

TREATY OF VERSAILLES

WHERE, WHEN - The treaty was signed in Versailles, France, on the 28th of June 1919.

WHAT - The terms of the treaty

- Germany had to accept total responsibility for starting WWI. This was called the War Guilt Clause/article 231.
- Germany had to pay US\$32 billion (adjusted for inflation) in reparations to cover war damages and other Allied losses. That was completely unreasonable and lead to financial ruin in 1923.
- Germany had to hand over 70,000 kilometres squared of land—this was about 13% of Germany's total land and six million Germans lived there.
- Germany was to hand over all of their colonies and these colonies were to become mandates run by the Allies on behalf of the League of Nations.
- The German army was to have no more than 100,000 men and the navy was limited to six ships and 15,000 sailors, and they had no airforce or submarines, and couldn't buy any other war materials.
- An Allied army was to occupy the Rhineland for a period of fifteen years and no German troops could be there.

WHO

UNITED KINGDOM

Leader: Prime Minister David Lloyd George

Specific aims: Germany to be justly punished but not too harshly, for Germany to lose navy and colonies (threat to English navy and empire), for Germany and Britain to become trading partners. Reasoning: Did not want to punish Germany too harshly as he did not want Germany seeking revenge in future.

REPUBLIC OF FRANCE

Leader: President Georges Clemenceau

Specific aims: to cripple Germany so it couldn't attack France again, wanted Germany broken down into smaller states (weakened). France wanted/got Alsace-Lorraine back, territory Germany took from them in 1871.

Reasoning: France had suffered the most during the war so he was under great pressure to make Germany pay.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Leader: President Woodrow Wilson

Aims: A better and more peaceful world, a League of Nations that would help and support each other and help to promote world peace, the right to self-determination (the right to decide which country you wish to be governed by).

Reasoning: The US had joined the war late and hadn't suffered as much as the other Allies in terms of human and material costs, and simply wanted a better world.

GERMAN EMPIRE (Weimar Republic post-Kaiser)

Leader: Foreign Minister Ulrich Graf von Brockdorff-Rantzau

Aims: Wanted to minimise damage done to them; however, they backed down on most things, such as the war guilt clause, which they initially vocally opposed but eventually backed down on.

Reasoning: They were in a weak position, and had to hold onto as much national pride and resources as they could.

WHY

The treaty ended up being mostly decided upon in a way to make Germany suffer. The UK, USA and others had to acquiesce to France's wishes because France had suffered the most. Thusly, the treaty was quite punishing, with a heavy total of reparations decided upon and their industrialised Rhineland occupied.

SIGNIFICANCE - Reaction and effects

The people of France and England relished that Germany was being punished, while the American people wanted nothing to do with it. Germany, on the other hand, was enraged. Tensions were inflamed; Jews and communists were under suspicion for having outside allegiances, and the whole country blamed everyone else for making them suffer, fostering hatred. The treaty did, arguably, make Germany suffer. Economically, the treaty tied Germany's hands, which engendered social and political problems which encouraged violence, such as with the Spartacist Uprising, the Freikorps being so prevalent, Hitler creating the NSDAP, Hitler making the Sturmabteilung, and the Kapp Putsch.

THE NOVEMBER REVOLUTIONS

WHAT?

The November Revolutions were caused by the '*dolchstosslegende*' a conspiracy theory propagated by the Nazis and other right-wing groups in the aftermath of World War I that blamed the Bolsheviks, Weimar politicians, and Jews for the loss of the war. The November Revolutions were a political revolt caused by the social tensions in response to the '*stab in the back myth*' or '*dolchstosslegende*'. This belief, deliberately encouraged by the right wing nationalists and extremists, was the belief that Germany's army was not defeated, but rather, they were betrayed by the German people/parliament themselves. They could not believe that Germany had lost the war so instead of accepting what happened, they started the belief that they had been betrayed by the parliament that were handed power after Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicated.

WHEN?

The November Revolutions were a response to the defeat of Germany in WW1 (1914-1918). The armistice was signed on the 11th of November 1918, which was made possible by the abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II on the 9th of November. The revolutions started in November of 1918 and ended in August of 1919.

WHO?

The '*dolchstosslegende*' was a belief encouraged by the Nazis, extremists, right wing nationalists and other right-wing groups in the aftermath of World War I that blamed the Bolsheviks, Weimar politicians, and Jews for the loss of the war. The Revolutions occurred after the government, led by Prince Max von Baden, resigned and Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicated and gave power to the parliament/people (nicknamed the 'November Criminals') as the country slipped into varying degrees of revolution and social unrest. They couldn't believe that Germany had lost the war, so when Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicated on the 9th of November in 1918 to allow the negotiations of signing an armistice, and power was handed to the parliament/people who signed the armistice on the 11th of November 1918, they instead of believing that Germany had been defeated they classified the parliament as 'traitors', starting the '*dolchstosslegende*'.

WHAT WAS THE IMPACT OF IT?

The November Revolutions had a large political and social impact as it led to the change in political structure, coalition government was formed and the constitution of the new republic was created in August 1919. The revolutions led to a new government, a new constitution, a new republic and democracy in Germany. This constitution was created in the town of Weimar, and thus was the inspiration for the newly formed Germany, the Weimar Republic. The end of the November Revolutions, leading to the change in government, lead to the end of Imperial Germany, and the beginning of a democratic (rather than socialist) state. August of 1919 marked the official start of the Weimar Republic (as it had technically been in place since 1918), which was caused by the November Revolutions.

The Spartacist Uprising

Key Individuals:

Karl Liebknecht - Leader and commander of the Spartacist

Rosa Luxemburg - Leader and commander of the Spartacist

Friedrich Ebert - Chancellor of Germany, head of the Democratic Socialist party of Germany

Waldemar Pabst - Key commander of the Freikorp, ordered the execution of Rosa Luxemburg, and Karl Liebknecht

Major cause:

- The creation of the Communist party of Germany (KPD) in November 1918, organised and formalised the far left
- The dismissal of Emil Eichhorn, the left leaning police chief of Berlin and member of the far left Independent Democratic Socialist party of Germany (USPD). In anger of his dismissal despite his popularity Emil called for a public demonstration by workers which marked the start of the Uprising
- The KPD creation also so it focus on actions of agitation and street warfare, its refusal to participate in elections was symbolic of its refusal to accept the legitimacy of the Republic. Instead it wanted to rely on violent revolution by workers to achieve its goal

The Uprising itself:

On Sunday the 5th of January 1919, hundreds of thousands of German communists poured into Berlin in support of Emil, many of them armed. With this mass of numbers and motivated by the situation, the workers occupied train stations, and major printing houses of the SPD newspaper, which had been printing negative articles on the Spartacist since September. The organisation of another strike on January 7th brought in another 500,000 workers to downtown Berlin. When talks of peace broke off as a possibility, Friedrich Ebert ordered his defence minister, Gustav Noske to hire the Freikorp, the extreme right wing paramilitary group of returning soldiers, to reestablish order in Berlin. Despite urges by the KPD for every worker to stay and fight many retreated initially fearing their lives and when the remaining revolutionaries realized that despite their number the Freikorp were simply better trained, more organised, and more experienced than them, they soon surrendered as well. The uprising finally saw its definitive end on January 15th when Luxemburg and Liebknecht were arrested by the Freikorp and executed under permission of the SPD.

Major Consequences

- It would mark the far left as life long enemies of the republic and start a rivalry between them
- In times of crisis the government was forced to rely on the far-right for help, this would cement their illegitimacy to many conservatives
- The failure of the Uprising destroyed much of the momentum that the communists relied on to achieve a revolution, they would never attempt a resistance this size in Germany again.

KAPP PUTSCH

DATE: MARCH 1920

What: Threat from the extreme right that developed into an attempt to overthrow government.

Who: nationalist groups, industrialists, the military and the old ruling class that never accepted Republic.

Cause: immediate cause was the government's attempt to carry out military clauses of Treaty of Versailles.

NOTES

- Treaty of Versailles stipulated that Reichswehr (army) had to be 100 000 men.
- This included the reduction of the Freikorps - March government ordered the disbandment of the Erhardt Freikorps Brigade, outside Berlin.
- Military commander General Luttwitz of Berlin refused - conspiracy with right-wing officers and civilians ordered 2 Freikorps brigades (12000 men) to march on Berlin.
- Chancellor Bauer and President Ebert expected army to intervene (it had for left uprising) but General von Seeckt refuses as sympathized with rebels (army right-wing).
- This forced President, Chancellor and Cabinet to flee city.
- Rebels occupied key government buildings.
- Declaration of new government led by radical right wing politician Wolfgang Kapp.
- Putsch failed few days later due to protests of working class.
- General strike of workers and unions that was effective in shutting down city.
- Middle-class didn't support and civil servants (bureaucracy and banking) supported strike.
- Von Luttwitz and Kapp fled city and Cabinet returned.

SIGNIFICANCE

1. First attempt of radical right to seize power and exposed weakness of government that had to flee.
2. Workers and trade unions supported government.
3. Demonstrated growing influence of the German army and its sympathy for the right.

"Erhardt's men entered Berlin virtually unopposed..."
A. De Jong, *The Weimar Chronicle*, Paddington Press, New York, 1978.

"While a number of officers and certain regiments openly declared themselves in favour of Kapp, others remained neutral."

The Assassination of Walther Rathenau

Walther Rathenau was assassinated on the 24th of June 1922 while driving to work, by three right wing extremists. Rathenau's assassination was the last of over 370 political assassinations in the 1920's carried out by right-wing extremists which collectively became known as the White Terror.

Rathenau was a Jewish industrialist and diplomat who was Foreign Minister from the 1st of January 1922 to his death. He was a member of the German Democratic Party who encouraged a policy of cooperation with the Social Democratic Party. Rathenau was also in charge of the AEG electronics and engineering conglomerate, which was a powerhouse of the German economy. During WW1 with the British naval blockade in place, Rathenau directed Germany's industrial production and the allocation of dwindling resources. His management is considered by historians to have 'prolonged Germany's resistance by months or even years'. However, his actions as a patriot brilliantly managing scarcity were twisted by anti-semitic nationalist hatred to become viewed as a rich Jew cornering markets.

During his brief term as Foreign Minister, Rathenau negotiated the Treaty of Rapallo with the Soviet Union. This Treaty allowed both pariahs of WW1 to strengthen their economies with bilateral trade. This Treaty also allowed Germany to covertly build up their army despite the Treaty of Versailles, with training conducted on Soviet soil. However, there was once again dissent from the extreme right, who were afraid of 'creeping communism' from the Soviet Union and were suspicious of 'a Jew making dubious deals with foreign Jews'.

The assassination of Walther Rathenau was also due to the right preferring a more confrontational stance towards the Treaty of Versailles rather than the Policy of Fulfilment which Rathenau supported.

CONSEQUENCES

- Galvanised the Reichstag to use Article 48 to introduce the Law for the Protection of the Republic to curb the excesses of the extreme right.
- Brought a halt to nationalist violence
- Public shock and outrage
- Rathenau became a republican martyr
- Mass demonstrations of over 500000 people in support of the republic
- Enabled supporters of parliamentary democracy to seize moral high ground from anti-republican Right which had previously portrayed themselves as 'true patriots and defenders of Germany who had been stabbed in the back in WW1 by weak politicians'

THE RUHR

In January 1923 60 000 French + Belgian troops crossed the Rhine border and occupied the Ruhr, a centre of industrial work in Germany.

CAUSES

- ↳ The Weimar government, under its policy of fulfilment (essentially that it would strive to adhere to all terms of the Treaty - including reparation payments) met the first reparation payment in August 1921.
- ↳ Germany's economy continued to weaken, and by the end of 1921 it announced it would be unable to meet its second reparation deadline.
- ↳ A year of negotiation with the Reparation Commission followed, and in December 1922 it was finally decided that Germany was behind in its payments of coal + telegraph poles to France.
- ↳ The French government believed that Germany had never accepted defeat, and so felt they must assert authority in order to force Germany to accept the Treaty.

THE EVENT

- ↳ In January 1923 the occupation of the Ruhr began.
- ↳ Over the 2.5 year occupation, 60 000 French + Belgian troops occupied the Ruhr.
- ↳ Soon after occupation began, the Ruhr was sealed off from the rest of Germany, and 150 000 civilians + non-essential workers were marched out of the area.
- ↳ France seized manufactured goods + raw materials as a form of forced reparations.

THE REACTION

- ↳ The occupation of the Ruhr lead to the Weimar government calling for passive resistance → not violent uprisings, but strikes that would cripple the French plans to operate the Ruhr as an industrial hub of reparations.
- ↳ Strikes soon occurred, and the German government agreed to pay the wages that striking workers were missing out on.
- ↳ The French were forced to bring in 100 000 troops to control the restless population + deal with acts of sabotage by right-wing extremists as well as to operate what German workers had abandoned.
- ↳ Over 150 German workers were killed in protests.

THE EFFECT

- ↳ Already in a situation of economic failure, the occupation of the Ruhr + the unrest that it caused only drove Germany into further economic collapse.
- ↳ It contributed to the incredible hyperinflation that would arise in the years to come + unemployment levels increased further.
- ↳ The occupation was counterproductive in a sense, as the German economy was driven into further downturn there was no hope of it meeting its reparations to France.

THE RUHR

- ↳ the industrial centre of Germany
- ↳ responsible for 75% of the nation's steel + coal output
- ↳ provided invaluable employment to the German people

EVENT STUDY TOPIC- HYPERINFLATION

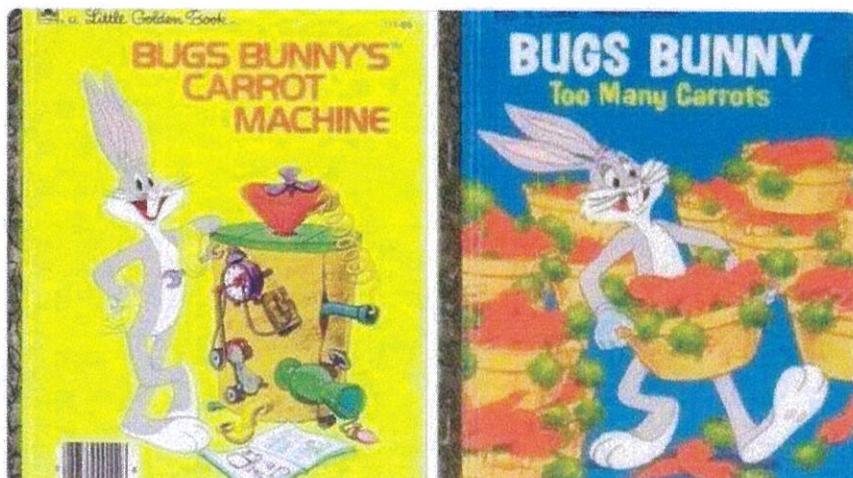
Reasons for Hyperinflation

- Industrial resources lost in the armistice
- Little export trade
- Very little foreign investment or loans
- Government was weak so couldn't carry through economic reform
- Because raising of taxes was resisted, only solution is to print more money
- Industrial shutdown of Ruhr in 1923 also contributed to failure of German economy
- Government had promised to pay wages of those from Ruhr and had to import expensive coal internationally
- The central German bank, and the government had no solution but to print thousands of marks, day and night

Repercussions of Hyperinflation

- As more money is printed, the value of the currency falls
- Pre-war 1USD=4.20 marks
- January 1920 1USD= 64.8 marks
- January 1923 1USD= 17 972 marks
- By August, 44 Trillion Marks in circulation
- Production of 46 billion marks a day
- By start of September 1923 1USD= 160 000 000 Marks
- In November, at height of hyperinflation, 1USD= 420×10^{10}
- Currency had become almost worthless
- Banks charge 35% interest per day
- Great suffering caused by collapse of economy
- Farmers and Junkers (landowners) not as affected as others
- Industrialists benefited, by wiping out all of their debts
- Businesses with access to foreign currency made massive profit
- The largest sufferers were people on fixed incomes/wages
- German middle class' savings annihilated

Germany suffers hyperinflation
(1923, Colorized)



ENABLING ACT (1923)

- Post WWI, Germany's economic capacity was greatly reduced with little foreign economic activity to stimulate any recovery.
- A politically weak and unpopular government also faced obstacles in attempts to reform economy.
 - Tax raises were opposed by industrialists benefitting from inflation and fears of increased unemployment.
- In order to maintain the reparation schedule and the growing needs of society, particularly with the seizure of economic activity in the occupied Ruhr, more money was printed. The value of the Mark plummeted and increasing government debt only exacerbated inflation.
- (OCT 1923) A stable currency was required for effective economic recovery. The granting of emergency powers to the Stresemann Government saw an Enabling Act passed.
- Banker Hjalmar Schacht is appointed to manage reforms.
 - Further printing of the Papiermark, with declining stability due to being backed by declining gold reserves, was recalled and a new currency, the Rentenmark" is circulated.
 - Increasing production of currency without increasing the value of the goods backing it, such as gold held in the treasury that backed the Papiermark, leads to the drop in value.
 - The Rentenmark is instead backed by the value of all German land and industrial assets.
 - Strict regulation is put on the currency to prevent devaluation.
- Further reforms included:
 - Budget balancing
 - Cuts to government expenditure.
 - Introduction of new taxes
 - Government abandons payment of wages to Ruhr workers
 - Formation of a new reserve bank
- (1924) The Rentenmark is withdrawn and a new German Mark introduced along with the implementation of the Dawes Plan.

Effects

- Allowed for some confidence to be regained in the economy and the Weimar republic however more initially financially disadvantaged (pensioners, middle class, and working class) had lost all their life savings in trying to sustain quality of life and were not compensated.
- Weimar is blamed and is seen as a symbol for all that is wrong in Germany
- Hardships faced during the economic slump allowed for the emotionalism to be further exploited extremist groups
- Economic dependence on America (via the Dawes Plan) that compromised German honour. Nationalists outraged that Germany had agreed to continue to fulfil the terms of the Treaty, saying that Stresemann had signed 'the Second Treaty of Versailles'.
- Formation of the Dawes plan as a result of the widespread economic reform did not strengthen the economy; instead it remained weak and subject to the volatility of the US economy.

MUNICH BEERHALL PUTSCH

Key People / Groups

Hitler: prominent leader of Kampfbund and Nazi Movement

von Ludendorff: former WWI commander and Kampfbund figurehead

Kampfbund: organisation of right-wing military groups in Bavaria, and set up in 1923.

Bavaria Government: right-wing government leading Bavaria, ruled by the Prime Minister, army commander and chief of police.

Gustav von Kahr: Prime Minister of state of Bavaria

General von Lusow: Commander of army in Bavaria

Hans von Seisser: Chief of Police in Bavaria

Key Date

8 NOVEMBER 1923

Causes

- Berlin government losing authority in Bavaria
- Nazi party was strong 55000 membership

Effects

- realised power could not be achieved by force
- national publicity of Hitler's views
- support of German army would be needed

The Munich Putsch

- Hitler and some of the Kampfbund made a move against the Bavaria government
- Aimed to seize the Bavaria government by force and trigger a national revolution that would overthrow Berlin government
- On 8 Nov 1923, armed storm troopers surrounded the Bürger Brau Keller (a beerhall) where Bavarian leaders were having a meeting
- Hitler made a pistol shot to the ceiling and announced the Bavaria and national governments as deposed
- Claimed a new national government led by himself and Bavaria government reluctantly agreed
- By the next morning the putsch had failed
- von Kahr declared the Nazi Party and Kampfbund dissolved after confirming support of the army and disregarded events from the night before
- Military reinforcements entered the city as von Lusow would not back up the putsch
- Ludendorff suggested a march into the centre of Munich, with hopes to win support
- Police open fired on the marchers as they reached the Odensplatz
- 16 nazi troopers and 4 police died, Hitler escaped in a waiting car, Ludendorff marched on and was detained
- Hitler, Ludendorff and 9 others stood on trial for treason
- Hitler used the trial to express his views, as the press would report everything in detail
- Ludendorff was excused, Hitler was sentenced to 5 years imprisonment with parole after 6 months
- Leniency of the court indicated a lack of attachment to the Weimar Republic
 - they made their punishments less harsh, as Hitler and Ludendorff displayed similar disloyalty to the Republic like the judiciary did

The Dawes Plan (1924)

The Dawes Plan was prepared in 1924 by a committee led by American banker Charles Dawes to adjust the requirements of Germany's reparation payments to suit Germany's ability to pay in an attempt to assist Germany in stabilising its economy.

Causes

- December 1922 - Germany became unable to pay further reparations
- The Reparation Commission declared that Germany was in default in the delivery of coal and telegraph poles to France.
 - ↳ The following month 60 000 French and Belgian troops crossed the border and occupied the Ruhr, sending German workers on strike
- The German government printed excessive amounts of money causing in an attempt to expand the economy however this resulted in hyperinflation.

Event - April 1924

- Charles Dawes (U.S. budget director) was sent to Germany in an attempt to sort out Germany's economy, leading the Dawes Committee.
 - ↳ advised the reform of the German Reichsbank which resulted in old money being called in and burned, ending the hyperinflation.
- The Dawes Committee (set up by the Reparations Commission) announced the Dawes plan in April 1924.
 - ↳ This plan still required Germany to pay reparations but started with a payment of 1000 million marks in 1925 increasing to 2500 million marks over the following 5 years.
 - ↳ The plan also enabled Germany to receive an immediate loan to assist in kick starting their economy.
 - ↳ With Germany accepting the plan, France also agreed to leave the Ruhr.

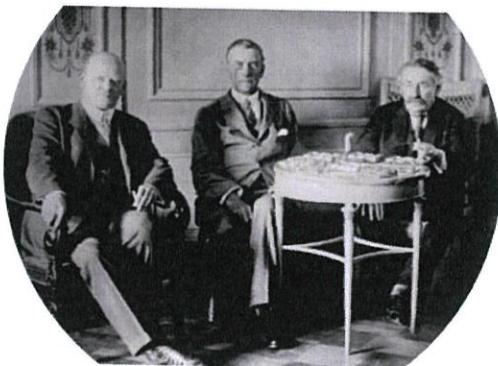
Impact

- Germany's acceptance of the plan marked the start of a period of economic stability and growth.
- The foreign loans given to Germany contributed to their economic prosperity.
 - ↳ Germany was then receiving more in loans than they were paying reparations.
 - ↳ German Standard of living also improved as more money was available to be spent on public institutions and welfare.
 - ↳ Also lead to more rapid industrial growth in Germany
 - ↳ German exports doubled from 1924 - 1929

"At Locarno we spoke European. It is a new language that we certainly ought to learn"

Event Study:

Lorcano Treaty



Stresemann, Chamberlain and Briand during negotiations

Basic Information

What: Seven agreements

When: 5-16 October 1925, formally signed Dec 1

Where: Locarno, Switzerland

Why: Stresemann proposed forming an understanding with old enemies to end Germany's isolation

Countries Involved:

Germany

Rep: Gustav Stresemann



UK

Rep: Austen Chamberlain



France

Rep: Aristide Briand



Italy

Belgium



Borders

Guaranteed:

- French-German border
- German-Belgian border

Result

- Germany treated as an equal
- Spirit of reconciliation
- Added sense of security

War

- France, Germany, Belgium renounced future use of war

29 / 6 / 17

Fact Sheet - The Young Plan - Lauren

The Young Plan

German Foreign Policy:

Former Chancellor Stresemann, became foreign minister in the new German government in 1923. He set realistic goals for his foreign policy, until his death in 1929. He believed that:

- > it was necessary to come to terms with former enemies, particularly France
- > it was necessary to cooperate with the west and end Germany's isolation, and then use the economic potential of Germany to negotiate further changes.
- > Germany could recover its place in the world by peaceful negotiations. He sought to restore Germany to the position of great and respected European power.
- > he aimed to end the diplomatic isolation of Germany in world affairs.

Stresemann was a driving force for The Treaty of Locarno (1925), Germany joining the League of Nations (1926), and the Young plan.

The Young Plan:

The Young Plan was Stresemann's final foreign policy in 1929. The Young plan followed the earlier work of the Dawes Plan - it set out to revise the reparation issue that had been left after Germany signed the Treaty of Versailles. Germany agreed to pay the cost of the war, however they also agreed to hand over some of their main resources - leaving Germany almost completely unable to pay the reparations. The Young Plan reduced the final reparation figure from the original 132 000 million marks to 37 000 million marks, with arrangements that it be paid in annual instalments to the year 1988.

The reparations were cancelled a few years later when the Great Depression began.