



# REVISION – WEIMAR REPUBLIC



3 periods 1919-1933:

1. *The Early Weimar Republic (1919-1923)*
2. *The Golden Years of the Weimar Republic (1924-1929)*
3. *The Late Weimar Republic (1929-1933)*

**MATERIAL:** Morris = 285-303 / Wolfson = 194-206 / Rogers/Thomas = 111-128

## FACTS:

- **New Constitution – presented January 1919 – approved in July 1919;**
  - *Republic* with a *President* and two houses; *Reichsrat* and *Reichstag*
- **The Versailles Treaty (June 1919)**
- **The threat from the left**
- **The threat from the right**
- **Political problems;** 8 governments between February 1919 and November 1923
- **Economic problems**
- **Reparation Bill** presented 1921 – £6,6 billion / \$33 billion / 132 billion gold marks
- **Ruhr Occupation 1923**
- **Hyperinflation 1923**
- **Foreign Policy before 1924; “the Obstruction Policy”**
  
- **Gustaf Stresemann (1878-1929)** Chancellor 1923. Foreign Minister 1923-1929.
- **The solution of the hyperinflation** (Hans Luther and Hjalmar Schacht), **Rentenmark**
- **Dawes Plan;** was to operate for 5 years (1924-1930)
- **Economical recovery** in the 1920's – progress
- **Political stability;** Stresemann and Hindenburg
- **Foreign Policy of Gustaf Stresemann - “the Fulfillment Policy”**
  
- **WALL STREET CRASH!!! October 24th 1929**
- **Young Plan, both advantages and problems: 1929/30**
- **Political problems;**
  - *Stresemann* died / *Müller coalition*
  - *Brüning coalition*
  - *von Papen (Cabinet of Barons)*
  - *von Schleicher*
- **President election 1932**
- **Hitler becomes Chancellor 1933**



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1. *The Early Weimar Republic (1919-1923)*
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**MATERIAL:** Old Morris (HL) = 245-253 Newest Morris (SL) = 285-300 Traynor = 171-185

## FACTS:

- **New Constitution – presented January 1919 – constitution approved in July 1919; Republic** with a *President* and two houses; *Reichsrat* and *Reichstag*, *Reichstag* legislative body, elected every 4<sup>th</sup> year, proportional representation based on secret ballots and universal suffrage, Chancellor answerable to the *Reichstag*, Government based on *Reichstag* support, *Reichsrat* representatives elected by their state (Germany had 18 states – “länder”), *Reichsrat* could only delay bills – not stop them, *President* elected seven years, first *President* Friedrich Ebert 1920 (leader of SPD), could use article 48: \_\_\_\_\_

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- **The Versailles Treaty (June 1919); Territory loss:** Alsace-Lorraine (iron), Silesia (coal), Polish Corridor, colonies (became League of Nations mandates), Danzig, Memel, North Schleswig + some more areas / *Military regulations:* no submarines, tanks, airplanes, limited army 100.000 men and limited navy / *War guilt §231 / Reparation bill* and the **German reaction** – protests and the sinking of the German High Sea Fleet at Scapa Flow (Note: “*Stab in the back*” myth...): \_\_\_\_\_

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- **The threat from the left;** mutinies at the end of the war, the formation of “Soviets” – workers and soldiers councils, Bavarian problems (Kurt Eisner), Spartacist revolt in Berlin: \_\_\_\_\_

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- **The threat from the right;** tradition, Frei Corps, Kapp Putsch, assassination of Erzberger and Rathenau, Beer Hall Putsch: \_\_\_\_\_

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- **Political problems;** 8 governments between February 1919 and November 1923; Weimar Coalitions – **SPD** (Social Democratic Party of Germany) / **DDP** (German Democratic Party – former left-wing National Liberals) / **Centre** / **DVP** (German Democratic Party – former National Liberals), coalitions between 1920-1923 were minority coalitions, weak governments: \_\_\_\_\_

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- **Economic problems;** WWI, growing budget deficit, huge loss of resources (Versailles Treaty), government printed more money, **Reparation Bill** presented 1921 (Allied Reparations Commission) £6,6 billion / \$33 billion / 132 billion gold marks, postponed reparations, Ruhr occupation by Belgium and France, passive German resistance, hyper inflation (Nov. 1923 \$1 = 4 200 000 000 000 marks) (NOTE: the governments economic policies): \_\_\_\_\_

- **Foreign Policy before 1924; “the Obstruction Policy”:** \_\_\_\_\_
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- **Gustaf Stresemann** (1878-1929) Chancellor 1923. Foreign Minister 1923-1929. Stresemann reduced the war reparations, negotiated the Locarno Treaties, negotiated Germany’s entry into the League of Nations and was the brain behind the ”Fulfillment policy”. He also found an understanding for the revision of the peace treaties...Received Nobel’s Peace Price in 1926: \_\_\_\_\_
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- **The solution of the hyperinflation** (Hans Luther and Hjalmar Schacht), **Rentenmark** (temporary currency based on a mortgage of all German land and industry) which led to the Dawes Plan. With the acceptance of this plan France and Belgium ended the Ruhr occupation in 1925: \_\_\_\_\_
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- **Dawes Plan;** was to operate for 5 years (1924-1930), Germany received loans to the value of 25.5 billion marks (mainly from the US), during the same period Germany paid 22.9 billion marks in reparations, a ”General Reparations Agent” – Parker Gilbert (US) was installed in Germany to supervise payments, the German Reichsbank was reorganized under Allied supervision, the final reparation amount was reduced – both advantages and problems – this was a temporary economical recovery through loans, most of the loans were given by enterprises in the US – who would, in an economical crisis, demand Germany to pay back the loan, there was still no definite end to the German War reparation payments, Germany still thought that the payments were to high: \_\_\_\_\_
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- **Economical recovery** in the 1920’s – progress: In 1927 the overall industrial production matched the numbers from 1913 (even though Germany had lost 10% of its land and quite a bit of mineral and industrial resources), examples of new successful industries; I.G. Farben and United Steelworks, this progress appeased the big industrialists and gave a better political stability but agriculture and small business did not perform well: \_\_\_\_\_
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- **Political stability;** Stresemann, Hindenburg (succeeded Friedrich Ebert as President 1925. Prussian General and Junker. Command of the German military 1916-1918. Popular ”war hero”...), the acceptance of Stresemann and Hindenburg + the economic recovery gave a more stable political situation, the industrialists were appeased, the armed forces accepted the Weimar Republic and the May elections 1928 shows this stability – good results for the ”Weimar Coalition” and bad for the political extremists - but we start to see signs of a Western overheated economy early in 1928: \_\_\_\_\_
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- **Foreign Policy of Gustaf Stresemann - “the Fulfillment Policy”;** Dawes plan (1924), Locarno Pact (1925 – Germany and France promised to respect their mutual frontiers, Germany accepted a permanent demilitarization of the Rhineland, Great Britain and Italy guaranteed the Treaty), League of Nations (1926 – Germany received a permanent seat on the League Council – originally assigned the US), Kellogg-Briand Pact (1928 – the countries that signed condemned war and promised to refer to a court of arbitration to settle international disputes): \_\_\_\_\_
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- **WALL STREET CRASH!!! October 24th 1929** – The New York Stock Market collapsed. US banks and US Companies now started to recall their loans to European banks. The European banks then start to recall Company loans which makes several of the bankrupt! These bankruptcies gives a sharp rise to the unemployment numbers. Europe faced a very serious economic depression:\_\_\_\_\_
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- **Young Plan, both advantages and problems:** 1929/30 – Germany's war debt was reduced from £6600 million to £2000 million, the war debt should be paid over a period of 58 ½ years, the annual payment was split into two parts – 1/3 was unconditional and 2/3 was postponable, the Young Plan should go into effect in 1930 but a moratorium was called for during 1931-1932 due to the fact that Germany was badly hit by the economic depression...:\_\_\_\_\_
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- **Political problems;** *Stresemann* died / *Müller coalition:* the Weimar Coalition under SPD leader Hermann Müller resigned when President Hindenburg (elected 1925 when Germany's first President Ebert died) refused to grant him emergency powers (Article 48) for social legislation to fight the economic depression / *Brüning coalition:* President Hindenburg turned to Heinrich Brüning and asked him to form a new government, Brüning called for an election (Sept. 1930), the extremist parties were very successful in this election. NSDAP grew from 2.6% to 18.3%, most of the parties in the German Reichstag refused to cooperate with each other (and the Chancellor) so most of the new laws were passed by decree (Article 48), Brüning passes over 100 laws by decree – but he still didn't manage to curb the economic depression. In 1932 the unemployment was 6 million people... Brüning resigned in May / *von Papen (Cabinet of Barons):* In May Franz von Papen replaced Brüning as Chancellor. He announced a new election. In July 1932 NSDAP became the biggest party in the German Reichstag – they received 37.3% of all the votes!, von Papen tried to get Hitler to form a coalition with von Papen as the Chancellor. Hitler refused, von Papen did not receive any support from any political party. He therefore appointed ministers without any party support and ruled completely by decree (Article 48). In September a vote of no confidence was passed and von Papen had to resign, in the elections in November 1932 NSDAP faced a little set back but they were still the biggest party – 33.1% of all votes / *von Schleicher:* General Kurt von Schleicher tried to form a government, after just 57 days he had to resign since he did not have the President's support anymore – Hitler was now invited to form a National Coalition with himself as the new Chancellor. Von Papen assured a reluctant President that he and the other members of this coalition would be able to control Hitler and his few Nazi Ministers. They were after all a minority in the new government. Hitler now accepted to become Germany's new Chancellor:\_\_\_\_\_
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- **President election 1932:** A few months before Brüning's resignation Germany had a President election. Hindenburg won this election before Adolf Hitler. Noticable is the fact that Hitler received over 11 million votes...:\_\_\_\_\_
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