

Germany Essential Learning

1. The Weimar Republic, 1919-33

Key concept	What is it? Give 1-2 facts to explain this concept
The legacy of the First World War	British blockade led to shortages of food, medicines and clothes Children were malnourished. Smallpox epidemic in 1918.
Revolution, 1918–19.	At end of Oct 1918, the German navy mutinied (rebelled) Fighting spread across Germany through the winter of 1918-19.
The abdication of the Kaiser	Kaiser Wilhelm (the German Emperor) resigned in November 1918. Chancellor (Prime Minister) Ebert declared Germany a Republic (no king)
The Armistice, Nov 1918	Chancellor Ebert declared an armistice (ceasefire) based on US president Wilson's 14 points, which suggested that Germany would be treated fairly.
The setting up of the Weimar Republic, 1919	Election was held and a government was formed under Ebert. The Govt wrote the new constitution (rules), called the Weimar Republic
The strengths and weaknesses of the new Constitution.	Strengths: Democratic, Men + women could vote, Proportional Representation allowed many parties. Weaknesses: lots of parties caused arguments, article 48 allowed president to take dictator-like powers.
	Land – 13% lost, Armies – restricted to 100,000 men, no tanks / airplanes Money – Reparations of £6.6bn, Blame – Clause 231 put all blame on Germ.
	Most people were angry with the treaty and wanted a scapegoat (someone to blame). They said that the Weimar Rep had stabbed them in the back.
	Spartacists = Communists. Attempted Revolution in Jan 1919 under leaders Liebknecht and Luxemburg. Freikorps suppressed this.
	Ebert decided to reduce numbers of Freikorps. This led to Kapp's Putsch (rebellion). This was ended by a general strike by workers.
	At end of 1922 Germany did not pay their reparations. In 1923 French and Belgian troops invaded Ruhr area of Germany to take coal and steel.
	Inflation existed from WW1. In the Ruhr, workers used passive resistance (strikes). Govt printed more money to pay them, but less goods were being produced. Together these factors caused hyperinflation.
	Stresemann became Chancellor in 1923. Promised to pay reparations and end hyperinflation. Introduced new currency – Rentenmark.
The Dawes + Young Plans, US loans and investment.	Dawes Plan 1924 – reparations were reduced, USA gave loans to Germany Young Plan 1929 – Reparations reduced to £1,850m, timescale 59 years.
The Locarno Pact, 1925	Germany signed a pact with the UK, France, Belgium and Italy promising to respect their borders and solve all problems peacefully.
Joining the League of Nations, 1926	Other countries let Germany join the League in 1926 – showed that Germany was increasingly trusted around the world.
The Kellogg-Briand Pact. 1928	Germany + 64 other nations signed this pact promising to use their armies only for self-defence.
Changes in the standard of living, incl wages + housing	Real wages increased in the 1920s by 10%, but middle classes had lost savings in 1923. 2 million new houses were built. Living standards improved.
Unemployment insurance	New laws increased unemployment benefits for those out of work and disability payments for those who could not work.

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Changes in the position of women in work, politics, leisure	Women could vote. By 1933 there were 100,000 women teachers and 3,000 women doctors. New fashions, women could drink and smoke.
Developments in art, architecture and cinema	Creative time for artists – Otto Dix and George Grosz. Modernist architecture. Bauhaus design, golden age for film eg Metropolis.

2. Hitler and the Rise of the Nazi Party, 1919-33

Hitler's early career, joining the German Workers' Party	Hitler was a failed artist and then a soldier in the German army. He joined the German Worker's Party (DAP) in 1919.
German Workers' Party	Created by Anton Drexler in Munich, originally known as the DAP. A nationalist, anti-Jewish, anti-Communist party.
Setting up the Nazi Party, 1919–20.	Hitler was a charismatic speaker and attracted new members to the DAP. Changed its name to the National Socialist Democratic Workers Party – NSDAP or Nazi Party. The name was designed to appeal to all.
The Twenty-Five Point Programme.	Points included Union of all Germans to a Greater Germany, Scrapping Treaty of Versailles, Nationalising business, generous old age pensions.
The role of the SA.	Started as a protection squad for Nazi party meetings. Developed into a private army under Rohm. Beat up political opponents.
The reasons for the Munich Putsch, 1923	Hated the Weimar Republic and saw it as weak after invasion of Ruhr and hyperinflation. Angry that Stresemann had ended passive resistance.
The events of the Munich Putsch, 1923	Marched into beer hall, held 2,000 people hostage Next day marched into Munich but was stopped by police. 16 Nazis were killed, Hitler was shot in the arm, escaped but was later captured.
The consequences of the Munich Putsch.	Put on trial. Hitler gained a lot of publicity. Found guilty of treason, sentenced to 5yrs in prison, only served 9 months.
Reasons for limited support for the Nazi Party, 1924–28.	Economy was improving under Stresemann, people were happier. Hitler was seen as an extremist and dangerous.
Mein Kampf	Translates as "My Struggle", the book Hitler wrote in prison. Autobiography and political views.
Party reorganisation	Nazi party was relaunched in 1925 when Hitler was released from prison. Party branches (1 gau, many gause) were created under a gauleiter.
The Bamberg Conference of 1926.	Goebbels was appointed gauleiter of Berlin, Rohm was forced to resign. The SS was created as Hitler's personal bodyguard. Hitler Youth was created.
The growth of unemployment – its causes and impact.	1929 Wall Street Crash led to Great Depression. By 1932 6m were unemployed. Many homeless roaming the streets.
Failure of Weimar government to deal with	Weimar Government did not want to print money or get into debt. They raised taxes and reduced benefits. This made the situation worse.
The growth of support for the Communist Party.	Many workers wanted a Communist takeover as in the USSR. Communist party became the 2 nd biggest party after the Nazis.
The appeal of Hitler and the Nazis	Middle Classes feared Communist revolution and also crime and disorder. Hitler promised to deal with the Communist threat and restore order.
Nazi propaganda 1929-33	Goebbels -> Head of Propaganda. Mass rallies, posters, newspapers. Messages were simple, easy to understand and focused on Hitler.

The work of the SA 1929-33	Rohm was reappointed head of the SA. SA was used to protect Nazi party meetings and break up Communist party meetings. Lots of fights.
Political developments in 1932: Brüning and von Papen	Chancellor Brüning had little support. Pres. Hindenburg ruled by decree. Nazis were the biggest party in the Reichstag with 37% of votes.
Hindenburg and von Papen, Hitler -> Chancellor in 1933.	Von Papen was appointed Chancellor in 1932 but did not have a majority. Made a deal with Hindenburg: Hitler -> chancellor, von Papen -> vice-

3. The Nazi dictatorship 1933–39

The Reichstag Fire, Feb 1933	Hitler called for new elections, during which the Reichstag burned down. Van der Lubbe, a Dutch Communist, was found at the scene and arrested. Hitler declared a state of emergency and arrested 4,000 Communists.
The Enabling Act, April 1933	In elections in March 1933, Hitler got 44%, largest party but no majority. Passed the Enabling Act with Catholic party support. This said he could make laws without the Reichstag for 4 years.
The banning of other parties and trade unions, 1933	Trade Unions were banned, replaced by the DAF – German Labour Front. All political parties were banned other than the Nazi Party.
The threat from Röhm and the SA	Hitler feared Rohm's power over the SA which had 1 million members. They argued about policies and who should control the army.
The Night of the Long Knives, June 1934	Himmler (leader of the SS) told Hitler that Rohm was planning a coup. Hitler arrested Rohm and other SA leaders and had them shot.
The death of von Hindenburg, Hitler becomes Führer, 1934	Hindenburg died. Hitler combined the jobs of Chancellor and President and called himself the "Führer". In a referendum, >90% approved.
The army and oath of allegiance, 1934	The army were grateful that Hitler had gained control of the SA. They swore an oath of allegiance to him personally.
The role of the Gestapo	Gestapo = State Police. Controlled by Himmler and the SS. Used paid informers. Could arrest without a warrant and imprison people.
The SS	SS = Hitler's personal bodyguard, led by Himmler. Members had to be pure Aryan and physically strong.
The SD	SD = Intelligence body of the Nazi party, led by Heydrich. Role was to discover actual and potential enemies and remove them.
Concentration camps.	Run by the SS or SD. Harsh prisons where people would be divided into groups and have to do hard labour with little food. Many died.
Nazi control of the legal system, judges and law courts.	All judges had to be loyal Nazis and wear swastikas. All laws were interpreted in a Nazi way.
Nazi policies towards the Catholic Church	Concordat was agreed. Hitler would leave the Catholic Church alone if they did not comment on his policies.
Nazi policies towards the Protestant Church	Reich Church was established, which combined all Protestants in one Church under the leadership of bishop Müller.
Goebbels and the Ministry of Propaganda	Newspapers were independent but what they could print was controlled. Cheap radios were produced. Loudspeakers were put up in towns.
Censorship	Newspapers which told unapproved stories were closed down. Mass book burning ceremonies were held to get rid of anti-Nazi books.
Rallies and sport.	Mass meetings for public celebrations, eg Hitler's birthday. Sport was encouraged to keep people fit and healthy.
The Berlin Olympics of 1936	Hitler used the Olympics to show the strength of Germany. He refused to shake black athlete Jesse Owens' hand.

Nazi control of art and architecture	Modern, abstract or surreal art / architecture was banned. Art and architecture had to show traditional Nazi themes.
Nazi control of literature and film.	Films were preceded by newsreels. Films told stories with a Nazi slant. Writers were forced to write stories in favour of Hitler and the Nazis.
The extent of support for the Nazi regime.	Most people approved of Germany's economic success and stability. But 1.3m people were sent to concentration camps, suggesting less support.
Opposition from the Churches, Pastor Niemöller.	Pastor Niemöller (protestant) opposed Nazi control of the Ch. Arrested. Cardinal Galen (Cath) opposed the euthanasia programme. Not arrested.
Opposition from the young	Swing Youth wore baggy clothes, long hair, makeup. Listened to jazz. Edelweiss Pirates wrote anti-Nazi graffiti and fought with Hitler Youth.

4. Nazi Domestic Policies 1933-39

Nazi views on women and the family.	Traditional views on women. Conservative clothes. Women should not work, should stay at home to support the family.
Nazi policies towards women	Women given loans, medals and encouragement to have large families. Many women lost their jobs, but from 1937 women did a duty year of work.
Nazi aims and policies towards the young.	Boys were brought up to be future soldiers. Girls were brought up to be future mothers.
The Hitler Youth and the League of German Maidens.	Hitler Youth for boys 14-18. League of German Maidens for girls 14-18. Both focused on physical activities and indoctrination into Nazi ideals.
Nazi control of the young through education	Lessons were changed to give a Nazi slant. Only German History / culture. Extra time for Physical Exercise and new lessons in race science.
Nazi policies to reduce unemployment	Labour schemes were set up building motorways (autobahns) or bridges. Jews and women lost their jobs. Rearmament provided lots of jobs.
Labour service (RAD)	All men had to do 6 months compulsory labour. Work was physical and poorly paid. Workers lived in army style conditions.
Autobahns	Motorways. Hitler built these to make transport for the army easier and to provide jobs for the unemployed.
Rearmament	Building tanks, ships and aircraft. By 1939 were 1.4m soldiers the army (under the T of V only 100,000).
Invisible unemployment	Jews, women and other minorities lost their jobs. Their numbers were not recorded in the official statistics.
Changes in the standard of living of German workers	Average weekly wages increased, but this was from a low base due to the Depression. Workers lost rights and worked longer hours (43h -> 47h)
The Labour Front (DAF)	Trade Unions were banned and strikes illegal. DAF claimed to improve workers' rights but it was a Nazi tool of control.
Strength Through Joy (KdF)	Arranged leisure time activities, eg concerts, theatre visits, museum tours, holidays, cruises. Low cost. Only Nazi-approved activities. In 1938 over 10m people took KdF holidays.
Beauty of Labour	Improved workplace conditions, eg factory canteens and sports facilities. But people had to contribute by working in their spare time.
Nazi racial beliefs and policies	Nazis wanted to create a pure German race. They believed that the Aryan race was superior and that the Jews were inferior. Hitler wanted to conquer lebensraum (living space) in the East for the German population.
Treatment Slavs and 'gypsies',	Slavs were to be slave labour for the German people.

	Gypsies were separated from the wider population in concentration camps.
Treatment of homosexuals	Homosexuality was illegal. Gay men were arrested and sent to concentration camps.
Treatment of those with disabilities.	People with disabilities were sterilised. They were sent to "asylums" where they were gassed and cremated.
The persecution of the Jews	Increasing numbers of laws were passed against the Jews to separate them from wider society and to make life difficult for them.
Boycott of Jewish shops and businesses	In 1933 the SA organised a boycott of Jewish businesses. Big letter "J"s were painted on Jewish businesses. The boycott was not very popular.
The Nuremberg Laws, 1935	Jews could no longer be German citizens. Jews were defined as anyone who had 1 or more Jewish grandparent.
Kristallnacht, 1938	A Polish Jew shot a German diplomat. This was used as an excuse to attack Jewish businesses and synagogues all over Germany. Approx 100 Jews were killed. 20,000 sent to concentration camps.