

Weimar society and culture



The good years for Weimar Germany were from 1924 to 1929, when the Republic got through the crises of 1923 and entered a stage of stability.

The economy at this time was prosperous and the political chaos turned to constancy. The brilliant culture of Germany made it the centre of European creativity. This was in the areas of music, film, art, literature, science and more where Berlin showed great talents! Berlin was now seen as one of the most exciting cities in Europe, and Germany was accepted back as an equal in to the community. Theatre and the cabaret especially flourished in Weimar society and culture with the concept of Proletarian Theatre developed by Erwin Piscator coming in to play. This theatre produced plays as well as challenging views of the members of society which hadn't been seen much before this time. A man named Bertolt Brecht along with composer Kurt Weill; they created The Threepenny Opera, a production that became very successful when it first appeared in 1928.

Brecht was a communist and his work usually expressed his lack of exception with the commercial mid-class culture. Most theatre pieces of Germany were different to the past because much of it had a political and social message. When it came to the cinema, Berlin had a very progressive film industry. In the 1920's, more films were produced than in the rest of Europe combined.

Many amazing German directors were discovered who included Fritz Lang, Joseph von Sternberg and Ernst Lubitsch. Some of the movie master pieces these men created include: The Cabinet of Dr Caligari, The Blue Angel, Metropolis and Nosferatu. Blue Angel launched its star Marlene Dietrich who

became world famous. Nosferatu was a German horror movie and so was The Cabinet of Dr Caligari. The Cabinet of Dr Caligari was directed in 1919 by Robert Wiene; and is the story of murder and deception set in a small German town of Hols enwall.

Both of these horror movies were re-made again in the future. Great film companies made German cinema one of the most notable in the world (a position it never again achieved). Leading composers of atonal music taught and heard their works first performed in Weimar Germany. The following decade in Germany was full of wonderful writers and great literature.

Some of these writers include Hermann Hesse, Thomas Mann and Erich Maria Remarque who was famous for his novel ' All Quiet on the Western Front. ' A. q. o. t. w.

f. was published in 1928 and was the most famous of all his work. The novel is about the cruelty of war from a soldier's perspective. Thomas Mann was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, 1929, most probably because of his successful novels Buddenbrooks and magic mountain.

The famous school of architecture ' Bauhaus' came across the new designs for German building. Walter Gropius was the founder of the school in 1919, believed that art should work with technology and make a change to the buildings they were to create. The school reflected the issues going on in Germany and rejected the older more traditional styles that were seen in the dire times of the country. Berlin, in particular, became a thriving midpoint of many new art movements such as Dadaism and expressionism. Artists used techniques that were new and unusual to produce meaningful works that

expressed the world and reality. Artists liked to express their feelings and emotions; most of the time reflecting the suffering and hardships many Germans had to go through in society.

The major artists of this period include George Grosz, Otto Dix and Max Ernst (as well as many more). Max Ernst was particularly famous because of his weird behaviour and unorthodox methods. The Weimar artists were first influenced by Russia and the USA. The assembly line technique that was developed in the American auto industry, the skyscraper, and styles of the American's mass consumption seemed to be the core of modern Weimar artists. They adapted some American forms but often used them critically and creatively.

Germany had the most educated population in Europe so it made technological and scientific advances during the 1920's. Seven Nobel prizes were won by German scientists through out the decade; and had the most famous scientists of them all; Albert Einstein who worked in Germany until 1933. Einstein was a theoretical physicist who was best known for his theory of relativity which is $E=mc^2$. He won the 1921 Nobel Prize in Physics. A man named Karl Mannheim developed theories encouraged by a synthesis of socialism and Freudian therapy that have proven highly influential in the twentieth-century. In addition to that, the Weimar Republic "inherited" excellent universities and science centres.

Gottingen was the world's most famous centre for physics, and German was the international language in physics and chemistry. The technology of Weimar Germany also boomed. The world's first great passenger airship was

created and named the Graf Zeppelin. This humongous plane was created by a company called Luftschiffbau Zeppelin and was filled with oxygen to make its crossings to the USA and South America. One day it even flew around the whole world! Another German airship made was named the Hindenburg and only to destroy itself while attempting landing in 1937.

Also communications advances such as the radio were developed. The New roads and railways were being made, so now the motor industry including the Mercedes and the BMW flourished. Like any catastrophe, the Great Inflation also had important social effects; which hit many people of the middle class. For example, young girls were permitted by their parents to hire themselves out as prostitutes so long as they were paid with butter, one of the most precious goods of inflation-ridden Germany. Government officials once who were corrupt; willingly accepted bribes in the form of food or foreign money in exchange for permits and ration cards. One might even see government officials and men of the world of high finance courting drunken sailors without shame.

In Berlin, hundreds of men dressed as women, and hundreds of women as men under the accepting eyes of the police! Not saying all Germans reacted to the inflation in this way, even the middle class. One of the more serious reactions to the uncertain economy was the growing suspicion amongst the middle class that the Jews were somehow responsible.