temporary currency; 1000 million DM = 1 RM (Rentenmark).

Relations with other countries were improved e.g. in 1925, Germany signed the Locarno Pact in which they agreed not to claim back any land lost in the Treaty of Versailles; in 1926 Germany was allowed into the League of Nations and Stresemann was given the Nobel Peace Prize.

Stresemann negotiated lower repayments for the reparations over a longer time period.

Unemployment insurance ensured all workers paid into the scheme from 1927 meaning they could provide financial support to people who became unemployed.

There were more women working as teachers - 100,000 by 1933.

More people had the right to vote - all men and women aged 20 and over.

The Bauhaus school of building pioneered modern methods of design using simpler techniques.

Art began to focus on a greater sense of realism - focussing on everyday life e.g. Otto Dix.

New films such as Metropolis used advanced techniques and methods e.g. 'The Cabinet of Dr Caligari'.

Farmers continued to suffer, earning only  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the national average wage.

Germany was heavily indebted to the USA, Stresemann himself said they were 'dancing on the edge of a volcano'.

Savings became worthless after hyperinflation which angered the middle classes.

Nationalists hated the Locarno Pact and believed it showed Germany was weak. Unemployment remained high amongst professionals such as lawyers and teachers.

Married women who went into work were discriminated against by traditionalists who believed they should be at home caring for their family.

Older people did not like the new types of music such as jazz as they felt it was black people's music.

People living in the countryside saw little improvement as they did not have access to cinemas and theatres.