

Key Terms: Germany 1890–1945



1: Germany and the Growth of Democracy

Kaiser Wilhelm II: Struggled to manage Germany's growing parliamentary government.

Prussian militarism: Strong military tradition influencing German politics.

Industrialisation: Rapid growth creating economic and social tensions.

Social reform and socialism: Response to worker demands; growth of SPD.

Navy Laws (1898–1912): Expanded Germany's navy, increasing tensions with Britain.

First World War: War weariness, economic collapse & defeat led to the Kaiser's abdication.

Reparations: Payments imposed by the Treaty of Versailles.

Occupation of the Ruhr (1923): French and Belgian troops seized industrial areas.

Hyperinflation (1923): Economic crisis from printing excessive money.

Weimar democracy: Challenges from Spartacists, Kapp Putsch, and Munich Putsch.

Stresemann era (1924–29): Recovery through Dawes Plan, Young Plan, and new currency.

Weimar culture: Flourishing arts and liberal values during recovery.



2: Germany and the Depression



Great Depression (1929): Economic crisis fueling support for extremist parties.

Nazi appeal: Hitler's charisma and propaganda, supported by the SA.

Failure of Weimar democracy: Weak governments, rising unemployment, and instability.

Papen and Hindenburg: Key figures in Hitler's appointment as Chancellor (1933).

Reichstag Fire (1933): Blamed on communists, used to suppress opposition.

Enabling Act (1933): Gave Hitler dictatorial powers.

Night of the Long Knives (1934): Elimination of SA leaders, consolidating Hitler's control.

Hitler as Führer (1934): Combined Chancellor and President roles after Hindenburg's death.

3: Experiences of Germans under the Nazis

Economic changes: Public works, rearmament, self-sufficiency, and war impact (bombing, rationing, labour shortages).

Social policy: Policies on women, youth, education, and control of religion.

Aryan ideology: Racial policies and persecution of minorities, culminating in the Final Solution.

Propaganda and censorship: Led by Goebbels to control public opinion.

Police state: Repression through the SS, Gestapo, and Himmler.

Opposition: Resistance by White Rose, Swing Youth, Edelweiss Pirates, and July 1944 bomb plot.

