

# PART ONE: GERMANY AND THE RISE OF DEMOCRACY

By 1914, Germany was a modern superpower with a strong military and industry. After military defeat and revolution in 1918, Germany became a republic and signed the **Treaty of Versailles**, crippling the economy and angering the people. Economic pressures led to **hyperinflation** in 1923, followed by a supposed **Golden Age** financed by US bank loans.

- What was Germany like before WWI?
- How did WWI impact Germany?
- What challenges did the Weimar Government face?
- Was there really a Weimar "Golden Age"?

**1871-1914**



### IMPERIAL GERMANY

Unified in 1871 and led by **Kaiser Wilhelm II** from 1888, Germany focussed on militarism, industrialisation and empire building. By 1914 Germany was a global superpower. Most Germans believed the Great War was not their fault and victory was achievable.

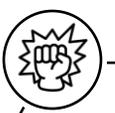
**1918**



### KAISER'S ABDICATION & ARMISTICE

After the failure of the Spring Offensive, the Kaiser abdicated, and Germany faced invasion. **Friedrich Ebert** took over Germany temporarily and agreed to end fighting on 11/11/18. Many Germans subscribed to the **Dolchstoß** myth, and believed those who signed the Armistice were traitors and 'November Criminals'. Anger towards the government was spreading.

**1919**



### SPARTICISTS UPRISING

On 6<sup>th</sup> January 1919 100,000 members of the Spartacist League (a **communist** group) revolted in Berlin. They took over important buildings like the telegraph office, and the Government nearly lost Berlin. **Friedrich Ebert** ordered the **Freikorps** to stop the rebellion. **Luxemburg** and **Liebkecht** were murdered, and the rebellion ended on 12<sup>th</sup> January.

**1919**



### TREATY OF VERSAILLES

Facing invasion, the new government agreed to allied demands to officially end the war. The ToV severely weakened Germany's economy, military and territory, and forced them to accept blame. Many Germans saw it as a **diktat** and were furious with the allies and government for signing it. Reversing the Treaty and seeking revenge for it was a popular political message.

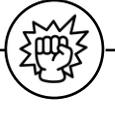
**1919**



### WEIMAR CONSTITUTION

Signed in August 1919, the new constitution laid out how the country would run. Germany became one of the most democratic countries in the world on paper; everyone over 20 could vote, power should have been shared by the **Chancellor**, **President** and **Reichstag**, and smaller parties should have mattered. In reality, the Constitution created weaknesses and many Germans had little faith in it.

**1920**



### KAPP PUTSCH

Right wing revolt led by **Wolfgang Kapp**. 5000 **Freikorps** members took control of Berlin and the Weimar Government fled. Kapp was successful in seizing power, but the workers of Berlin went on strike, cutting of electricity, water, gas and trains. Kapp gave in and fled abroad; **Ebert** and the government returned to Berlin. Workers in the Ruhr stayed on strike in the **Red Rising**.

**1923**



### HYPERINFLATION

After a missed reparation payment Belgian and French troops invaded and occupied the **Ruhr**. Workers were ordered to strike, and to pay them the German government printed money. Excessive printing meant money lost its value. By December bread was 201 billion marks. Those with savings lost everything. Faith in the government eroded and anger towards them and France increased.

**1923**



### MUNICH PUTSCH

Adolf Hitler attempted to seize power by force. Supported by **Ludendorff** he stormed a Munich beer hall and took the state leaders hostage. Hitler planned to take Munich then march on Berlin. His plan failed and he and Ludendorff were arrested. Hitler claimed he was defending Germany and received support for his actions. He was sent to prison and whilst there wrote *Mien Kampf*.

**1924**



### NEW CURRENCY

**Gustav Stresemann** introduced a new currency (the Rentenmark) and central bank (Rentenbank) to replace the hyperinflated mark. The new currency held its value and the hyperinflation crisis ended. In 1924 the Reichsmark and Reichsbank became the new currency and bank, and remained in place for 25 years.

**1924**



### DAWES PLAN

An 800 million mark loan was agreed from the USA. Germany was able to make reparation payments and French troops left the **Ruhr**. Loans kickstarted the German economy and new factories, schools, houses and roads were built. A cultural '**Golden Age**' was experienced in major cities like Berlin. In 1929 the **Young Plan** reduced reparation payments from £6.6bn to £1.8bn and gave Germany longer to pay, further boosting the economy.

**1925**



### LOCARNO PACT

After WWI Germany was no longer considered a world power. Stresemann was desperate to change this and signed the Locarno Pact; France, Belgium, Italy, Britain and Germany agreed not to invade each other. The fact that Germany was invited to sign showed the world that it was still a major power.

**1926**



### LEAGUE OF NATIONS

After WWI 42 countries created an organisation to try maintain world peace. Leaders of the countries would meet to discuss issues. Germany was originally banned, damaging its international reputation. Germany did join in 1926 again showing it was becoming a key world power and rebuilding its reputation.

**1928**



### KELLOGG- BRIAND PACT

Participating countries agreed to never go to war with each other, apart from to defend themselves if attacked. Like the agreements of 1925 and 1926, the fact that Germany was invited to sign showed that its international reputation had been rebuilt.



### KAISER WILHELM II

Leader 1888-1918; focussed on military, industry and empire to make Germany a global power. Forced to abdicate after German military defeat in Nov. 1918.



### FRIEDRICH EBERT

Leader of the SPD in 1918; took control of Germany when the Kaiser abdicated. President of Germany 1919- 1925.



### ROSA LUXEMBURG & KARL LIEBKNECHT

**Communists** and leaders of the Spartacist League. Both were killed after the Spartacists Uprising in January 1919.



### WOLFGANG KAPP

Led 5000 men of the **Freikorps** in the Kapp Putsch; attempted to overthrow the government in Berlin and reverse the Treaty of Versailles.



### ADOLF HILTER

Leader of the NSDAP ('Nazi Party'). Austrian WWI veteran based in Munich. Wanted to make Germany great after the humiliation of defeat.



### ERICH LUDENDORFF

Famous General and leader of Germany during WW1; supported Hitler during the Munich Putsch.



### GUSTAV STRESEMANN

**Chancellor** in 1923 & Foreign Minister 1924-1929; restored Germany's economy and international reputation, leading to the 'Golden Age'.



### CHARLES DAWES

American banker and Vice President from 1925- 1929. Agreed to loan Germany money to rebuild the country as part of the 'Dawes Plan'.

**ARTICLE 48** Allowed the President to rule by himself in times of emergency.

**CHANCELLOR** Ran Germany day-to-day; leader of the biggest party in the **Reichstag**. Had to have support of 50% of the Reichstag members.

**COMMUNISM** A left wing political idea; all land, wealth and power should be controlled by the government to be shared by the workers. Violence is considered acceptable in achieving this goal.

**DIKTAT** 'Dictated peace'; the name given to the Treaty of Versailles due to its incredibly harsh terms.

**DOLCHSTOSS (Stab-in-the-back)** The myth that Germany was not defeated militarily in 1918 but betrayed (or 'stabbed in the back') by members of the Government.

**FRIEKORPS (Free Corps)** Right wing ex-soldiers who organised into military style units.

**GOLDEN AGE** A period in which Germany became famous for producing internationally famous films, art, literature and design.

**PRESIDENT (Head of State)** Voted for by the people; in charge of appointing a Chancellor and maintaining security and peace. Could use **Article 48** if required.

**REICHSTAG** German parliament; members were voted for by everyone over 20 and laws were passed when 50% of members agreed to them.

**RUHR** Industrial area on the border of France; responsible for most of Germany's coal production.

# PART TWO: GERMANY AND THE DEPRESSION

In October 1929 the Wall Street Crash brought about the collapse of the US economy, and with it, the German economy which had been underpinned by huge US loans. Within months the Weimar Republic had descended from 'Golden Age' to economic, social and political chaos. Out of this chaos Adolf Hitler emerged as a Chancellor, promising to restore Germany to its former greatness. By summer 1934 Hitler manipulated his way from democratic leader to dictator; he had become the Führer.

- How did the Great Depression impact Germany?
- How did Hitler become Chancellor?
- How did Hitler become a dictator?

**Oct 1929**

### WALL STREET CRASH

During the 1920s individuals, businesses and banks in the United States began investing in stocks and shares in major companies. Initially this created an economic boom, paving way for the 'roaring twenties'. In October 1929 panic set in and on the 29<sup>th</sup> October (Black Tuesday) a mass sale triggered a total collapse of the stock market.

**1930-**

### THE GREAT DEPRESSION

Germany's close ties to the US economy (Dawes Plan) guaranteed a severe economic downturn as a result of the Wall Street Crash. As loans were recalled German businesses shut and unemployment rocketed to a high of 6million in 1932, leading to wider social crises such as homelessness, crime and starvation. The Weimar Government seemed incapable of dealing with what appeared to be the complete collapse of Germany.

**Sep 1930**

### 1930 REICHSTAG ELECTIONS

As economic collapse led to social and political crisis, support for extremism rose. The Nazis gained 107 seats and became the second biggest party (after the SPD). **Heinrich Brüning** became Chancellor and attempted to rescue Germany by cutting benefits for the workers and raising taxes for the rich.

**July 1932**

### JULY 1932 REICHSTAG ELECTIONS

Heinrich Brüning failed to deal with the Great Depression and resigned in July 1932. An election was called and the Nazis became the biggest party, winning 230 seats. **Hindenburg** refused to make Hitler Chancellor and appointed **Franz Von Papen**.

**Nov 1932**

### NOVEMBER 1932 REICHSTAG ELECTIONS

Von Papen never gained support in the Reichstag and called another election in November; the Nazis lost seats, but with 196 were still the biggest party. Hitler demanded that Hindenburg make him Chancellor but he refused. Von Papen resigned and Hindenburg turned to an old friend **Kurt Von Schleicher**.

**Jan 1933**

### HITLER APPOINTED CHANCELLOR

With no support Von Schleicher cannot rule as Chancellor. Von Papen and Hindenburg plan to remove Schleicher and replace him with Hitler. They believe they can control Hitler by having Von Papen serve as the Vice Chancellor and limiting the number of Nazis in government.

**Feb 1933**

### REICHSTAG FIRE

Dutch communist Marinus van der Lubbe sets fire to the Reichstag. Hitler claimed the fire was the start of a violent communist revolution and fear of communism intensified.

**Feb 1933**

### REICHSTAG FIRE DECREE

Hitler convinced Hindenburg to use Article 48 to pass a 'Decree for the Protection of the People and State' (aka the Reichstag Fire Decree) which suspended parts of the Constitution, removing basic Rights, e.g. to freedom of speech, press and assembly.

**Mar 1933**

### ENABLING ACT

Hitler passed the Enabling Act, which gave him the power to pass laws without the need to consult the Reichstag or Hindenburg; Hitler was now a dictator in all but name.

**April 1933**

### POLICE STATE FORMED

The Nazis replace all local governments, councils and police. The Gestapo are formed and the first concentration camp opened in Dachau.

**Jun 1934**

### NIGHT OF THE LONG KNIVES

Although Chancellor, Hitler did not have total power, and he felt threatened by the SA. To ensure he had total power, Hitler eliminated the SA by executing their leaders, most importantly **Ernst Rohm**. Hitler also killed prominent conservatives like Kurt von Schleicher. The Night of the Long Knives gave Hitler total power of his party, and also encouraged the German Army to back Hitler.

**Aug 1934**

### DEATH OF HINDENBURG

On 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 1934 President Hindenburg died. Rather than calling for elections, Hitler used his power to merge the positions of Chancellor and President and gave himself total power, calling himself **Führer**.



**PRESIDENT PAUL VON HINDENBURG**  
President 1925- 1934; Leader of the German Army during WWI and right wing. Ruled Germany through Article 48 during the early 1930s; appointed Hitler.



**HERMAN MÜLLER**  
Chancellor June 1928- March 1930; Müller struggled to pass laws during the Great Depression, and eventually, Hindenburg refused to use Article 48, forcing him to resign.



**HEINRICH BRÜNING**  
Chancellor March 1930- July 1932; Brüning was a conservative who tried to stabilise the German economy, but ended up angering the left and right. He was eventually sacked.



**FRANZ VON PAPEN**  
Chancellor July 1932- Nov 1932; Papen was a conservative landowner and former General with no Reichstag support who ruled using Article 48.



**KURT VON SCHLEICHER**  
Chancellor Dec 1932- Jan 1933; Schleicher was an Army General and advisor to Hindenburg who was sacked when he tried to turn Germany into a military dictatorship.



**ERNST RÖHM**  
Leader of the SA; Röhm was a socialist with huge power in the Nazi Party. Hitler saw Röhm as a threat and killed him during the Night of the Long Knives.



**JOSEPH GOEBBELS**  
In charge of Nazi Propaganda and eventually Reich Minister of Propaganda from 1933; Goebbels knew how to use propaganda to manipulate and stir emotion.



**HEINRICH HIMMLER**  
Leader of the SS and responsible for law and order in Nazi Germany; Himmler oversaw the running of concentration camps.

**ARTICLE 48** Allowed the President to rule by himself in times of emergency.

**CHANCELLOR** Ran Germany day-to-day; leader of the biggest party in the **Reichstag**. Had to have support of 50% of the Reichstag members.

**COMMUNISM** A left wing political idea; all land, wealth and power should be controlled by the government to be shared by the workers. Violence is considered acceptable in achieving this goal.

**DECREE** Meaning 'law'; Hindenburg led by 'decree' as he ruled by making laws himself, rather than asking the Reichstag to vote.

**PRESIDENT (Head of State)** Voted for by the people; in charge of appointing a Chancellor and maintaining security and peace. Could use **Article 48** if required.

**REICHSTAG** German parliament; members were voted for by everyone over 20 and laws were passed when 50% of members agreed to them.

**SCHUTZSTAFFEL (SS)** Hitler's private bodyguard which replaced the SA as the paramilitary force of the NSDAP. They were responsible for law and order in the Nazi Germany and led by Heinrich Himmler.

**STURMABTEILUNG (SA)** The paramilitary (private army) of the NSDAP led by Ernst Röhm. They contributed to Hitler's rise by fighting communists and serving as an example of discipline, but were eventually eliminated by Hitler during the Night of the Long Knives.

# PART THREE: LIFE IN NAZI GERMANY

When President Paul von Hindenburg died on the 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1934 Adolf Hitler abolished the position and made himself Führer. With total control over Germany, the Nazi government set about rebuilding Germany as the 'Third Reich'. The Nazis oversaw significant economic developments based on public works and rearmament, and effectively used a combination of propaganda and terror to control the population. With the drive to create a 'pure Aryan' Reich, the Nazis oversaw one of the worst genocides in human history and the death of 6million Jews.

**1933** 

**CONTROL OF CULTURE BEGINS**  
As soon as they took power the government attempted to remove all aspects of 'threatening' and 'un-German' culture; book burnings were common at universities, the Bauhaus School was shut down, jazz and Jewish music was banned, clubs were shut, and theatres and cinemas were forced to only put on productions of 'German plays'

**1933** 

**CONCENTRATION CAMPS ESTABLISHED**  
In March Dachau concentration camp was opened to house political prisoners and expanded to include other *Untermensch*. 23 main camps were built and around 1.6million people were sent to them; although murder was not the expressed intention around 1million died. Prisoners were often used for forced labour.

**1933** 

**REARMAMENT ACCELERATES**  
Under Schacht's leadership fake companies like MEFO were established to rebuild the military, increasing employment levels and preparing Germany for the coming war. Secrecy was dropped in March 1935 and Germany's military strength was openly displayed at the 7<sup>th</sup> Party Congress (Nuremburg Rally) in September 1935.

**1933** 

**PUBLIC WORKS SCHEMES BEGIN**  
The Nazis commissioned the building of the autobahn network; the first was opened in 1935 and by 1938 around 3800km of roads had been built. Schools and hospitals were also built. These schemes provided employment over 100,000 people and improved the lives of the population by modernising Germany.

**1933** 

**GERMAN LABOUR FRONT (DAF) ESTABLISHED**  
Replacing all Trade Unions in Germany, the DAF promised to protect worker's rights and improve conditions to build the intended *Volksgemeinschaft* The DAF established several programs to do this:

**1933** 

**STRENGTH THROUGH JOY (KDF)**  
Offered affordable holidays and other leisure activities like tickets to football matches. In 1937 *Volkswagen* ('People's Car') was established to provide a truly affordable family car. Nicknamed the 'KDF-Wagen' the first models became available in 1938.

**1933** 

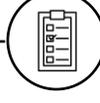
**BEAUTY IN LABOUR (DAF)**  
Designed to improve working environments; installed better lighting, safety equipment, low-cost canteens, sporting equipment and safety equipment.

**1934** 

**REICH LABOUR SERVICE (RAD) ESTABLISHED**  
The Nazis formally created the RAD in July 1934. In 1935 they made it compulsory for all men 18-25 to serve 6 months. The RAD was organised like the military with men wearing uniforms and living in camps. Works included planting forests, digging drainage ditches, and the infrastructure for the 1936 Olympic games.

**1935** 

**NUREMBURG LAWS PASSED**  
The government passed the *Reich Citizenship Laws*, legally separating Jews from Germans and removing basic rights for Jews, including the right to vote. The government also passed the *Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour* banning marriage and sexual relationships between Jews and Germans to protect the 'purity' of Germany.

**1936** 

**FIRST FOUR YEAR PLAN**  
Introduced and overseen by Göring with the intention of preparing Germany for war. High production targets were set in industries like steel and armament production, most of which were missed. **Autarky** was a key focus with companies like IG Farben developing *ersatz* alternatives to goods that couldn't be produced in Germany, such as cotton from pulped wool and oil from coal.

**1936** 

**OLYMPIC GAMES**  
Held in Berlin the games were designed to show off how far Germany had come in 3 years. For the event Hitler ordered the building of a new stadium, the Olympiastadion, with a capacity of over 100,000 and the games were filmed by Leni Riefenstahl, who used cutting edge technologies to create propaganda films. The Nazis won the games, giving Hitler and the population confidence that Germans really were superior.

**1938** 

**KRISTALLNACHT**  
The start of the Holocaust; the SS carried out a terror campaign against the Jewish population on the night of the 9-10th of November. 10,000 shops were attacked, and 200 synagogues were burned down in the 'night of the broken glass' resulting in 100 deaths and 20,000 Jews being sent to concentration camps.

**1942** 

**WANNSEE CONFERENCE**  
A meeting of leading Nazis chaired by Reinhard Heydrich met to discuss the 'Final Solution to the Jewish Question' and agreed to a plan of systemic murder of the Jews using the extermination camp network.

**1944** 

**JULY BOMB PLOT**  
A group of Wehrmacht officers attempted to assassinate Hitler after Germany military failure became obvious. Claus von Stauffenberg left a bomb in the 'Wolf's Lair'; the bomb did go off, but Hitler was only injured.

- **Did the Nazis improve/plan to improve Germany?**
- **How did the Nazis control the population?**
- **How did the Nazis change lives?**
- **What opposition did the Nazis face?**



**JOSEPH GOEBBELS**  
Reich Minister of Propaganda from 1933; Goebbels knew how to use propaganda to manipulate and stir emotion.



**HEINRICH HIMMLER**  
Leader of the SS and responsible for law and order in Nazi Germany; Himmler oversaw the running of concentration camps.



**REINHARD HEYDRICH**  
Leader of the SD and architect of the Holocaust. Oversaw the Wannsee Conference and put in charge of Bohemia (modern day Czechia).



**HJALMAR SCHACHT**  
President of the Reichsbank 1933-1939 and Minister of Economics 1934-1937; Schacht oversaw economic growth in the 1930s but disagreed with a lot of Nazi policy and was dismissed by Hitler.



**HERMANN GÖRING**  
Leader of the Luftwaffe (Air Force) and part of Hitler's inner circle. Originally led the Gestapo and put in charge of the Four-Year Plans.



**SOPHIE SCHOLL**  
University of Munich student and leader of the White Rose Group; beheaded in 1943 for resisting the Nazi regime by handing out leaflets and posters.



**CLAUS VON STAUFFENBURG**  
Colonel in the Wehrmacht (Army) responsible for the July Bomb Plot 1944. Stauffenberg's bomb killed 4 men and injured Hitler, but the plot failed.



**MARTIN NIEMÖLLER**  
Leader of the Confessional Church; sent to a concentration camp for criticising Nazi rule.

**AUTARKY** The economic policy of striving for 'self-sufficiency' to increase the strength of the nation by relying on itself, for example, in the production of raw materials.

**GESTAPO** The secret police of Nazi Germany.

**REARMAMENT** The rebuilding of the military in contravention of the Treaty of Versailles.

**GLEICHSHALTUNG:** 'Nazification'; bringing all aspects of society under Nazi control and influence (e.g. judges having to wear swastikas).

**SCHUTZSTAFFEL (SS)** Led by Himmler, the SS began as Hitler's bodyguard, but became responsible for law and order in the Nazi Germany.

**SICHERHEITSDIENST (SD)** Overseen by Reinhard Heydrich and responsible for intelligence gathering. Officially part of the SS; worked alongside the Gestapo to control Germany and the occupied territories.

**VOLKSGEMEINSCHAFT** Meaning 'people's community'; the Nazis attempted to move beyond a focus on class divide and unite the 'Aryan' German population to build a strong nation.

**UNTERMENSCH** Meaning 'sub-human'; referring to non-Aryan groups considered inferior, including Jews, gypsies, homosexuals, the disabled and many more.