

# Was the weimar republic doomed from it's very beginning?

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In 1918 the German people were shattered by the unexpected defeat in the first world war. As the war ended, the Kaiser abdicated and early in 1919 Germany's politicians drew up there democratic constitution. Many saw it as doomed from the start with many problems facing it, with opposition from the left and the right. Many believe that the Weimar republic was doomed, this is for a number of reasons. Firstly the government got left with the burden of the treaty of Versailles. The German people were extremely unhappy with the terms they were dealt. Germany experienced lots of territorial changes during this time, which included key industrial areas. In total Germany lost around 13% of its territory resulting to the loss of 12% of its population which lived in these areas (around 6. 5 million) the treaty of Versailles left the government with a large debt from the war to pay off, thus causing the economy to be decreased. Through the loss of land, Germany lost lots of its natural resources and it also caused increased unemployment. The loss of the war created low moral and a death toll totalling 2 million and 6. 3 million wounded which needed looking after. And the German people didn't like the fact that Germany had to accept all blame for the war. For these the German people despised the new republic for accepting the terms. Another reason why it could fail was due to the fact that it was seen as the German authoritarian tradition was gone, were the royal family would previously run the country. The German people saw this and did not like this new political structure were they moved from a dictatorship to a democracy. This new democracy was headed by Friedrich Ebert, he was a saddler who rose to become one of the leaders of the " SPD" , in November 1918 he became chancellor, and in February 1919 he was elected by the new

assembly to be President of the Republic. Ebert steered the Weimar republic to safety, attempting to seek support from both workers and the elite. However this caused hostility from both extreme right and left. By him sit on the fence and not taking a clear stand for either the left or right, caused much hostility and meant he never gained respect of many of the Germans. This un-willingness to take a clear stand for either side meant that many uprisings and revolts occurred. There was threat from the communist left, in January 1919 there was an uprising from the Spartacist party, Ebert's reaction to this was to turn to the right wing Freikorps army, which easily suppressed the uprising with both leader of the party being killed. However this caused even more anger amongst the extreme left, and over the next four years there was much unrest, with many strikes from workers in key industrial areas such as the Ruhr mines and Berlin. There were also uprisings and protest from the extreme right, with the Munich and Kapp Putsch. This is where the army was refusing to obey the government and planned to march on Berlin and overthrow the government there. Many saw the republic was doomed due to the fact that the key social, administrative and judicial structures remained unchanged. The landed elites remained to hold their large amounts of power and influence, the bureaucracy was unchanged and remained hostile. The military virtually stayed unchanged and under control from the same people, and again they remained hostile toward the government. The educated teachers and professors did not agree with all aspects of the democracy and many were hostile. The judiciary system remained unchanged and many were again hostile to the government. The big businesses were also largely unchanged meaning that power of industry

still remained in the hands of the same people, causing too many problems for these people could cause serious repercussions. Many also argued that the Weimar republic was doomed from the very beginning simply because the constitution was too democratic. The mass change in political structure caused un-rest and much confusion. A reason why it could be argued that the Weimar Republic was not doomed from the very beginning was the very fact that they were a democracy, this gave hope to those who usually had no vote in what happened or who was in power. The new political system meant that there was a new political structure put in place, and all men and women over 20 could vote. The spirit of democracy was one of progress. It was the people who voted for the government so they had a choice. This new political structure meant that not one person had control and bad decisions could not be done by one person. The elected president could be appointed and dismissed by the Reichstag which the people elected. And the elected president had control over the army through article 48, which meant that it could be defended against it from its enemy's There were also new individual rights for the working people, such as the 8 hour working day. These changes for working class people gained some confidence in the constitution. Another reason for the Republic not being doomed was that the revolts which were made were easily repelled and did not really cause many problems, some may even argue that they can not be called revolts because nothing was changed from them. You can also say that by the fact that Ebert was in the middle and did not clearly take one side gave the republic a chance of survival, this is because he could attempt to keep support of both, so that by only keeping to one he would severely cause unrest with the

other. Also by 1924 the Weimar republic had survived a series of attempted  
cops and revolts from both the left and right, they became stronger through it  
and then began to make some serious changes. the fact they were willing to  
do this gave the German people a reason to have faith in them. In conclusion  
I believe despite the signs of hope for the Weimar Republic they were always  
doomed from the beginning due to the time the constitution was created and  
the circumstances it was dealt when it started. The political turmoil and  
largely varied opinions and views of the people meant that it was always  
going to have problems from the start!