

A Level History Paper Two

Step up work

Democracy and Nazism: Germany 1918-1945

Struggle is the father of all things. It is not by the principles of humanity that man lives or is able to preserve himself above the animal world, but solely by means of the most brutal struggle. If you do not fight, life will never be won.



Can you find out who said this?

The origins of the Weimar Republic

By autumn 1918 it was clear that Germany would lose World War One. From November onwards a series of events occurred which became known as the German Revolution.

The Kiel Mutiny

On 3 November at the main German naval base in Kiel frustrated German sailors mutinied instead of following orders to attack the British Royal Navy. The sailors mutiny sparked rebellions all over Germany and in a matter of days led to the collapse of the German government which forced the ruling monarch, Kaiser Wilhelm II, to abdicate on 9 November. Following his abdication Friedrich Ebert, leader of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) became Chancellor (the equivalent of Prime Minister in Britain) and took power over Germany.

End of World War One - Germany surrenders

On 11 November 1918 World War One ended when an armistice was agreed with the Allies (Britain, France and the USA) and Germany surrendered.

The armistice was signed by representatives of the new, civilian government, including Ebert and members of the SPD. This meant that later, their opponents started to call them the 'November Criminals' - people who had signed the armistice behind the German army's back. This became known as the Dolchstoßlegende - the 'stab-in-the-back' theory.



In January 1919, elections had given the SPD party the most power. Shortly after, Friedrich Ebert, leader of the SPD became the first democratically chosen President. He and his party (which had won a majority of seats in election) started to draw up a new constitution for Germany. They met in the town of Weimar as Berlin was deemed too unsafe after an uprising earlier in the month.

Although a considerable number of deputies (German MPs) voted against it, the new constitution was eventually approved and signed in August 1919. This government eventually became known as the 'Weimar Republic'.

Task

Find definitions for the following words:

- Mutinied

- Abdicate

- Chancellor

- Armistice

- Constitution

Watch the following video on the weaknesses of the Weimar Republic and then answer the following questions:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z9y64j6/revision/2>

1. What does democratic mean?
2. Define Reichstag
3. Explain Proportional Representation
4. How often was the President elected?
5. How was the Chancellor appointed?
6. What is 'Diktat'?
7. Define reparations
8. How were those on the right feeling?
9. What about those on the left?
10. Explain Article 48 and why it was dangerous.

The Weimar Constitution, 1919

Read the following information and complete the table showing the strengths and weaknesses of the Weimar Republic.

In many ways the Weimar Republic was more democratic than governments in other democratic countries. The new constitution provided a wider right to vote and women were allowed to vote on the same terms as men. The system of proportional representation allowed even smaller parties to win seats so all different voices could be heard. There was also full democracy in local government as well as central government. The constitution also set out clear rights for every individual e.g. all Germans were seen as equal before the law, censorship was forbidden and everyone had religious freedom.

However, proportional representation led to problems; smaller parties could gain representation in the Reichstag and they would often exploit the parliamentary system and it created **coalition** governments, many of which were short lived. (If you are unsure of what a coalition government is, look it up) Article 48 could be dangerous if it was misused, for example Ebert (the first President) used Article 48 on 136 occasions. This was not in keeping with a democratic government.

Strengths of the Weimar Republic	Weaknesses of the Weimar Republic

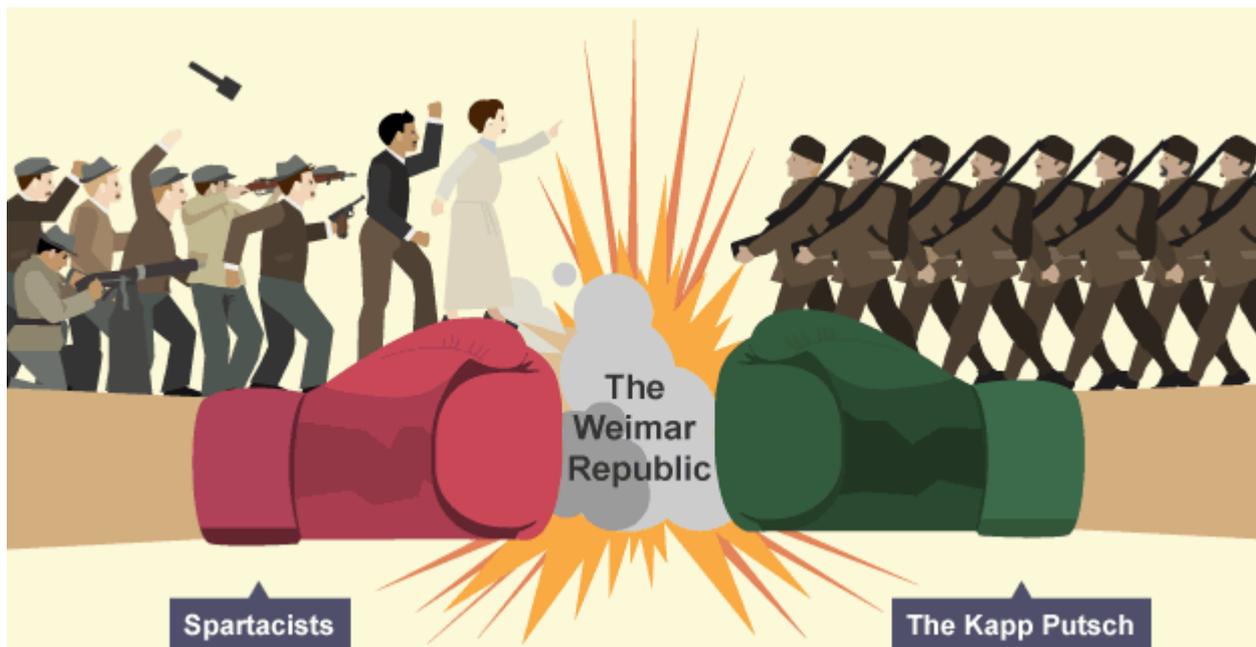
The Treaty of Versailles

Watch the following video on the terms of the Treaty of Versailles (the second video on the page) and note down at least 4 key terms that were signed.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z9y64j6/revision/3>

Challenges to the Weimar Republic

The Weimar Republic's unpopularity meant it faced violent uprisings from both sides of the political spectrum during 1919 and 1920.



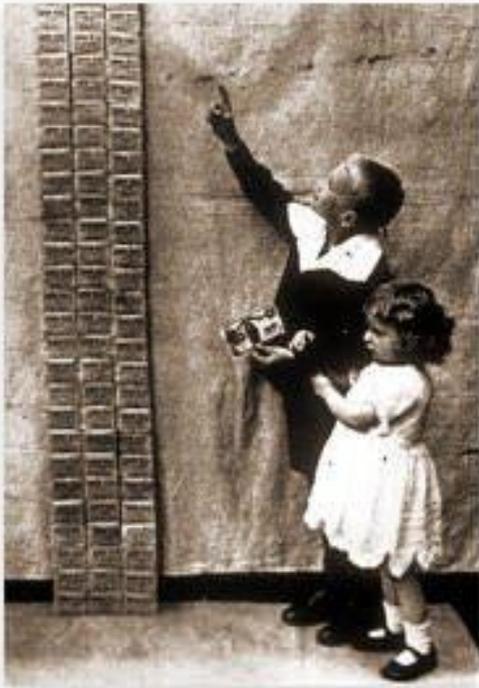
Complete some research and see what you can find out about:

The Spartacist Uprising, 1919

The Kapp Putsch, 1920

The Hyperinflation crisis, 1923-24

The war effort required unprecedented levels of government spending, in order to support this the German government decided to increase their borrowing from other countries and to print more money. This meant that government debt grew and the value of the currency fell. This was very risky and when Germany lost the war it meant they were in a financial crisis. As the value of the currency kept falling (inflation) and it went unchecked it led to hyperinflation. At this time money lost its meaning as prices soared. Workers collected their wages and salaries in wheelbarrows and shopping baskets and tried to spend their money immediately before prices rose again. In January 1923 a kilo loaf of bread cost 163 marks, by October the price rose to 9 million marks and by 19th November it had risen again to 233 billion marks!



Children playing with blocks of money



A woman burning money for her fire because it was cheaper than wood or coal!

Task

Can you find out any more interesting facts or pictures about the hyperinflation crisis of 1923-24.

Gustav Stresemann and the German recovery

Watch the following video and answer the questions:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z9y64j6/revision/6>

1. When was Stresemann elected Chancellor?
2. Which party was Stresemann the leader of?
3. What was the name of the new currency Stresemann introduced?
4. What did those on the left and right think of Stresemann?
5. What was Stresemann's job after being Chancellor?
6. Explain the 1924 Dawes Plan with the USA.
7. In 1926 what was Germany allowed to join?
8. Explain what was agreed in the 1929 Young Plan.
9. Explain two problems of German recovery.
10. What happened to Stresemann in 1929?

The rise of the Nazis

Watch the following video about Hitler and the Nazi Party and make a note of 10 new things you have learnt.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z3bp82p/revision/1>

Challenge: Can you complete extra research on The Reichstag Fire and The Night of the Long Knives?