

CHRONOLOGY 1918 - 24

1918



AUGUST 8 Allied forces launch the final phase of World War I.

SEPTEMBER 29 German Army High Command agrees to armistice and the formation of a civilian government.

OCTOBER 3 New government formed under Prince Max von Baden; Germany begins to negotiate the terms of the armistice with the United States.

NOVEMBER 3 Naval mutiny in Kiel triggers the November Revolution, a period of civil conflict that continues through the following year.

NOVEMBER 9 Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicates. A new republic is established, led by Social Democrat Friedrich Ebert.

NOVEMBER 11 Armistice ending the war is signed at Compiègne, France.

DECEMBER The November Group is established in Berlin, composed of radical artists, writers, and designers who advocate a strong relationship between art and politics.

FEBRUARY 21 Assassination of Kurt Eisner, Minister-President of Bavaria. Eisner's death leads to the short-lived Munich Soviet Republic (April-May).

APRIL Walter Gropius founds the Bauhaus art and design school in Weimar.

JUNE 28 Germany accepts the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Alsace is ceded to France and the Rhineland is demilitarized.

AUGUST 11 The National Assembly ratifies the Weimar Constitution, officially establishing Germany as a parliamentary republic.

1920



JANUARY Exchange rate stands at 64.8 marks to the dollar, up from 8.9 marks the previous year.

FEBRUARY 24 The German Workers' Party changes its name to the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP). Adolf Hitler addresses a meeting of 2,000 people in Munich, announcing the party's manifesto.

FEBRUARY Robert Wience's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* is released.

FEBRUARY-MARCH The Freikorps are officially disbanded, though many eventually join the Nazis' paramilitary wings.

MARCH 13-17 Wolfgang Kapp and Walther von Lüttwitz, with the support of right-wing political and military forces, attempt to overthrow the republic. The Kapp Putsch fails in large part due to a general strike in Berlin.

MARCH-APRIL Communist uprisings in central Germany and the Ruhr region are suppressed by government troops.

JUNE First International Dada Fair opens in Berlin.

DECEMBER 4 The left-wing majority of the USPD votes to merge with the KPD. Remaining USPD members eventually join the SPD.

MAJOR PARTIES OF THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC

GOVERNMENT PARTIES

SPD Social Democratic Party
ZP Center Party
DDP German Democratic Party
DVP German People's Party

LEFT OPPOSITION

USPD Independent Socialist Party
KPD Communist Party

RIGHT OPPOSITION

DNVP German National People's Party
NSDAP National Socialist German Workers' Party

CAPTIONS

1918 November Revolution demonstration in Berlin, calling for workers' and soldiers' councils

1919 Thirty-two victims of the Spartacist uprising are buried in Berlin, including Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg; Luxemburg's coffin is empty, as her body is never found

1920 "Stop! Those who go forward will be shot." Paramilitary troops in support of the Kapp Putsch block access to government buildings

1922 Blind war veteran, with his dog, plays for coins in Berlin

1923 Nazis arrest Munich city councillors during the Beer Hall Putsch; French soldiers during the occupation of the Ruhr; Million-mark notes, rendered worthless, are used as notepaper

1924 *Völkisch* propaganda election trucks in front of the Brandenburg Gate, May 4, 1924

1919



JANUARY 5-12 The leftist Spartacist uprising breaks out in Berlin; it is violently suppressed by the army and the Freikorps (volunteer paramilitary organizations), with the support of the SPD, KPD leaders Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht are captured on January 15 and are interrogated, tortured, and executed.

FEBRUARY 8 National Assembly opens in Weimar. Ebert is elected Reich President on February 11, Philipp Scheidemann becomes chancellor (replaced in June by Gustav Bauer).

1921

JANUARY German war reparations are set at 269 billion gold marks, payable over 42 years. The amount is reduced in June to 132 billion marks (equivalent to \$31.4 billion).

MARCH France occupies the Ruhr in North Rhine-Westphalia to enforce reparation payments, prompting miners' strikes in April.

JULY Exchange rate is at 76.7 marks to the dollar.

AUGUST 26 Matthias Erzberger, who had negotiated the 1918 armistice, is assassinated by the far-right Organization Consul (OC).

1922



JANUARY Exchange rate rises to 191.8 marks to the dollar.

MARCH F. W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* is released.

APRIL 16 Treaty of Rapallo, negotiated by Germany's foreign minister, Walther Rathenau, establishes economic and military cooperation between Germany and the Soviet Union.

JUNE 24 Rathenau is assassinated by the OC.

OCTOBER Hyperinflation begins, eventually becoming so severe that money printed in the morning is useless by the afternoon.

1923



JANUARY 11-16 French and Belgian troops occupy the entire Ruhr region in order to extract reparations. German campaign of passive resistance leads to standstill in regional production and transportation.

JANUARY Exchange rate rises to nearly 18,000 marks to the dollar.

JANUARY 27-29 NSDAP's First Party Congress held in Munich.

AUGUST One dollar now exchanges for more than 4.6 million marks.

AUGUST 13 Resignation of Wilhelm Cuno's government. "Great Coalition" government is formed by the four main pro-democratic parties (SDP, ZP, DDP, DVP). Gustav Stresemann becomes chancellor.

OCTOBER Communist uprisings in Hamburg, Saxony, and the Rhineland.

OCTOBER Regular radio broadcasting begins in Germany.

NOVEMBER Hyperinflation peaks at 4.2 billion marks to one dollar.

NOVEMBER 8-11 Nazis attempt a putsch in Munich, with the aim of convincing the Bavarian state government to rebel against the federal government. The so-called Beer Hall Putsch is suppressed; Hitler and other instigators are arrested, and the NSDAP is banned.

NOVEMBER 15 The Rentenmark (rm) is introduced to stabilize the German currency, with one rm equal to 1 billion marks.

NOVEMBER 30 Stresemann steps down as chancellor (replaced by Wilhelm Marx) but remains as foreign minister.

1924



APRIL 1 Hitler is given a five-year prison sentence for his role in the Beer Hall Putsch.

MAY 4 Reichstag elections result in gains on both the far left and the far right, at the expense of the government's coalition parties.

SEPTEMBER 1 The Dawes Plan is enacted to collect reparations. French and Belgian troops will evacuate the Ruhr and reparations are lowered. Foreign loans to Germany are allowed.

NOVEMBER Thomas Mann publishes *The Magic Mountain*.

DECEMBER 7 Coalition parties modestly regain seats in the Reichstag elections.

DECEMBER 20. Hitler is released from prison after serving nine months.

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1925

JANUARY The ban on the NSDAP is lifted, leading to the Nazi Party's refounding in February.

FEBRUARY 28 President Ebert dies.

APRIL 26 Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg is elected Reich President. Though he runs as an independent candidate, he is regarded as a conservative.

JUNE Gustav Hartlaub's *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) exhibition opens at the Kunsthalle Mannheim. Soon thereafter, Franz Roh publishes *Nach-Expressionismus: Magischer Realismus* (Post-Expressionism: Magic Realism).

JULY The first volume of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* is published. The second volume is published in 1926.

JULY-AUGUST French and Belgian troops begin withdrawal from the Ruhr.

DECEMBER 1 The Locarno Treaties are signed, preserving Germany's borders with France and Belgium and guaranteeing that Germany would not wage war against either country.

DECEMBER Josephine Baker brings her "Revue Nègre" from Paris to Berlin.

1926



APRIL 26 Germany and the Soviet Union sign the Treaty of Berlin, guaranteeing their neutrality in the event of a third-party attack on either country.

JULY 3-4 Second Nazi Party Congress held in Weimar.

SEPTEMBER 8 Germany joins the League of Nations.

DECEMBER Gustav Stresemann receives the Nobel Peace Prize for his role in the Locarno negotiations, along with Aristide Briand, France's foreign minister.

1928

MARCH The Association of Revolutionary Visual Artists of Germany (Asso) is founded.

JUNE 29 A second Great Coalition government is formed between the SPD, DDP, and ZP, as well as the ultra-conservative DNVP. Hermann Müller (SPD) becomes chancellor.

AUGUST 27 Germany, France, and the United States sign the Kellogg-Briand Pact, which renounces war as a means of settling disputes. Other nations soon follow.

AUGUST Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill's *Threepenny Opera* opens in Berlin.

SEPTEMBER Unemployment stands at 650,000.

1929



MAY 1-3 "Bloody May" riots occur in Berlin between KPD demonstrators and SPD-controlled police, who fire on protesters and bystanders.

MAY *Film und Foto*, the first major international exhibition devoted to photography and film, opens in Stuttgart.

SEPTEMBER Unemployment rises to 1.3 million.

OCTOBER U.S. stock market crash triggers worldwide Great Depression. American banks recall all loans to Germany. Unemployment begins to grow rapidly.

1927



JANUARY Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* is released.

JANUARY 31 The Inter-Allied Military Commission officially ceases oversight of Germany.

OCTOBER 1 Unemployment Support Law goes into effect, covering up to 800,000 unemployed workers for periods of 3-4 months.

CAPTIONS

1926 Joseph Goebbels (second from right) at NSDAP Second Party Congress in Weimar

1927 Prices posted at a hairdresser indicate special rates for the unemployed

1929 Barricade in Berlin's Neukölln district during the May riots

1930 SPD election poster: Nazis "are the enemies of democracy!"; NSDAP election poster accusing the SPD of stealing German workers' wealth

1931 Crowds rush to withdraw savings after the collapse of the Darmstädter and National Bank

1932 "Stop Hitler's sedition! Elect Hindenburg"

1933 Hindenburg greets Hitler, March 12, 1933

1930



MARCH 27 Coalition dissolves over disagreement about how to handle unemployment crisis. Müller resigns as chancellor; Heinrich Brüning (ZP) forms a minority government. No government will rule with a majority in the Reichstag from this point forward.

MARCH The Leipzig premiere of Brecht and Weill's *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* is disrupted by Nazis.

APRIL Josef von Sternberg's *The Blue Angel* is released.

SEPTEMBER Unemployment continues to rise, to more than 3 million.

SEPTEMBER 14 Massive turnout for national elections results in SPD winning a majority of votes, but not enough to retain a majority of seats in the Reichstag. In their electoral breakthrough, the NSDAP garners 18 percent of the vote, gaining 95 seats.

1931



JUNE 5 Cuts in salaries and pensions of public employees.

JULY 13 The Darmstädter and National Bank collapses, triggering a banking crisis. The stock market is closed until September.

SEPTEMBER Unemployment reaches 4.5 million.

DECEMBER 8 The federal government declares a state of emergency, reducing wages to 1927 levels. Brüning is dubbed "The Hunger Chancellor."

1932



APRIL 10 Hindenburg is reelected president with 19.4 million votes (53 percent). Hitler is second, with 13.4 million (37 percent). Ernst Thälmann (KPD) is third, with 3.7 million (10 percent).

MAY 30 Brüning resigns as chancellor, succeeded by Franz von Papen.

JULY 31 The Nazis garner 37.8 percent of the votes in the Reichstag elections, more than doubling their seats to 230.

AUGUST 13 Hitler demands that Hindenburg name him chancellor; Hindenburg refuses.

SEPTEMBER 5.1 million are out of work, with more than one million no longer eligible for government assistance.

DECEMBER 3 Papen resigns. General Kurt von Schleicher becomes chancellor.

1933



JANUARY Unemployment peaks at 6.1 million.

JANUARY 28 Schleicher resigns.

JANUARY 30 Hindenburg, persuaded by Papen and other advisors, appoints Hitler chancellor.

FEBRUARY 1 The Reichstag is dissolved.

FEBRUARY 27-28 The Reichstag fire leads to emergency measures suspending civil liberties and banning the KPD. Approximately 4,000 communists are arrested, including Thälmann, who had called for Hitler's overthrow.

MARCH 5 In the last free elections of the Weimar Republic, the Nazis win 44 percent of the vote; their coalition with the DNVP yields a plurality.

MARCH 23 The Enabling Act is passed (only the SPD votes against it), granting Hitler dictatorial powers.