

Ebert, Stresemann and The Weimar Republic

KEY WORDS

Armistice: An agreement, or truce to stop fighting.

Democratic Republic: A system of running the country in which people have the vote for the government they want.

Communism: A political system where all property is owned by the government; people are equal and they are paid by the government according to their needs.

Weimar Republic: Was the name given to Germany's democratic system between 1919 and 1933.

Reparations: Payments made by Germany to some of the winning nations of the First World War for the damage done by the fighting.

Diktat: A nickname given by many Germans to the hated Treaty of Versailles; translated as 'dictated peace'.

Article 48: Part of the Weimar Constitution that gave the President the right to rule in a time of crisis without requiring the support of the Reichstag.

Proportional Representation: A political system in which the number of politicians for a particular party is in proportion with the number of votes they win; it can lead to lots of small parties gaining seats and an unstable government.

Constitution: A document that states how a country should be run.

Majority: Over half the votes or politicians in a parliament.

Left- Wing: A political belief that promotes equality, high taxation for the rich, and the redistribution of wealth.

Right- Wing: A political belief that suggests that social orders and hierarchies are natural, they believe in tradition.

Fascist: Is a far right wing movement that believes in an authoritarian, national approach with a dictator in power.

Hyperinflation: A sudden, dramatic rise in prices and decrease in the value of money.

Passive resistance: Protesting against the government or laws by using non-violent acts.

Putsch: An attempt to seize power or take control using force.

Swastika: Is the crooked cross symbol adopted by the Nazi Party as their emblem.

Rentenmark: Germany's currency that was introduced in 1924.

Dawes Plan: An agreement between the USA and European countries, allowing for US loans to be given to European countries (especially Germany) in order for them to build factories and roads, and stimulate economy.

Young Plan: An agreement to reduce reparations, made in 1929 between Germany and the countries they owed money to after the First World War.

Depression: A time during the 1930's when many banks and businesses failed and millions lost their jobs.

Interpretation A: The caption for this 1924 poster asks, 'Who in the war stabbed the German army in the back?' It accuses German politicians of doing this.



Interpretation B: Adapted from a book by historians Sally Marks called The Illusion of Peace: International Relations in Europe 1918-1933, written in 1976.

Describe Question (4 marks)

- 1) Describe two threats to Weimar Germany
- 2) Describe two problems faced by the German government in dealing with hyperinflation.

Bullet Point Question (12 marks)

1) Which of the following was the more important reason why the Weimar Republic was in danger in the years 1919–1923:

- Economic problems
- Political unrest?

Explain your answer with reference to both reasons.

KEY INDIVIDUALS AND KEY GROUPS

Friedrich Ebert: Was the leader of the SPD, temporary leader of Germany at the end of WW1 and later President of Germany 1919-1925.

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.

Spartacus League (Spartacists): A group of German communists who wanted a revolution similar to the one that had taken place in Russia in 1917.

Freikorps (Free Corps): A right-wing paramilitary group that was active in the early years of the Weimar Republic.

Wolfgang Kapp: Was a Prussian civil servant and journalist, a strict nationalist and led the Kapp Putsch.

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.

Gustav Stresemann: A member of Germany's parliament since 1907, he was briefly Chancellor in 1923 and became Foreign minister in 1924 -1929. He was involved in the Dawes and Young plan in 1923.

Adolf Hitler: Leader of the Nazi Party, eventually Chancellor of Germany in 1933 and then Der Fuhrer in 1934.

Marlene Dietrich: One of the most famous German actresses during Germany's Golden Age in the 1920's.

Otto Dix: One of the most famous German artists during Germany's Golden age in the 1920's.

League of Nations: The first world organisation made up of a variety of governments whose mission was world peace.

Stormtroopers (SA): Hitler's brown shirted supporters who were employed to beat up opponents and guard meetings.

Red Rising: Left-wing voters' revolt in March 1920, in the Ruhr region of Germany.

KEY WORDS

Avant-Garde: New and experimental ideas and methods in art, music or literature.

Bauhaus: A school of design originating in Weimar Germany, which focused on modern, simple and practical designs, rather than the more elaborate, 'fancy' designs of long ago.

Culture: The values, morals, traditions and attitudes of a group or society; it relates to the music and films people watch and listen to, the art they create, the buildings they design and the behaviour they display.

Radical: A very different or extreme idea or approach.

Subversion: When anyone tries to destroy or damage a system or a government.

Putsch: an armed uprising against the government .

"The Treaty of Versailles is severe, but it is amazing it is not more so. Thanks to Wilson's insistence, Germany lost remarkably little territory, considering how thoroughly it had lost the war. True, the colonies were gone, but the European losses were relatively few. The real difficulty was not that the treaty was exceptionally severe, but that the Germans thought it was, and in time persuaded others it was."

3 PART: Interpretation Question

Part 1 (4 marks)

How does Interpretation B differ from interpretation A about the terms of the Treaty of Versailles?

Part 2 (4 marks)

Why might the authors of Interpretation A and B have a different interpretation about the treaty?

Part 3 (8 marks)

Which interpretation do you find more convincing about the impact of the Treaty of Versailles?

In what ways question (8 marks)

1) In what ways were the lives of Germans affected by hyperinflation? Explain your answer.

Key Events Timeline

KEY:

Social

Political

Economical

Hitler discovered the German workers party (May 1919)

The Treaty of Versailles was signed (28th June 1919)
Ebert's government had to sign the T of V. It weakened the government because its opponents always blamed it for the problems caused by the treaty. Germany's pride was damaged as it also had to take fault for the war. German people resented that.

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.

Weimar Constitution was Established (August 1919)
It was very democratic minus Article 48.

The New Weimar Government met for the first time (11th February 1919)

Hitler set up the Hitler Youth Organisation (1922)

American Jazz music comes to Germany (January 1920)

1920

No political party ever won more than half the votes in any election (1919-1933)

The Growth of the Nazi Party (1920 -1923)

It had 3000 members in 1920. 5000 members in 1921 and was a minor party in 1923.

Occupation of the Ruhr (January 1923)

France and Belgium occupied the Ruhr region in Germany when Germany couldn't pay their reparations. The invaders took over coal mines, steel works and factories. France intended to force Germany to pay up or work under French control. The Germans were in no position to fight back. They did not have the military strength and the Ruhr was in the Rhineland, the demilitarised area of Germany. Instead, German workers in the Ruhr put up resistance and refused to cooperate with the French and Belgian invaders. They went on strike. With industrial production in the Ruhr at a standstill, Germany was producing almost nothing and not making money.

Hyperinflation (January 1923)

The German government printed more money to pay the strikers in the Ruhr. The economy collapsed and hyperinflation (a rapid rise in the level of prices and goods and services) hit Germany. Almost overnight the life savings of many Germans became worthless and they were forced to sell their valuables to buy food. Some workers were paid twice a day and could spend their wages instantly, but people who were paid monthly or depended on savings suffered because these could not keep up with price rises.

1924

The Rentenmark was replaced by the Reichmark (1924)

Hitler is released from prison after Munich Putsch and his trial (December 1924)

Hitler decided the Nazis could only get in power if they gained the vote.

Mein Kampf was published (18th July 1925)

Hitler wrote his book about Anti-Semitic views whilst in prison. It became very popular and was a piece of propaganda for Nazi views.

Germany joins the League of Nations (9th January 1926)

It was a peacemaking organisation they originally weren't allowed to join. It restored Germany as a 'great power' and boosted Germany's pride.

The percentage of votes for the Nazis decrease (1924-1928)

Nazis had 5% of the votes in 1924, they were very bitter towards the Weimar Government because they signed the Treaty of Versailles. By 1928 the Nazis only received 2% of votes because Germany was more financial stable and enjoying the Golden Age.

Stresemann died of a stroke. (1929)

1928

The Wall Street Crash (October 1929)

The US economy collapsed, the result was that the loans from the USA dried up and America had to recall their loans.. It caused a global depression.

The Spartacist League Revolt (6th January 1919)

The Spartacists were Communists who wanted to copy what Communists had achieved in Russia in 1917. They tried to seize control, helped by some soldiers, sailors and factory workers. Their leaders were killed.

Friedrich Ebert held elections (Late January 1919)

As promised at the end of WW1 Ebert held elections so that Germany could vote for who they wanted to rule Germany. The SPD won and Ebert become the President of Germany.

There were 350 political murders in Germany after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles (1919-1922)

The Nazi Party was founded (February 1920)

Hitler became the leader, designed the new flag with the swastika and changing the name.

Kapp Putsch (March 1920)

Dr. Wolfgang Kapp led a march in Berlin of 5000 Freikorps (ex-soldiers). They wanted to make Germany powerful again with something like an old dictatorship style of government. The putsch was defeated by the workers who declared a general strike.

1922

The amount of reparations that were to be paid were finalised (1921)

By 1921, Germany was faced with the final bill for reparations. It totalled £6,600,000 (132 billion gold marks) to be paid in regular instalments. Reparations were also to be paid in goods as well as money so that France received 5000 trains, 150,000 railway wagons, 10,000 lorries and 140,000 cows.

Munich Putsch (8th-9th November 1923)

Hitler, leader of the Nazi Party, had support in Bavaria. At a meeting in a beer hall, Hitler announced that he and his supports were going to seize power and marched towards the government building. The putsch was quickly defeated. Hitler arrested, put on trial and sent to prison for 5 years.

The Dawes Plan (1924)

It was named after the American Charles Dawes, he organised the loans to help bring economic stability to Europe. Germany borrowed money off the USA to pay reparations and rebuild Germany. Germany started to recover. German people once again had jobs and wages to spend.

1926

Hindenburg became president (February 1925)

Locarno Pact (5th-16th October 1925)

Germany accepted the terms of the Versailles Treaty as they affected Western Europe, for example he accepted that the Rhineland was to be demilitarised permanently. At the same time the French and Belgians agreed not to invade German territory again.

The Golden Age (Throughout the 1920's)

Under the Kaiser there had been strict censorship. When censorship was removed under the Weimar government, painters, writers, musicians and architects revelled in the new freedom- particularly in cities such as Berlin. Clubs and cinemas thrived. German art and architecture became internationally famous.

The Young Plan (February 1929)

Reparation payments were reduced to £2.2 billion and Germany was given longer to pay.

1930

The Great Depression takes over Germany (1930)

The Depression had huge impact on Germans because Germany depended on loans from the USA and because it all still owed reparations to the Allies. German business could not pay back the recalled loans so went bankrupt. Millions of Germans lost their jobs. There were 6 million unemployed by late 1932. The mood of optimism in Germany disappeared.