

# Modern history germany 1918-1945

[Countries](#), [Germany](#)



To what extent did the weaknesses in the Weimar Republic account for the growth and rise to power of the Nazi Party to 1933? The Weimar Republic was created in 1919 with the abdication of Wilhelm II. The new government was the body that signed the Treaty of Versailles, and to many, this was a betrayal. The consequences of Versailles were severe to Germany, and many were looking for someone to blame, the government was the ideal scape goat. Communists and the right saw an opportunity to create a state that they wanted, and were prepared to challenge the new republic for this.

Many richer Germans had lived well under the Kaiser, and distrusted the new government. This began a long line of challenges that would become the Weimar Republic's weaknesses and would later on, lead to their defeat and the growth and rise of the Nazi Party. From the start, the new Weimar government faced opposition from both left and right. The Left wing Spartacist group, lead by Luxemburg and Liebknecht, admired the new Russian Communist political system, and with the fall of the Kaiser, saw an opportunity to attempt to place Germany into a similar system.

In January 1919 they revolted, and tried to take control of Berlin, with the support of the USDP they proclaimed a new revolutionary government. However, Ebert had already won the support of the military with the Ebert-Groener pact, and the troops suppressed the revolt. This pact was significant, meaning the government had associated itself with the right, and perhaps this early incident is one of the factors which would convince the government to appoint Hitler Chancellor in 1933. The Right, were next to revolt and in 1920 the Kapp Putsch revolt occurred.

Monarchists seized government buildings in Berlin; and this forced the government to flee to Stuttgart. The rebels however, surrendered on March 17 as unions declared a general strike. Yet again the government had had another close escape. At this stage the political instability was through the roof thanks to the financial implications of the Treaty of Versailles. By 1921, the level of reparations had been fixed to 132, 000, 000 gold marks. And it was clearly evident that Germany was so weakened by this, that it would not be able to pay.

By January 1923, the French were angered at Germany's poor lack of payment, and occupied with force, the Ruhr region. The citizens of the Ruhr began to hate the French who were exploiting them, and so again, the people needed someone to blame. Of course this being the same people who had agreed to pay reparations, their government. By November 1923, the situation of hyperinflation had skyrocketed, as small firms collapsed and were bought out at prices far below their real value. Ownership of the German economy became concentrated into the hands of a small few powerful interests.

Money was becoming more and more worthless by the day. Burnt constantly, as it became cheaper than firewood itself. The middle classes had their savings devalued considerably, and there was general discontent all over. The Treaty of Versailles was signed by the new government, and this treaty was causing great anguish. The people of Germany had no one to blame but the government, the majority of the country were angered, and it could be considered that with universal criticism, and perhaps some hatred, the new republic was doomed to fail.

The extremist Nazi's had only 12 seats in 1928, and had little or no voice in national government. The socialists were in control with 153 seats and had a steady recovery in progress, with no radical changes planned. The government itself had progressed from an imperial autocracy to a democratic republic. Universal suffrage came about; meaning their head of state could be changed every seven years if the people became unhappy. From the uplift during the late 1920's there was optimism for the republic, the economy, and the German culture.

This optimism was rudely interrupted however, by the devastating world depression and the heavily impacting Wall Street crash which meant that "anyone who bought stocks in mid-1929 and held onto them, saw most of his or her adult life pass by before getting back to even". With this, social breakdown followed, with an increase in crime. Many women turned to prostitution to feed their families and shortly after, Berlin became the centre for experimental artistic movements as well as Nightclubs, cabaret, and Cafes that became notorious for immorality.

After this, investment was withdrawn from the economy, causing Germany to go into decline once again. Unemployment then reaches record levels of six million. With this many people began to turn to Hitler, who preached employment and greatness and promised major improvement. This was reflected in the Nazis then gaining 107 seats in the 1930 election. Showing that people were looking for a proper extremist solution. There were thousands of demonstrations against the government from most political groups throughout but these were overpowered by the 1,300 Nazi demonstrations that took place during 1930 alone.

Bruining then relied on decrees to keep order. The depression created the very situation that Hitler had been waiting for. The Nazi's believed that only a national catastrophe would see them win power, and they were correct. The Nazi's stirred up opposition to the government and republic, by linking the government to Versailles, and linking Versailles and the Weimar Republic to all of Germany's problems. As Hitler had such a wide political appeal, the Nazis then began to blame other political groups, especially the communists.

Hitler was an excellent orator, and had a strong personality which promised greatness for the German people. He became attractive to the modern day worker and the middle classes as he promised secure employment at a time when people were distrusting of their own current government. Hitler also promised that he would act legally and with order. Another appeal which gave peace to the German people. However, the elections of 1932 saw the Nazi's lose two million votes at the expense of the communists, the KPD. The country was showing signs of splitting into two.

But the one thing that both groups had in common was that they wanted to change the system of government. This did not sit well with the Weimar republic. By now it was clear that the country was going to go one way and the republic was doomed. There was a great fear of civil war amongst the people, and they had to choose who they wanted to prevent this, and unite the country once again. By March 1933 it was clear that more people had turned to the Nazis, who gained 92 more seats, and the communists lost 19.

The Nazi revolution was beginning. By this time, the Reichstag saw a Nazi majority and was headed by a Nazi Chancellor. Key Nazi points were soon introduced as law. Point 25 of the Nazi 25 points, Centralisation, was evident

when Hitler subordinated the local governments. By May, trade unions were banned, the S. D. P was dissolved, and by June, the Nazi party was the only legal party. When Hindenburg died a year later, Hitler appointed himself Fuhrer, and the Weimar republic came to an end.

From the very start, I gained the perspective that many believed that the weak foundations in which the republic was built on, combined with the roles of the conservative elite's in German society as well as the Great Depression were the strong influences which lead to the downfall of the Weimar Republic and the rise of the Nazis. Clearly the Weimar republic faced opposition from both sides of the political spectrum. This created potential for the reintroduction of a monarch, or even a communist state, and several attempted revolutions occurred.

The public blamed their problems on the Treaty of Versailles, and in turn, blamed the government that signed it. I think we can agree that from the 1930s the Weimar Republic was surely doomed, when the country was splitting into two groups, the left and the right, with both wanting an end to the republic, and a change to another political system, communist or Nazi. The Weimar was a rushed and often referred to as a 'mistaken democracy, with a dysfunctional nature, that aided in the rise of Nazism. ' The Weimar republic started in chaos, spent much of its short life in chaos, and dissolved without putting up much resistance. But although it was weakened by these many evolving issues, I believe that the Weimar Republic was not the only factor to Hitler's rise as his use of aggressive and persuasive propaganda with the backup of violence, brainwashed many people into believing that he was the only option for Germany to follow. I believe that no one factor was

responsible for the collapse of the Weimar republic, but it being a combination of factors and circumstances that lead to its down fall and the growth and rise of power that was then passed to the strategic and overbearing Nazi Party lead by Hitler in 1933. Freya Young, Year 12 Modern History

Bibliography and Referencing Internet A quote from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wall\\_Street\\_Crash\\_of\\_1929](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wall_Street_Crash_of_1929) " Anyone who bought stocks in mid-1929 and held onto them saw most of his or her adult life pass by before getting back to even. " Quote by Richard M. Salsman <http://www.oppapers.com/essays/Rise-Nazi-Party/15442> Books The Weimar Republic, Written By Detlev J. K. Peukert From Weimar to Hitler (Germany 1918-33) Author: E. J. Feuchtwanger Excel HSC, Modern History, Author Ron Ringer