



**EDUQAS**

GCSE (9–1) HISTORY

Endorsed by  
**eduqas**  
Part of WJEC

# THE DEVELOPMENT OF GERMANY

1919–1991

Rob Quinn

 **DYNAMIC**  
LEARNING

 **HODDER**  
EDUCATION  
LEARN MORE

# CONTENTS

<b>Chapter 1:</b>	<b>Weimar Germany</b>	<b>7</b>
	Background: Germany by 1914	7
	The impact of the First World War and the Treaty of Versailles	8
	Background: the Weimar Republic	9
	Opposition to the Weimar government	16
	Economic and political reform under Stresemann	19
	Improved foreign relations	20
<b>Chapter 2:</b>	<b>The rise of the Nazi Party and its consolidation of power between 1933 and 1934</b>	<b>22</b>
	Reasons for Nazi support	22
	Hitler becomes Chancellor	26
	Steps to dictatorship	28
	The creation of the police state	31
<b>Chapter 3:</b>	<b>Life under the Nazis</b>	<b>34</b>
	Economic control	34
	Control of workers	36
	The treatment of women	38
	Children and education	40
	The treatment of Jewish people up to 1939	42
<b>Chapter 4:</b>	<b>Life during the Second World War</b>	<b>46</b>
	Background: Germany's foreign policy in the 1930s	46
	Changing conditions on the Home Front in Germany	47
	Opposition to Hitler and the Nazis	52
	The treatment of Jewish people after 1939	55
	The impact of defeat on Germany	58
<b>Chapter 5:</b>	<b>West and East Germany between 1949 and 1991</b>	<b>59</b>
	The division of Germany	59
	Economic recovery in the west	62
	Control and repression in the east	66
	The separation of Germany by 1961	70



<b>Chapter 6:</b>	<b>Cold War relations</b>	<b>72</b>
	The emergence of the two Germanies	72
	The Berlin Blockade and Airlift, 1948–49	74
	The significance of the Berlin Wall	75
	Military alliances and diplomatic relations	78
	Willy Brandt and <i>Ostpolitik</i>	80
<b>Chapter 7:</b>	<b>Co-operation and reconciliation</b>	<b>82</b>
	The collapse of communism in eastern Europe	82
	The fall of the Berlin Wall	83
	The end of the Cold War	87
	German reunification	89
	The role of Helmut Kohl and German reunification	91
	<b>Examination guidance</b>	<b>92</b>
	<b>Glossary</b>	<b>99</b>
	<b>Index</b>	<b>102</b>
	<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>104</b>

# 1 Weimar Germany

This chapter focuses on the key question: **How successful was the Weimar government in dealing with Germany's problems between 1919 and 1933?**

Germany was badly affected by the outcome of the First World War. The German economy had collapsed, and the Treaty of Versailles caused Germany to take the blame for the war and pay the costs of the war (**reparations**). After the **Kaiser** had **abdicated** in 1918, the new **democratic** system of government in Germany struggled against the rise of political extremists during an economic crisis that led to the French occupation of Germany's industrial heartland in 1923. A new currency, American loans and international co-operation temporarily solved these problems and Germany entered a new period of 'Golden Years'. Yet by 1929, Germany's future was still precarious as it was reliant on money from America to pay its debts, and the problems of poverty and unemployment had not been solved.

## Background: Germany by 1914

The German Empire was created in 1871 and ruled by the Kaiser. Germany also had a parliament, the **Reichstag**, but its powers were limited. By 1914 the new Germany was one of the most important countries in the world with powerful industries, a strong army and a newly created navy.



▲ Figure 1.1: Germany by 1914

# The impact of the First World War and the Treaty of Versailles

▼ **Source A:** A British cartoon showing the Kaiser watching time run out for his government, published in *Punch* magazine at the beginning of November 1918



THE SANDS RUN OUT.

The First World War began in 1914 but right from the start it did not work out as expected:

- The Schlieffen Plan, to defeat France quickly at the start of the war, did not work. The war became bogged down in the trenches in a stalemate that lasted until 1918.
- Germany struggled to fight a war on two fronts – with Britain and France in the west, and with Russia in the east.
- The **Allies'** naval blockade of Germany was very effective at preventing the arrival of urgently needed supplies for Germany, while the German use of submarines limited but did not stop supplies getting through to Britain.
- The arrival of 2 million US troops at the end of 1917 made fighting the war much more difficult for Germany.

By 1918, it became clear that Germany had no hope of winning the First World War. The disastrous Ludendorff Offensive of the summer had highlighted the German army's lack of supplies, and resulted in the Allies beginning to attack the Hindenburg Line, Germany's border defences.

The commanders of the German army advised the Kaiser to end the war and give more power to the *Reichstag*. They hoped that the politicians in the *Reichstag* would be blamed for ending the war and that the army could escape responsibility for Germany's defeat. The Social Democratic Party (SPD), as the largest party in the *Reichstag*, formed a new government under the leadership of Friedrich Ebert in November 1918.

The outbreak of a naval mutiny in the port of Kiel and violent protests in several German cities persuaded the Kaiser to **abdicate** (step down) on 9 November 1918. Germany was now a **republic**. On 11 November 1918, the new German government signed an **armistice** with Germany's enemies. The war was over.

The impact of the First World War on Germany was far-reaching:

- The Kaiser's government had collapsed, leaving Germany with a weakened experimental government during the end of the war and the peace negotiations that followed.
- Over 2 million German soldiers had died, and another 6 million had been wounded. There were 293,000 civilian deaths by 1918 from starvation and the effects of the winter cold. Child deaths had increased by 50 per cent during the war.
- Germany was close to bankruptcy as the war had lasted far longer than most people had expected. German factories had focused on making weapons for the war but other industries and businesses had suffered when foreign trade was cut off by the Allied naval blockade of Germany. Germans also felt poorer as prices had increased by 100 per cent during the war while wages had only increased 50 per cent.
- There were serious food shortages after the failure of potato crops, which left Germans dependent on turnips which were usually grown to feed livestock.
- There were serious political divisions between the socialists who generally wanted to make Germany a fairer and more democratic society, the **communists** who generally believed in violent revolution to share the wealth of the country among the workers and the nationalists who generally wanted a **dictatorship** to return Germany to being a powerful country again. These divisions often led to violent protests in the new German republic.

## ACTIVITY



Which was the most serious impact of the end of the First World War (a) for Germans in 1918, and (b) for the future of Germany?

## Background: the Weimar Republic

The new government decided to hold elections for a new *Reichstag* in January 1919. There was an attempted communist uprising in Berlin (see The Spartacists on page 16), inspired by the Russian revolution. It was decided that it would be safer for the new *Reichstag* to meet in the city of Weimar. This city therefore gave its name to the new government of Germany – the Weimar Republic – even after the *Reichstag* had returned to Berlin. The new **constitution** was created by August 1919 and was called the Weimar constitution (see Figure 1.2). It made Germany one of the most advanced democratic countries in the world.

Although these were important changes to the government of Germany, there were also some problems with the new constitution:

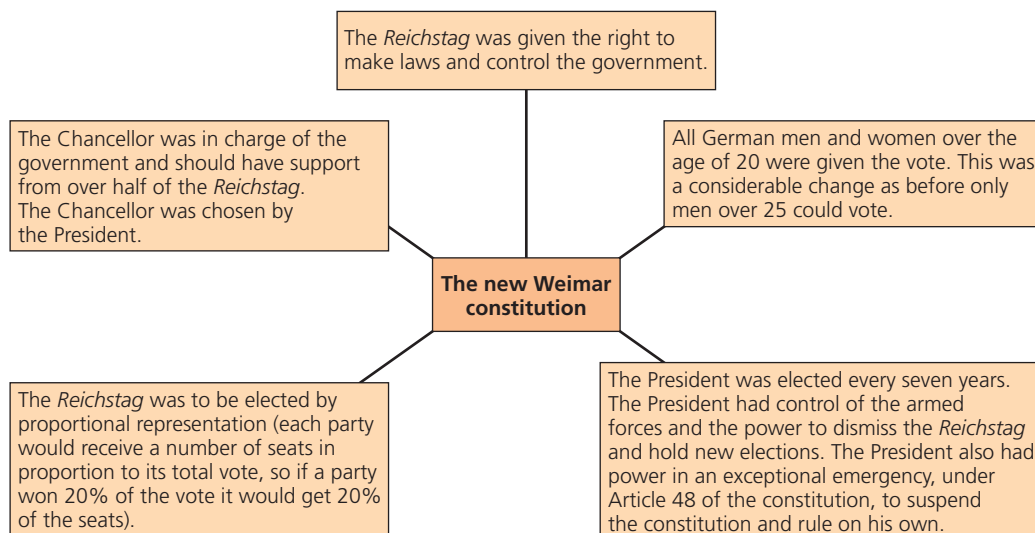
- The system of **proportional representation** sometimes resulted in no **political party** having a majority of seats in the *Reichstag* (see Table 1.1 on the next page). Governments often had to be made up of several parties – these were called coalitions. Although **coalition governments** could work well, when there were serious problems (such as the **hyperinflation** crisis in 1923) coalition partners could disagree about what to do and leave the government. This led to weak, unstable government at crucial times (for example, when dealing with the economic fallout of the **Wall Street Crash** after 1929).
- When coalitions broke down or could not be formed, the only person who could govern effectively was the President. This resulted in democratic government being suspended under Article 48. Germany's first President,

Ebert, used Article 48 on 136 separate occasions between 1919 and 1925. Many Germans worried that this excessive use was a threat to democracy.

- Not all Germans welcomed the new constitution. There were left-wing opponents, such as the communists, who believed that the Weimar government was too moderate and not left-wing enough. There were also right-wing political parties that wanted to see the return of the Kaiser and stronger government than the Weimar Republic could provide.
- Democracy of the sort provided by the Weimar constitution was new for Germany. There was little experience of the practice of democratic government before 1919.



▲ **Source B:** Newly elected President Ebert, leader of the SPD, gives a speech to a crowd in Weimar in 1919



▲ **Figure 1.2:** Key points of the new Weimar constitution

Some political parties were completely opposed to the republic. For example, the German Communist Party (KPD) preferred a worker's revolution while the German National People's Party (DNVP) and the German People's Party (DVP) wanted to bring back the monarchy.

The more moderate parties were the Social Democratic Party, made up of socialists and reformers; the Centre Party, supported by Roman Catholics; the German Democratic Party, supported by the German middle classes.

The Nationalist Socialist German Workers' Party (Nazi) Party was not formed until 1920, which is why they are not included in these results.

Party	Number of seats	Number of votes	Percentage of votes
Social Democratic Party (socialists) (SPD)	165	11.5 million	38
Centre Party (Z)	91	6 million	20
German Democratic Party (DDP)	75	5.5 million	19
German National People's Party (DNVP)	44	3 million	10
Independent Socialist Party	22	2.25 million	8
German People's Party (DVP)	19	1 million	4
German Communist Party (KPD)	0	0	0

▲ Table 1.1: The results of the January 1919 elections to the *Reichstag*

### POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE WEIMAR ELECTIONS, 1919

DNVP (*Deutschnationale Volkspartei*) – the German National People's Party wanted to return to the old system of having a monarch like the Kaiser

DVP (*Deutsche Volkspartei*) – the German People's Party, represented the interests of the most powerful businesses in Germany

Z (*Zentrumspartei*) – the Centre Party, represented the interests of Catholics and the Catholic Church

DDP (*Deutsche Demokratische Partei*) – the German Democratic Party, supported by many middle-class voters and in favour of Weimar democracy

SPD (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*) – the Social Democratic Party, represented the interests of working-class voters

KPD (*Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands*) – the German Communist Party, wanted to replace Weimar democracy with a communist dictatorship

### ACTIVITIES



- 1 Why was the new government of Germany known as the Weimar Republic?
- 2 Under the new Weimar constitution, what was the role of the:
  - (a) President
  - (b) Chancellor
  - (c) *Reichstag*?
- 3 Make two lists:
  - the strengths of the Weimar Republic
  - the weaknesses of the Republic.
- 4 Which political party won the 1919 election?
- 5 What do these election results suggest about the support the winning party had from the German people in addressing Germany's problems?



## The impact of the Treaty of Versailles

Although Germany agreed to the armistice of November 1918 which ended the First World War, the peace treaty was mainly decided by the victorious Allies (Britain, France and the USA). Germany was in no position to resist the Allies as its army had been defeated and its economy was weak. The terms of the treaty were drawn up in a former royal palace at Versailles, near Paris.

The US President, Woodrow Wilson, wanted a moderate peace settlement but he had to take note of the views of his allies. Georges Clemenceau, the French Prime Minister, was out for revenge for the widespread destruction of French farms, businesses and towns, as well as the civilian deaths, caused by the German invasion in 1914; he wanted to ensure that France would never again be threatened by Germany. David Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister, was personally sympathetic to Wilson's hopes for a lenient peace treaty but had just won the 1918 general election with promises to make Germany pay for the war. He also was under pressure to gain a large financial settlement from Germany as Britain had incurred huge debts in fighting the war.

The German government was not allowed to take part in the negotiations at Versailles. The Allies presented Germany with a dictated peace (**Diktat**), which meant that the German government had to either take the terms on offer or refuse them and face the war starting again.

Many Germans were outraged by the terms of the treaty, as they had agreed to the armistice in the hope that any peace would be based on the **Fourteen Points**, put forward early in 1918 by Wilson, as a plan to end the war. For example, Germans had hoped that they would be given the right to **self-determination**. This had been an important part of the Fourteen Points and Germans now felt betrayed as they were not given this right. The terms of the treaty came as a shock and a huge blow to German expectations. Many had expected that as a result of having removed the Kaiser and set up a modern democratic government before the end of the war, Germany would be treated fairly and leniently by the Allies.

### ACTIVITIES



- 1 Why were there arguments among the Allies about how Germany should be treated in the peace treaty?
- 2 Why was the German government forced to agree to terms in the treaty which they had had no part in negotiating?
- 3 Why were the German people so angry about the terms of the treaty?

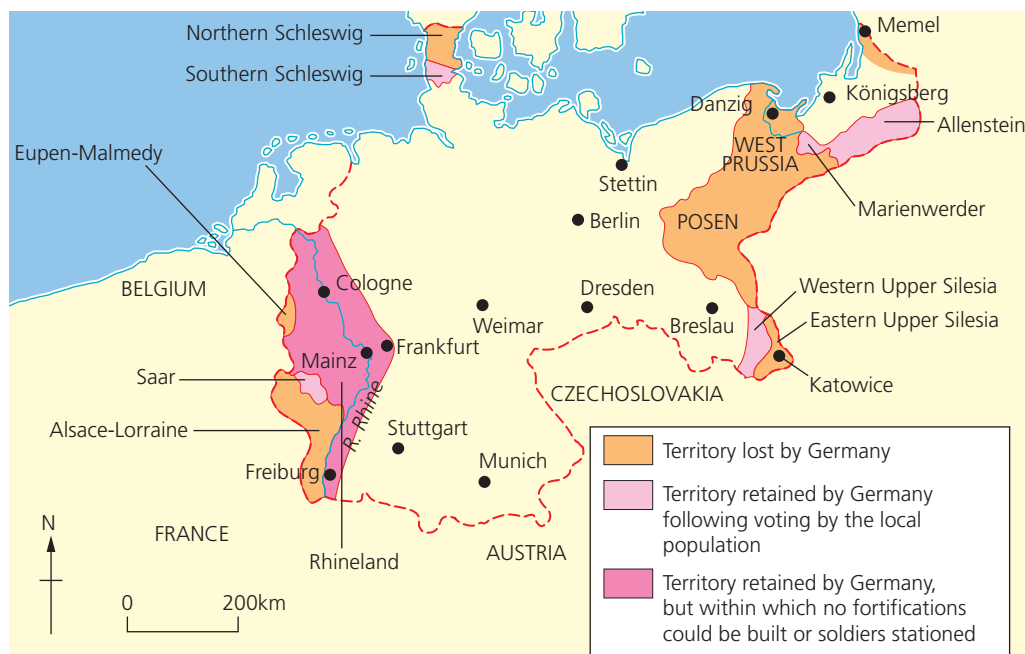


▲ **Source C:** Officials signing the Treaty of Versailles, 28 June 1919



The main terms of the treaty were:

<p><b>War guilt</b></p> <p>Under Article 231 of the treaty, Germany was forced to accept complete responsibility for causing the First World War. The main reason for this clause was so that the Allies could justify making Germany pay for the war (reparations).</p>	<p><b>Reparations</b></p> <p>Germany had to pay for the damage caused by the war. The payments to the Allies totalled £6,600 million.</p>
<p><b>Loss of land</b></p> <p>Germany was to lose 10 per cent of its population and 13 per cent of its territory, including valuable areas of coal, iron and steel production:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The Saar region, rich in coal, was given to France for 15 years (after which the inhabitants would vote on which country to belong to).</li> <li>■ Alsace-Lorraine was returned to France.</li> <li>■ Belgium gained Eupen and Malmedy.</li> <li>■ Denmark gained northern Schleswig.</li> <li>■ Upper Silesia was given to Poland, which was also given a portion of German land called the Polish corridor so that the new country of Poland had access to the Baltic Sea.</li> </ul> <p>Germany also lost all its overseas <b>colonies</b> in Africa which were divided between Britain, France, Belgium and Portugal. In the Pacific, German colonies were given to China, Japan, New Zealand and Australia.</p> <p>There was a ban on the idea of <b>Anschluss</b>, the union of Germany and Austria, which Germans saw as a great betrayal of the idea of self-determination.</p>	<p><b>Military terms</b></p> <p>These terms were severe and a blow to the prestige of a country which had previously had a powerful army and navy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The army was reduced in size to 100,000 volunteers.</li> <li>■ The navy was reduced to six old battleships, six light cruisers and a few smaller craft. There were to be no submarines.</li> <li>■ Germany was not allowed to have an air force.</li> <li>■ The Rhineland, an important area of western Germany, was demilitarised which meant that no German soldiers were allowed within 50 kilometres of the right bank of the River Rhine. The Allies were to occupy the zone for 15 years.</li> </ul>



▲ Figure 1.3: The territorial changes from the Treaty of Versailles

**Source D: From Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles**

*The Allied Governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her allies for causing all loss and damage to which the allied governments and their peoples have been subjected as a result of the war imposed by the aggression of Germany and her allies.*

**Source E:** From a German newspaper, *Deutsche Zeitung*, 28 June 1919

*Vengeance! German nation! Today in the Hall of Mirrors [Versailles] the disgraceful treaty is being signed. Do not forget it. The German people will, with unceasing work, press forward to reconquer the place among nations to which it is entitled. Then will come vengeance for the shame of 1919.*

## ACTIVITIES

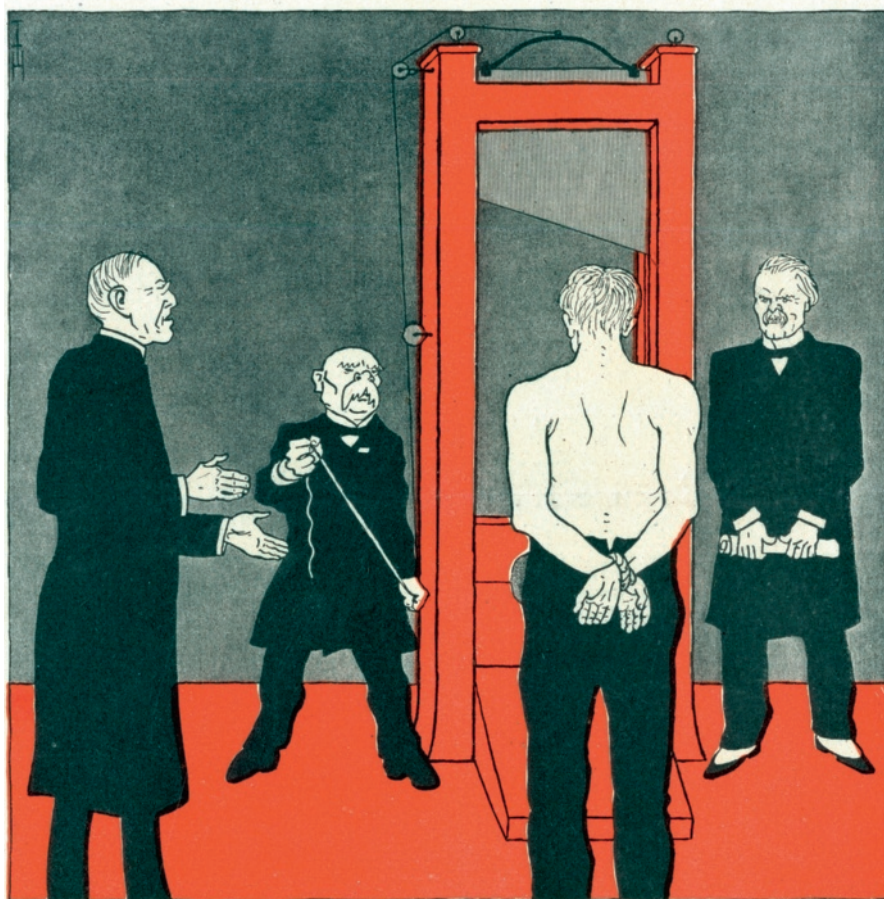
- 1 In what ways could the territorial consequences of the treaty have been worse for Germany?
- 2 Why did the 'stab in the back' idea change people's views of the Weimar government?

## Political consequences

The creation of Poland was regarded as a deliberate attempt to weaken Germany by separating it from East Prussia. The loss of the colonies, the stigma of the Diktat and the war guilt clause, and the enforced payment of reparations drove home not only the unfairness of the treaty as Germans saw it but also its humiliation. The German political parties that made up the Weimar coalition government that signed the treaty could not escape the 'stab in the back' myth – the belief that the German people had been betrayed by their own government. Just as it began, the new republic was fatally weakened in many German eyes as a result of its association with a very unpopular peace treaty.

However, if Clemenceau had had his way, more German territory would have been permanently lost, such as the Rhineland and Saarland, and if Alsace-Lorraine had been given the right to self-determination, it is unlikely that the people would have voted to stay in Germany.

A wave of protest followed the publication of the treaty. The army commanders made it clear to the government that further military operations would be a disaster and there was no choice but to accept the terms of the treaty. The majority of Germans felt bitter resentment at the terms of the treaty and criticised the new government for agreeing to them. It was not only the right-wing parties that were humiliated by this treaty; opposition to it was widespread. The Weimar Republic was now linked to defeat and humiliation. The army could, however, claim that it was all the politicians' fault: those who had signed the armistice in November 1918 were frequently referred to as the November Criminals.



▲ **Source F:** A German cartoon about the Treaty of Versailles showing the 'Big Three' (the leaders of the USA, Britain and France) sending Germany to the guillotine, 1919