

# Year 9 Learn Sheet

## Final Assessment **Germany: the impact of WW1 and the Weimar Republic**

### The impact of WW1 on Germany

By 1918, Germany was losing WW1 - this was for a number of reasons:

- By 1918, the **British blockade** had left many Germans starving;
- **The USA had entered the war in 1917, bringing in fresh troops to fight the Germans;**
- Germany had been promised a fair peace by USA President Woodrow Wilson, known as the 14 points;
- **October 1918-** The German Navy and army **mutinied, refusing to fight** - this began in the port of Kiel. Towns were taken over by workers and soldiers' councils;
- **9 November 1918-** The Kaiser **abdicated**. The new government, led by President Friedrich Ebert, promised to end the war;
- **11 November 1918-** Germany signed the **armistice**. WWI was over.

### The Weimar Constitution

- Germany became a **democracy**, called the **Weimar Republic**.
- The President and Reichstag were elected. **All adults could vote**.
- They used **proportional representation** (PR).
- **Article 48-** this said that the President could make his own laws in an emergency. He got to pick when it was an emergency.
- Many people did not like this new democracy- they wanted to **overthrow the government**.

	✓	X
PR	% of votes = % of seats in Reichstag. Very fair.	Led to coalition governments which could be weak
Article 48	President could pass laws without the Reichstag in an emergency	President could abuse this power and act like a dictator

### Treaty of Versailles

In June 1919, Germany was forced to sign this peace deal- they had no choice!

**Land-** Germany gave up 13% of its land to Denmark, France, Czechoslovakia and Poland, and gave up all its colonies. They were banned from uniting with Austria.

**Army-** Germany's army was cut to 100,000 men. It was only allowed 6 battleships, no submarines, tanks, or planes. The army was not allowed in the Rhineland, next to France.

**Money-** Germany had to pay £6.6 billion to the Allies for war damages.

**Blame-** Germany took all the blame for the war.

### Saviour Stresemann



#### Who was Gustav Stresemann?

- A member of the **Weimar Government's** majority party, the **Social Democrats**.
- Had been a member of the German Reichstag since 1907.
- Briefly **Chancellor** of Germany in 1923.
- Best remembered as Germany's **foreign minister** (involved in developing relations with other countries) from **1924-29**.
- **Died suddenly in 1929**, the same year as the Wall Street Crash caused economic chaos across the world.

### Economic and political problems in Weimar Germany – 1919-1923

Germany was hit with a **£6.6 billion** reparations (war debts) bill as part of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919.

Germany couldn't afford to pay these reparations – announcing in **1922 that it couldn't pay for 3 years**.

In response, in **1923 60,000 French and Belgian troops invaded a demilitarised (no German army was allowed in) industrial centre of Germany called the Ruhr** to physically take resources (e.g. coal, steel) as substitute for reparations. Ruhr workers were ordered to go on **strike (otherwise known as passive resistance)** by the German government, and money was printed by the German government to pay their wages and reparations.

**Hyperinflation led to dramatic price rises** and Germany's economy on the brink of collapse (see diagram).

A **new currency** was brought in to end hyperinflation, but many Germans never forgave the democratic government.

In 1919 a **left-wing** group, the **Spartacists**, attempted to take over Berlin and turn Germany into a **communist** country. The new democratic government fled to the town of **Weimar**. They hired the **Freikorps**, a right-wing group of ex-soldiers, to put down the Spartacists, whose leaders, **Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were murdered**.

A year later, the **Freikorps** attempted a takeover of **Berlin in 1920**, called the **Kapp Putsch**. The Weimar government had planned to **disband (break up) the Freikorps**, which pushed them into wanting to take over Germany and return it to an **autocratic government (rule of a Kaiser figure)**. While the government was unable to do anything, a **general strike by workers saw the Freikorps uprising fail**.

By 1923, the Weimar Republic's army was now strong enough to **put down Hitler's Munich Putsch of November that year**. Hitler had tried to take control of Munich, with a plan to then march on Berlin. However, the failed Putsch gave Hitler celebrity status. The judge sympathised with Hitler, and only have him 9 months in prison. This allowed Hitler to write Mein Kampf and **rethink his strategy for taking power, he would now persuade people to vote for him**.

#### Stresemann's main policies

**The Dawes Plan (1924)** = Gave Germany longer to pay the allies the reparation fine as well as a **loan from the USA of 800 million marks** to be invested into German industry and businesses to allow Germany a chance to get back up on its feet.

**The Locarno Pact (1925)** = **Germany, Britain, France, Belgium and Italy signed this agreeing not to invade each other**. This increased trust in Germany that they would not cause a Second World War. The year later Germany joined the League of Nations, an international club of countries aiming to keep world peace.