

The Rise of the Nazi Party

Before WW1:

- Germany had been a great power (Kaiser, ministers, and army)
 - Kaiser relied on chancellor, chief ministers and commanders
- The situation worsened due to the **treaty of Versailles** (Hunger, malnutrition etc.)
 - Kaiser and the army commanders involved members of the Reichstag in ruling the country
 - Wanted to shift the blame onto the elected politicians

1918:

- **The Kaiser abdicates on Nov 9**
- The next day the **SPD** became the new leaders
 - Germany was now a **democratic country**
- An **armistice** was signed

1919 (Jan)


- **The Weimar Republic was established** (unpopularity of it) 1918-1933
- **The first 🇩🇪 of the Weimar republic**
- An unpopular republic (1919-1923)
 - Elbert's SPD was the largest party (became president)
 - He did not have enough members to for a gov so he formed a coalition with the Catholic Centre Party and the German Democratic party

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---|--|
| Proportional and fair representation. (e.g 20% votes => 20 seats). Resulted in most views and interests being represented in the Reichstag (parliament) | Difficult for one party to gain a majority. Governments ended up as <u>coalitions</u> (temporary alliance from different political parties). Made it difficult to pass laws cause people kept disagreeing with each other |
| Laws had to be approved by Reichstag so no abuse of power | Article 48 could be abused by President (Hitler moment) |
| Political Challenges | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Laws couldn't be passed | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hard for one party to gain majority, <u>coalition</u> govt made it hard to pass laws• Article 48 could be misused and exploited as the President could just do anything they wanted |

 **1921:**





Hitler takes control of the Nazi party

- SA - Sturmabteilung/Brownshirts => ex-soldiers who joined Nazi party. Hitler turned them into a private army complete with uniforms and a command structure
- SS - Schutzstaffel/Blackshirts => Hitler's bodyguards, led by Heinrich Himmler

 **1923:**

France occupies the Ruhr (Jan)

Hyperinflation

-  and  troops invaded the Ruhr
- German workers were ordered to go on strike => halt in industrial production => German  collapsed (gov )
- Middle-class most affected => hyperinflated economy => government lost a lot of support

Munich Putsch - 1923

- Marched into Munich (👉)
- Hitler was arrested (did try to escape)
- Nazi Party got banned
- While in jail he wrote a book (Mein Kampf)

Mein Kampf

Loyalty to Germany

Racial purity

Nationalisation of economy

Lebensraum → Excuse to invade other countries to make more 'living space'

🌟 Golden age of Weimar Government (1923-1929) 🌟

- Gustav (The Goat) Stresemann came into power
- Replaced German mark with Rentenmark
- Negotiated reorganization of reparations through Dawes Plan (1929) and Young Plan
- Reduced its debt

 **1924:**

Nazi Candidates stood in the Reichstag elections for the 1st time, won 32 seats

Hitlers oratorical skills + the SS and SA + Success in Nazi political campaigns:

Promises Hitler made:

- End ineffective democratic coalition governments
- Restore the glory days of the Kaiser and authoritarian rule
- Return to traditional German values
- Fight the threat of communism in elections, in Reichstag and on streets

1929:

A period of worldwide economic depression (Oct) - US economy crashed

- Dawes Plan and Young Plan were changed and modified
- Unemployment went up like crazy / 40% of the workforce
- Weimar Government basically failed (this was under **Paul von Hindenburg**). Hindenburg had to rule by decree and took total control using **Article 48**
- "Failure of democracy" as the SPD (coalition gov) couldn't solve the issues-
 - SPD coalition collapsed so he appointed Heinrich Brüning
 - He cut the wages of civil servants, harsh measures so couldn't get Reichstag to pass the laws
 - Forming a coalition was impossible
 - Hindenburg continued to rule by decree
- **Fear of communism:**

People saw the **rise of the USSR and communism** as a threat as their countries had systems opposite of communism (democratic, capitalist economies)


 - The **business owners** would have to give up a ton of their assets if their countries became communist- leading them to support more extreme parties who would stand against communism
 - Also fueled by nationalism (their country is more superior than others)

1932:

- Hindenburg defeats Hitler in the presidential election (April)
 - Hitler wanted to appear as a man of the ppl (understood their problems etc)
- Reichstag elections

1933:

- **Hitler is appointed Chancellor (Jan)**
- Hindenburg and Franz von Papen thought they could use Hitler to get measures passed => restore stability to Germany (Nazis had the majority of the votes in the Reichstag)
- They thought they could use his opponents to curb his influence if Hitler grew too strong
- SPD and KPD against him
- Did not have majority in Reichstag
- Von Papen + elites planned to control him
- Von Schleicher and army were more loyal to Hindenburg (most were)
- Nazis took control of radio stations, newspapers, rallies
- Hitler wanted to win democratically (2/3 majority vote in the Reichstag).
- Nazis already had control over radio stations, police and newspapers
- He called for another election in March 1933
- SPD and KPD (opponent parties) were interrupted in terms of meetings by SA and SS

-  **Reichstag fire - 27 February 1933**
- **Immediately blamed it on the communists**
- Convinced Hindenburg to give emergency powers => Hitler went ahead and arrested 4,000 communists immediately and made it difficult for opposition parties to campaign
- During the elections on the 5th of March, Nazi Party won 52% of the seats

Enabling act - 24 March 1933

- Only **SPD** voted against him now
- Nazis got **Catholic Centre Party** to cooperate with him
- Thus Hitler became dictator and Hindenburg/anyone else could do jack shit about it
- Hitler could issue laws without it going through parliament

Gleichschaltung (Co-ordination) - April 1933

- Passed a law that banned Jews from civil service
- Trade unions were banned
- All local councils had to have a Nazi majority
- Banned all other political parties

1934:

- **The Night of long knives (June/July)**
 - Ernst Rohm was arrested. SA was pretty much collapsed. Old rivals and other opponents were taken down – von Papen was put under house arrest, 400 SA men were arrested => they were growing too powerful
- **Oath of allegiance / Hitler becomes Fuhrer - (Aug)**
 - Hindenburg died => Hitler combined presidency and chancellor to make Fuhrer/Fuehrer (supreme leader) of Germany
 - Army swore allegiance to him