

GERMANY DEPTH STUDY

Word	Definition
Reichstag	German parliament
democracy	A type of government where all adults vote for who governs them.
Chancellor	Head of the German government (like a UK prime minister)
President	Head of the German state(country) elected every 7 years
Article 48	The president's power to rule without the Reichstag
reparations	War debts – Germany owed £6.6 billion
Rentenmark	New currency introduced by Gustav Stresemann
economic	to do with money
culture	Art, architecture, music, theatre etc.
25 Point Programme	The Nazi Party's promises if elected. Written in 1920, main points included: reversing Versailles, union of German speakers.
SA	Nazi party private army led by Ernst Rohm 'Brownshirts'
SS	Hitler's personal guard led by Heinrich Himmler 'Blackshirts'
Mein Kampf	Hitler's book written in 1924 whilst in prison.
DNVP	Nationalist Party who supported Hitler
Propaganda	Spreading false messages through media – Josef Goebbels
Weimar Republic	The name given to the German government from 1919 to 1933.
communists	Extreme left wing group – belief in equality for all workers
Depression	Economic misery; high unemployment;
Trade union	Organisations set up to protect and defend workers' rights
industrialists	Big business leaders – these men supported Hitler because they feared communism
DAF	German Labour Front (replaced trade unions)
oath	Promise (usually sworn on the Bible)
Fuhrer	Leader – title Hitler used after Hindenburg died.

SIGNIFICANT PEOPLE

Adolf Hitler 	Gustav Stresemann 	Ernst Rohm 
Heinrich Himmler 	Josef Goebbels 	President Hindenburg 
Franz von Papen 	General Schleicher 	Marinus van der Lubbe 

What were the strengths and weaknesses of the Weimar Republic?

The Weimar Republic was the German government from 1918 to 1933. All adults could vote. Presidents were elected every 7 years. The Head of government was the Chancellor. There had been problems for the Weimar Republic in 1923 but by 1925 it was in a better position. The years 1925 to 1929 were the 'Golden Years' of the Weimar Republic. This was when Gustav Stresemann was Chancellor and Foreign Minister.

Strengths

- Stresemann was a highly effective politician.
- Stresemann introduced a new currency in 1923. This stopped hyperinflation.
- Stresemann negotiated with the USA. The result was the Dawes Plan which gave Germany longer to pay reparations. The USA loaned 800 million marks to Germany.
- The US loans helped create jobs.
- Wages went up and Germans had a better standard of living.
- German people felt prouder. • German artists, architects, musicians and writers were popular
- Cabaret and nightclubs were popular.
- Stresemann signed the Locarno Treaty in 1925. In this treaty, Stresemann reaccepted the Treaty of Versailles. As a result, Germany was allowed to join the League of Nations.
- In 1929, Stresemann negotiated with the USA again. The result was the Young Plan which reduced reparations payments to £2.2 billion.

Weaknesses

- The German people were not sure about democracy
- The German people did not really like politicians. They preferred army leaders and senior judges who did not like democracy.
- In 1926, the Germans elected Paul von Hindenburg as their president. He disliked democracy too.
- Big business and landowners did well in Weimar Germany.
- Workers rights were respected because Weimar supported trade unions.
- Farmers suffered because of lack of demand for the food they produced.
- Small businesses like shopkeepers suffered from competition from big department stores.
- Middle class Germans felt that the Weimar Republic was not meeting their needs.
- Many Germans hated the nightclubs and the new art and architecture.
- German communists criticised the Locarno Treaty. • German nationalists criticised Stresemann for joining the League of Nations.

How successful was the Nazi party in the years 1925-1929?

The Nazis were not successful during the 'Golden Years' of the Weimar Republic. The Nazi party was formed in 1919. Adolf Hitler became the leader of the party in 1921. In 1923 he attempted to take power in Munich. This was called the Munich Putsch. It failed. Hitler was put on trial and sentenced to 5 years in prison. In the end he served 9 months. Whilst in prison, he wrote his book 'Mein Kampf'. By 1925 the Nazis were nobodies again. But Hitler spent the next few years planning and waiting for his opportunity.

1925 – Hitler changed his tactics but this didn't have much success.

- The Munich Putsch taught Hitler that he could not take power by violent force.
- He decided to get voted into power.
- He set up Nazi Party branches in big cities to spread the Nazi message.
- He created the Hitler Youth to spread Nazi ideas to the young.
- He formed the SS and enlarged the SA.
- The Nazis tried to get support from the German working class, but they were not interested because jobs, wages and employment were all good. So, in 1927 he decided to try to get support from the middle class. • In 1928 the Nazis only had 12 seats in the Reichstag (parliament).

Who did support the Nazis in the 1920s?

- Farmers in northern Germany • Middle class shopkeepers and small business owners
- People who thought that the Weimar culture was immoral.
- The DNVP (a right-wing party)
- Membership of the Nazi Party rose to over 100,000 by 1928

What was the impact of the Depression on Germany?

In 1929 the American economy collapsed when Wall Street crashed. This led to an economic depression which affected Germany badly. The economic depression was the most important cause of Hitler's rise to power.

What effect did the Wall Street Crash have on Germany?

- US bankers asked for their loans to be repaid. This caused German banks to collapse.
- German businesses went bankrupt; workers lost their jobs; unemployment rose to 6 million.
- The Weimar government found it difficult to deal with the problem.
- The German people lost faith in the democracy of the Weimar Republic and started turning to the extreme political parties like the Communists and the Nazis.

Why did the Nazis start doing so well during the Depression?

- The Weimar Republic looked weak; the Nazis promised a strong leader
- The Nazis offered solutions – stop paying reparations; reverse the Treaty of Versailles; let the unemployed join the army; rearm Germany.
- The Nazis promised work and bread (food). They promised pensions for the old and jobs for all.
- As a result, in the 1930 election, the Nazis won 107 seats in the Reichstag.
- Nazi propaganda was amazingly effective. Goebbels made Hitler look like the only hope Germany had.
- In 1932 Hitler ran for president of Germany. He got 13 million votes to Hindenburg's 19 million. Even though he lost, it raised his profile.
- In his speeches, Hitler blamed Jews, Communists, Weimar politicians and the Treaty of Versailles for Germany's problems. People believed him
- The Nazis set up soup kitchens to help feed the unemployed and shelters for the homeless
- The middle class turned to the Nazis because they were worried about the Weimar Republic's ability to make things better.
- In the election of July 1932, the Nazis won 230 seats, making them the biggest party in the Reichstag.

- But support for the Communist Party rose too. Business leaders feared the communists, so they supported the Nazis. E.g., I G Farben. Farmers also feared communism, so they supported the Nazis.

How did Hitler become Chancellor in January 1933?

- In July 1932 Hitler demanded to be Chancellor but President Hindenburg refused.
- Chancellor Franz von Papen had to use Article 48 (president's powers) to pass laws, but he soon found that the Reichstag did not support him
- Hindenburg sacked von Papen and replaced him with General Schleicher.
- Through January 1933, von Papen and Hindenburg met in secret. Von Papen promised Hindenburg that they could control Hitler if they made him chancellor.
- On 30th January 1933, Hindenburg made Hitler the new Chancellor of Germany. He did this to help bring stability to Germany.

How did Hitler consolidate his position 1933-1934?

In January 1933, Adolf Hitler was Chancellor of Germany with limited power. In August 1934, he was a dictator with total power, calling himself Der Fuhrer. He achieved this through mainly legal methods.

Why was the Reichstag Fire important in explaining Hitler's consolidation of power?

- The Reichstag was the German parliament building in Berlin.
- Hitler had an election planned for March 1933 in which he hoped for a huge majority.
- On 27th February 1933, the Reichstag building was set on fire. A Dutch communist was found inside.
- Hitler blamed the communists for the fire and demanded emergency powers telling the country that the fire was the first stage of a communist takeover.
- Hitler was given the emergency powers and used them to arrest communist leaders and 4000 communist party members.

Why was the March 1933 election important in explaining Hitler's consolidation of power?

- Hitler held a general election, appealing to the German people to give the Nazis more support.
- Only 44% of the people voted Nazi (288 seats), which did not give him a majority in the Reichstag. But he was still able to ban the Communist Party with the help of the Nationalist Party.
- Hitler now planned to pass an Enabling Act to give him more power. • The Enabling Act had to be voted on in the Reichstag. • If passed, the Reichstag members would end democracy and give Hitler the powers of a dictator.

Why was the Enabling Act so important in the Nazis consolidation of power?

- On 24 th March 1933 Hitler announced the vote on the Enabling Act.
- The vote was 441 to 84. With the communists banned, only the brave Social Democrats voted against it.
- Democracy had ended – the Enabling Act gave him the powers of a dictator for four years. This had been achieved legally.
- Eventually, all other parties were banned making Germany a one party (totalitarian) state.

How did Hitler use the Enabling Act?

- He got rid of Jews and other Nazi opponents from the civil service and the courts. (April 1933)
- Trade Unions were banned. All workers had to become members of the new German Labour Front. (May 1933)
- Law against the Formation of New Parties made Germany a one party state. (July 1933)

Why was the Night of the Long Knives important in the Nazis consolidation of power?

- The SA had been led by Ernst Rohm since the 1920s. It had 4 million members.
- Ernst Rohm saw himself as an alternate leader to Hitler. He wanted to make the SA part of the German army. This worried army leaders who hated Rohm.
- Hitler needed the army on his side and he was growing suspicious of Rohm anyway. So, Hitler decided to get rid of Rohm and hundreds of other enemies in June 1934. On the weekend of 29-30 June 1934, Rohm and 400 others were murdered in what became known as the 'Night of the Long Knives'. The army were satisfied with Hitler's actions. The SA became part of the SS.

The death of Hindenburg and the oath of loyalty

- President Hindenburg died on 2nd August 1934, aged 87.
- Hitler announced that the office of President and Chancellor would be combined. Hitler would become the Fuhrer.
- On the same day, the entire German army swore an oath of loyalty to Hitler. The army agreed to stay out of politics and serve Hitler