

## WW1 impact on Germany:

Social unrest

Influenza pandemic

Allies' naval blockade = food shortages

Public opinion turned against Kaiser Wilhelm II, resulting in the Kiel mutiny which called for his abdication on the 9th Nov 1918 so Germany became a Republic

10th Nov 1918: all politicians appointed by monarch left their posts  
Temporary government set up in Reichstag: comprised of SPD & USDP (council of people's representatives) until Jan 1919 elections

Nov 11th 1918: Armistice signed by Ebert (after coercion from the Allies), calling for a ceasefire to end WW1

Nationalists objected, calling Ebert & supporters of the clause 'November criminals'

## Weimar Republic (in power in the Reichstag):

Ebert = president (leader of SPD), democratically elected

Feb 1919: constitution drafted & Aug 1919 made active in which: president elected every 7 years & members every 4 years.

Reichstrat: 2nd House of Parliament (regional government)

Pros of constitution: voting age was 20, women could vote, Bill of rights (protected freedoms of: religion, assembly, speech & equality)

Cons of constitution: proportional representation (>0.4% of vote = seat, percentage of votes = seat percentage) = coalition governments formed, Article 48: undermines democracy, for it allows Ebert to pass Acts at his own accord (was abused & could suspend constitution by passing copious decrees)

## Early Weimar unpopularity:

Treaty of Versailles signed June 1919, perceived as a 'Diktat' in which Ebert committed 'dolchstoß' = mass resentment!!

## Terms of TOV:

Article 231: Germany accepted complete war guilt

\$6.6b reparations

Armed forces reduced to 100,000 men, only 6 warships & no aircraft

German empire dissolved, given to Allies as mandates by League of Nations

Demilitarisation of Rhineland (open to western attack)

Caused mass Weimar discontent & social unrest

## Revolutions:

### Extreme Left:

Spartacist Jan 1919: KPD lead by Liebknecht & Luxemburg in attempts to overthrow Weimar. Seized Berlin radio headquarters & strike of 50,000 workers. Ebert called Freikorps (right wing army) to disperse the communists: 100+ workers killed. Ebert = losing control rapidly!

### Extreme Right:

Kapp Putsch March 1920: aimed to install right-wing gov in Reichstag, Freikorps marched to Berlin, Ebert fled to Netherlands but called for general strike. 1922: Freikorps assassinated Walter (Jewish foreign minister.)

Opposition from extremists was causing Weimar gov to collapse from inside out, social unrest proved very problematic for a Germany already plagued by sociopolitical, geopolitical & socioeconomic hardship!

## Social cohesion: (Ebert's attempt at maintaining power via compromise of policy)

Civil servants kept law & order

Army kept republic in power

Industrialists promised no collectivisation of industry

Trade unions appeased with 8hr work days

## Occupation of Ruhr:

1923: French & Belgium forces occupied Ruhr region (abundant in coal & oil reserves) to compensate for a lack of Reparation payments

German workers went on strike, disrupting transport networks & extraction processes so Ebert decided to print more money to pay their wages

## =hyperinflation CRISIS

(Production couldn't keep up with the amount of money in circulation)

German marks = worthless

## Impacts of hyperinflation:

Middle class: savings made worthless so nothing to fall back on if made redundant

Working class: pensioners & those on fixed incomes suffered

Upper class: bartered foreign currency for essentials & bought small firms

Farmers: ate own crops, raised crop prices for profit

But debt from banks could be repaid

## German Recovery under Stresemann:

1923: Stresemann became chancellor, then foreign minister- leading to the GOLDEN YEARS of the Weimar Republic

Sep 1923: Ruhr strike ended, reducing diplomatic tensions

Nov 1923: Rentenmark created, tied to value of gold

'Great Coalition' (moderates merged) created to speed up decision making

Dawes Plan 1924: secured \$40 mil loans from USA ('dancing on a volcano'- S)= dependency on USA

Young Plan 1929: allies reduced reparations to \$29b, giving Germany 58 years to repay them

Locarno Pact 1925: respect of joint borders agreed

League of Nations: Germany joined in 1926

Stresemann enabled German economic recovery via foreign policy until his death in Oct 1929, in which Germany suffered majorly AGAIN

## Wallstreet Crash 1929:

Evoked a Great Depression due to USA stock market crash

USA demanded loan-repayments from Dawes plan

Industrial output went into decline

6 million unemployed by 1933 due to business closure

Bruining ('hunger chancellor') raised taxes & reduced welfare benefits via >100 DECREES, lead to homelessness & increased crime rates (increase of 24% in theft in Berlin)

Middle/upperclass savings & stock investments dissolved

Lead to MAJOR Weimar detest for Germany was rife with poverty- giving rise to extremist support e.g. of the Nazis in search of a solution that moderates had failed to provide

Bourgeois feared KPD so supported Nazis

## Weimar Golden years:

**Economic:** 1927 unemployment insurance act

Pensioners act 1920: 750k fund for ex-veterans

2 mil homes built= enhanced standard of living

Economic prosperity was facilitated by Stresemann's foreign policy (Dawes & Young plans)

**Women:** 112 women in Reichstag

Divorce = easier

**Article 109:** equality under the law

Dominated education & healthcare job sectors as they took on white-collar roles

But no woman held any cabinet posts in 14 years/ sat in the Reichstag

## Arts:

Freedom of expression in: film, art, literature & architecture

Books had anti-military undertones & messages from both the left & the right

Germany became a leader in cinematography through the rise of sci-fi e.g Lang's metropolis & expressionism featured in movies

Objectivity movement focused on realism, not modernism in art