

Key issue 1: The Establishment & early years of the Weimar Republic

KEY WORDS

- **Kaiser**- German word for emperor.
- **Abdication**- renouncing a position or power or authority
- **Chancellor**- the head of the government
- **Reichstag**- the elected assembly or parliament of Germany. This is the building where the assembly meet (bit like our House of Parliament).
- **Social Democrat**- a left wing political movement. They also campaign for political reforms for all men and adults e.g. all able to vote.
- **Constitution**- the written set of rules of how a country is governed. Laws can only be passed as long as they do not conflict with the constitution.
- **Proportional representation**- a system of elections in which parties are allocated seats in parliament according to the proportion of votes they get.
- **Democracy**- a political system where citizens of the country are able to elect their chosen government, usually through an electoral process.
- **Democratic Republic**: A system of running the country in which people have the vote for the government they want.
- **Freikorps**- parliamentary groups of nationalists. They were anti-republican and made up of ex-soldiers. They formed after November 1918.
- **Communism**- A left wing political view of a party. They believe in state ownership and equal distribution of wealth.
- **Autocracy**- a political system in which a single figure possesses unrestrained power.
- **Inflation**- when the prices of good rise
- **Hyperinflation**- Rapid increase of money
- **Armistice**- Agreement to stop fighting
- **November Criminals**- Weimar politicians blamed for the stabbing them in the back by signing the Treaty of Versailles.
- **Article 48**- Gave the President emergency powers in times of a crisis
- **Coalition**- When a group of 2 or more political parties form a government together
- **Extremists**- Groups that believe in violent & radical ideas.
- **Spartacists**- Revolutionary Communist who wanted Germany to be run.
- **Putsch**- A violent attempt to overthrow the government.
- **Treaty of Versailles**- A treaty that outlined what would happen to Germany at the end of the war
- **Article 231**- War guilt Clause of Treaty of Versailles
- **Diktat**- Dictated peace
- **Dolschstoss**- Stab in the back
- **Passive resistance**: Protesting against the government or laws by using non-violent acts.

Essay Question

'The impact of the Treaty of Versailles on the new Weimar Republic between 1919 and 1924 was more damaging economically than politically.'

Assess the validity of this view.

KEY INDIVIDUALS AND KEY GROUPS

Kaiser Wilhelm II: Emperor of Germany, King of Prussia and Supreme commander of the German Army 1888 - 1918

General Erich Ludendorff: Was a top German military commander in the latter stages of World War I.

Paul Von Hindenburg: Was the German general and statesman who commanded the Imperial German army during WW1 and later became the President of Germany 1925-1933.

Friedrich Ebert: Was the leader of the SPD, temporary leader of Germany at the end of WW1, then the first chancellor and later President of Germany of the Weimar Republic.

Freikorps- Ex- soldiers of the German army.

Wolfgang Kapp- Leader of the Freikorps and Berlin politician

Rosa Luxemburg/Karl Liebknecht- Leader of the Spartacists

Spartacists- Communists, who wanted Germany to be run by the working classes

Social Democratic Party (SPD): One of the largest political parties in Germany. A left wing party that grew under the rule of Kaiser Wilhelm II. It was a party that supported more rights for workers and looking after communities.

Bunderstrat: A group made up of German state representatives who supported the Kaiser (unlike the Reichstag).

Reichstag: The main elected German Parliament who were politicians voted in by the German people. They often challenged the Kaiser.

Nazi Party (National Socialist German Workers Party): A right-wing political party, originally known as the German Workers Party up until 1919. Adolf Hitler became the leader of the party and led the Munch Putsch.

Adolf Hitler: Leader of the Nazi Party, eventually Chancellor of Germany in 1933 and then Der Fuhrer of Germany

Source Question

Comrades! The events of the last few days have brought a bitter awakening from our dreams. The motto of the Revolution of 9 November was the idea of the unity of the various socialist movements. But the bourgeoisie believed that, by the means of the so-called socialist government, they would be able to control the proletarian masses and strangle the socialist revolution. These illusions have now been banished into nothingness. The masses have come to realise that what has been pasted together and called a socialist government is nothing but a government representing the bourgeois counter-revolution, and that whoever continues to tolerate such a state of affairs is working against the proletariat and against socialism!

From a speech by Rosa Luxemburg to the Founding Congress of the Communist Party of Germany (formerly the Spartacus League), 31 December 1918.

With reference to this source and your understanding of the historical context, assess the extent of support for the new Republic of 1918

Key Events Timeline

KEY:

Social

Political

Economical

Foreign

Turnip Winter and Deadly Flu epidemic (1916-1917)

The British naval blockade was preventing people in Germany from getting any food. People starting starving and dying. In desperation they ate crows, horses and turnips. As well as this a flu epidemic broke too. It spread rapidly and killed many because people were too weak and vulnerable to fight off the disease.

Ludendorff told German leaders they would never win the war (October 1918)

The Ludendorff Spring Offensive had failed, Germany had exhausted it's options. Ludendorff suggested that if the Kaiser made Germany a democratic state, Britain, France and America would treat Germany fairly. The Kaiser transferred some power to the Reichstag, and allowed main political parties to form a new government. He hoped that this would also appease the German people, it did not.

WW1 ended (11th November 1918)

In a train carriage German politicians and representatives of the Allies met in a railway carriage. Germany signed the armistice and the first world war ended at 11am on 11th November.

The Treaty of Versailles (28th June 1919)

The BIG 3 and other country leaders came together to create a treaty full of terms for Germany to abide by. It was signed in Versailles on 28th June 1919. Germany took the blame for the whole of WW1.

Treaty of Berlin

outlined that Germany would remain neutral if the USSR (1922)

Treaty of Rapallo-

restored relationship with Germany & Russia (1922)

Kapp Putsch-

attempted putsch by freikorps. Army refused to support the government. Putsch failed when workers went on strike. (March 1920)

Ruhr invasion- French & Belgium troops invade the Ruhr over reparation payments. (January 1923)

Dawes Plan introduced to ease reparation payments (April 1924)

1916

1917

1918

1919

1920

1922

1924

Mutiny in Germany (28th October 1918)

Sailors in Kiel refused to follow orders and attack British ships. News of their mutiny spread and other ports started to refuse orders. Soldiers sent to deal with the mutiny joined the protests. They took over towns and set up councils. The Kaiser had lost control and his army Generals refused to follow him.

Friedrich Ebert was made the leader of Germany (9th November 1918)

Ebert became the temporary leader of Germany and promised to hold elections as soon as the time was right.

Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicates (9th November 1918)

The Kaiser was forced to abdicate and had to flee to Holland to live the rest of his life for his own protection.

Spartacist uprising- crushed by freikorps- (January 1919).

Treaty of Versailles (TOV) is signed (June 1919)

New Weimar constitution set up (August 1919)

1921

1923

Hyperinflation causes social & economic problems (June 1923)

Hitler & the Nazis attempt to seize power in the Beer Hall Putsch in Munich (November 1923)