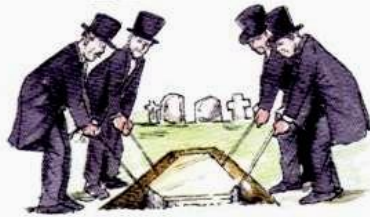


# Was the Weimar Republic doomed from the start?

Revision presentation Weimar Germany 1918-1929

# The Impact of World War One on Germany



300,000 deaths related to malnutrition during 1914–18 among civilian population.



In Germany, the government was forced to slaughter one-third of all pigs in 1915 because the naval blockade had cut off imports of fodder to feed them.



The blockade cut supplies of nitrates to Germany – vital for explosives for the army and fertilisers for the farmers.



In Germany in 1916, the adult meat ration for one week was the equivalent of two burgers in a modern fast-food restaurant.

# November 1918

- **Autumn 1918** it was clear Germany had lost the war
- Allies offered Germany peace but with strict conditions, one being Germany should be more democratic.



# November 1918

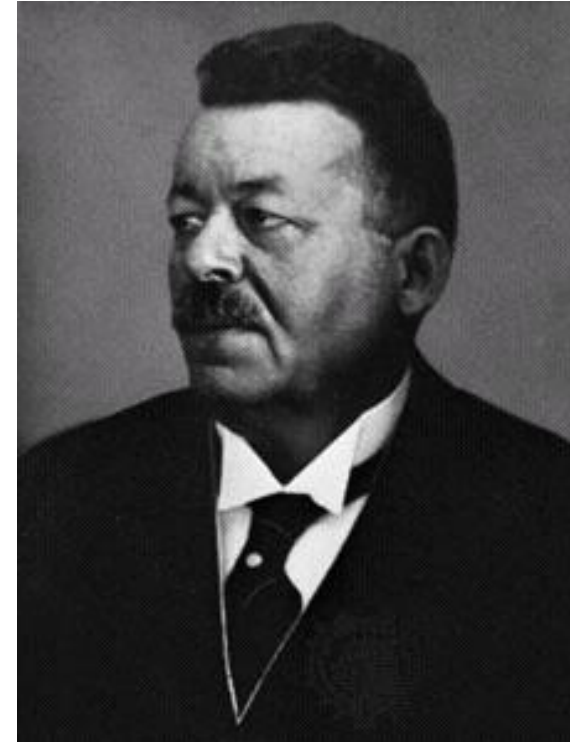
- **Kaiser refuses** these conditions
- **Sailors in northern Germany were angry and mutinied** taking over the town of Kiel.
- This led to other revolts – socialists led uprisings in other ports
- In **Bavaria an Independent Socialist Republic** was declared.



Sailors in the Kiel Mutiny

# November 1918

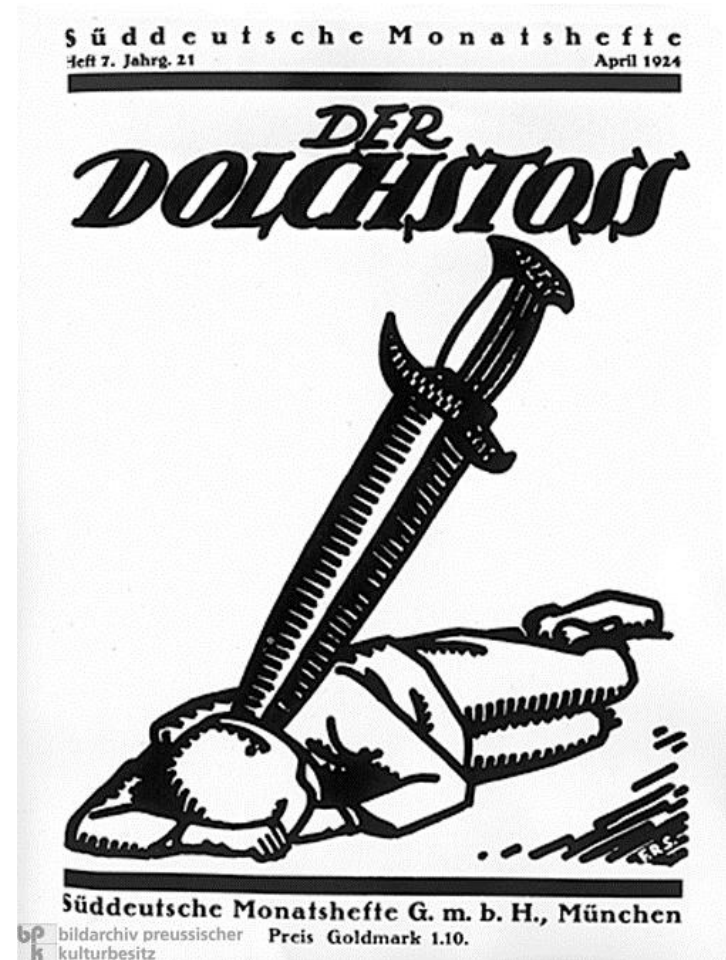
- 9<sup>th</sup> November Kaiser abdicated, he left Germany for the Netherlands
- 10<sup>th</sup> November Ebert becomes the new leader of the Republic of Germany.
- 11<sup>th</sup> November Armistice signed with the Allies



Ebert

# Problems for the New Government

- **Germany lost the war**, the German people didn't believe this. The Kaiser and the army never told bad news to the people. Many believed that Germany could still win the war. The people needed to be convinced that they could not restart the war and win.



# Problems for the New Government

- **Germany's ECONOMY was a disaster.** Germany has debts of **150 billion** marks because of the war. The government can't even afford to pay war pensions for the **600,000 families** whose fathers and sons have been killed in the war.



# Problems for the New Government

- **People were starving.**  
Food is scarce and expensive.  
Possibly 300,000 Germans have suffered the effects of malnutrition.
- **Germany was more divided than ever.** Some wealthy INDUSTRIALISTS got rich from the war while poor families had to sell their possessions to buy food.

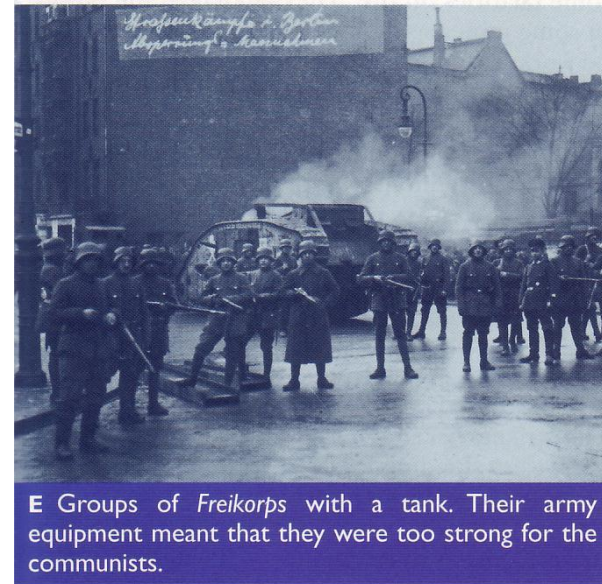


**B** Starving people in Munich tear apart a dead horse in 1919.



# Problems for the New Government

- **Berlin was dangerous – some Germans didn't want democracy.** Armed gangs of former soldiers were fighting in the streets with police, troops and each other. Many of these gangs were totally opposed to democracy. Berlin was so dangerous that the new government had to meet in the small town of Weimar instead.



Freikorps groups with a tank. Their army equipment meant that they were too strong for the communists.

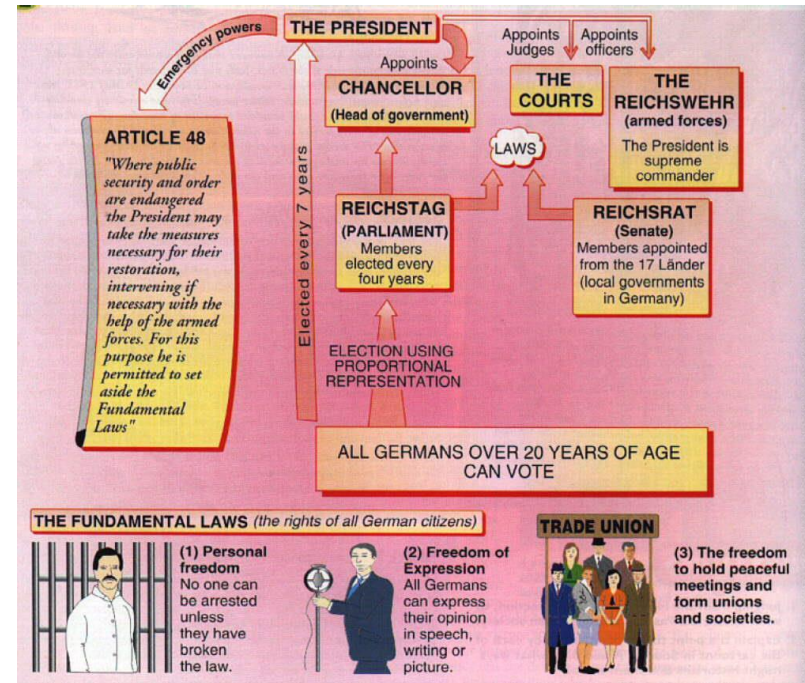
# The Weimar Constitution

- Germany was to be a **democracy**.
- The **Reichstag** (parliament) was to make laws and control the government.
- **Men and women aged 20** and over could vote in elections for deputies to the Reichstag.



# The Weimar Constitution

- Voting was by **proportional representation**, so a party receiving 10 percent of the votes would get 10 percent of the deputies.
- The head of the government was the **chancellor**.
- The head of the state was the **president**, who was to be elected every **seven** years. The president could dissolve the Reichstag, order fresh elections and, in times of emergency suspend the Reichstag and rule by himself (**article 48**).



# Weaknesses of the Constitution

- Between 1919 and 1933, no party won more than half the votes in the Reichstag
- Therefore **all governments were coalitions.**
- When faced with serious problems the coalitions often fell apart.
- Also **many people such as the aristocratic families (Junkers) and industrialists and members of the army did not like the new democracy.** They wanted Germany to have one strong leader like before the war.

# The Threat from the Left: The Spartacist Revolt January 1919

- Communists thought the time was right for revolution in Germany.
- In January 1919, communists in Berlin calling themselves **Spartacists** tried to overthrow the government. Karl **Liebknecht** and Rosa **Luxemburg** led them.

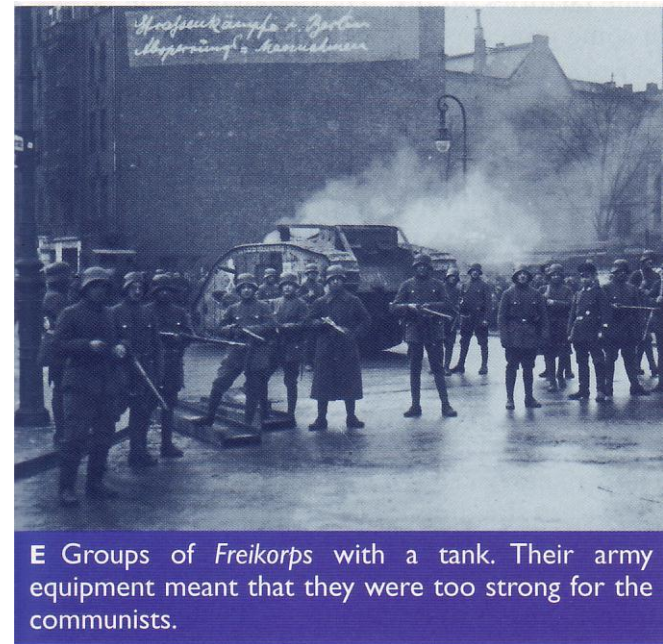


# The Threat from the Left: The Spartacist Revolt January 1919

- The Spartacists took over the main streets and public buildings in Berlin. Ebert was taken prisoner but was released when he promised to meet their demands.
- Ebert called on the army to put down the rebellion but they refused. Many officers were opposed to the new government.

# The Threat from the Left: The Spartacist Revolt January 1919

- Ebert was forced to ask the leaders of the **Freikorps** for help. These were bands of ex-soldiers who held on to their weapons and continued to follow their officers.
- From **Jan 6-13 bloody street battles raged in Berlin**. The well-armed Freikorps units killed thousands of communists and executed their leaders. The revolt was over.



E Groups of Freikorps with a tank. Their army equipment meant that they were too strong for the communists.

# The impact of the Treaty of Versailles on Germany

- At the time of the armistice Germany was promised that the peace treaty would be based on **Wilson's 14 Points**. **This promise was not kept.**
- The Germans were not allowed to take part in the discussions about the treaty – they were told they had to sign or face invasion by the allies. This was known as a **DIKTAT**.



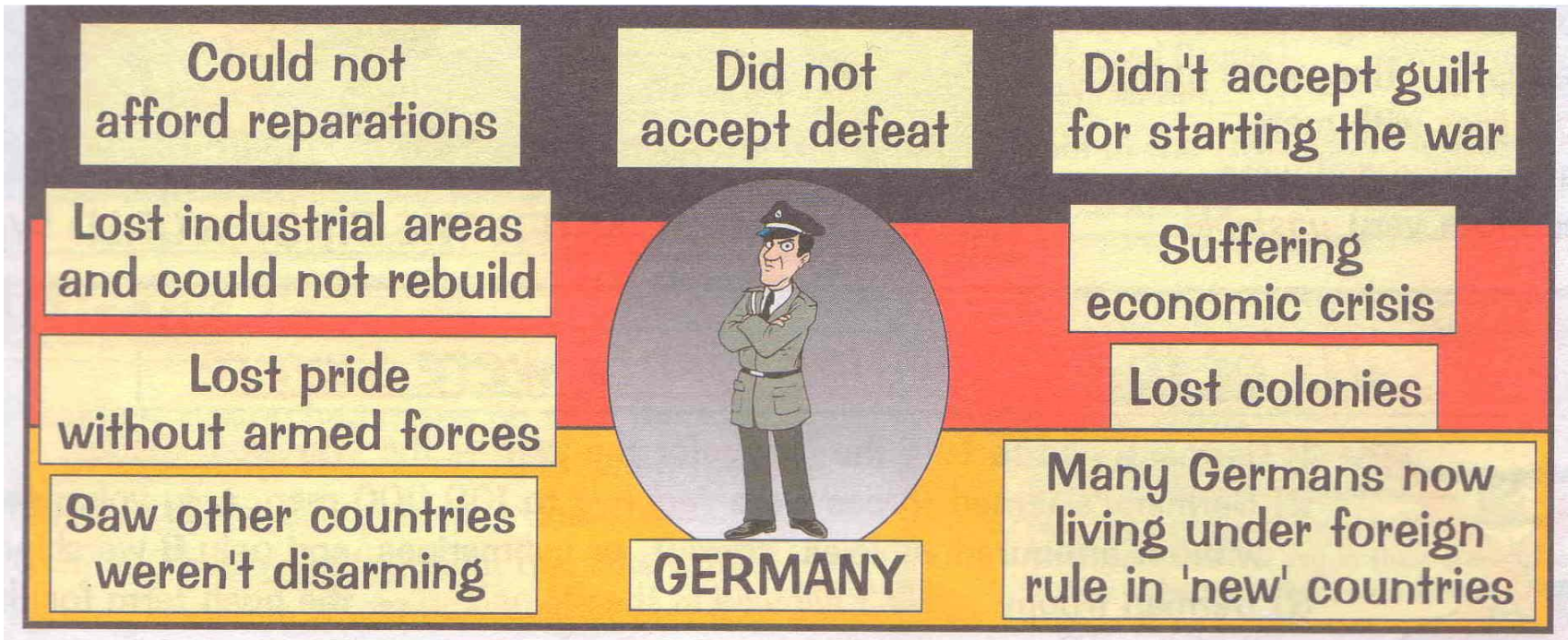




# The impact of the Treaty of Versailles on Germany

- The limits on the **army were humiliating**. The German army was reduced to **100,000** men. No tanks, no air forces and no submarines. This left Germany almost totally defenceless against other states.
- **Alsace-Lorraine** was returned to France, all German colonies were taken away, Poland was given German territory and the Rhineland was remilitarized.
- Germany lost **10% of its land and 12.5% of its population**.
- Millions of Germans were now ruled by foreigners.
- East Prussia was cut off from the rest of Germany by the Polish Corridor.
- Germany had to accept all blame for the war and pay **REPARATIONS of £6.6 billion to compensate the allies for war damage**.

# German thoughts on Versailles



# The Threat from the Right: The Kapp Putsch

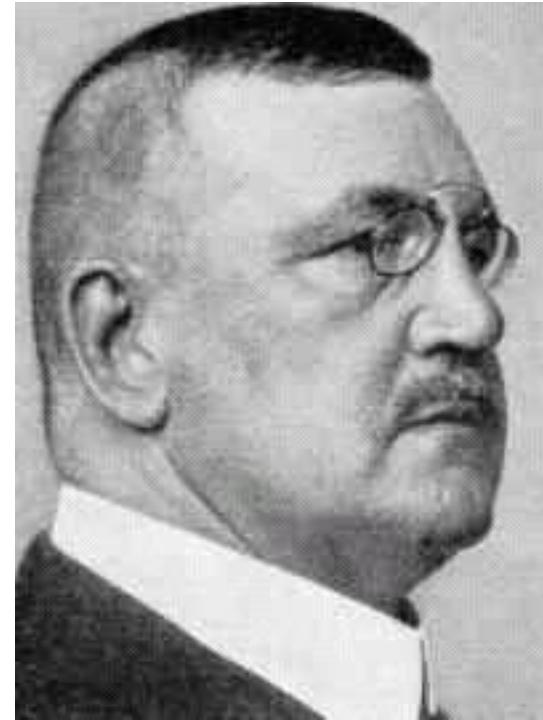
- When Ebert tried to disband the Freikorps because of the Treaty of Versailles limiting the army to 100,000 they rebelled. This is known as the Kapp Putsch.
- The Freikorps marched on Berlin in March 1920 and proclaimed Dr Wolfgang Kapp Germany's new leader. The army refused to fire on the Freikorps, many of whom had fought alongside them in the war. The government fled Berlin.



Kapp

# The Threat from the Right: The Kapp Putsch

- Ebert appealed to the ordinary people of Berlin for help. **They went on strike to show their opposition to Kapp.** Berlin's roads, railways, power, water and sewage were all brought to a standstill. Kapp gave up and fled the country



# Closure

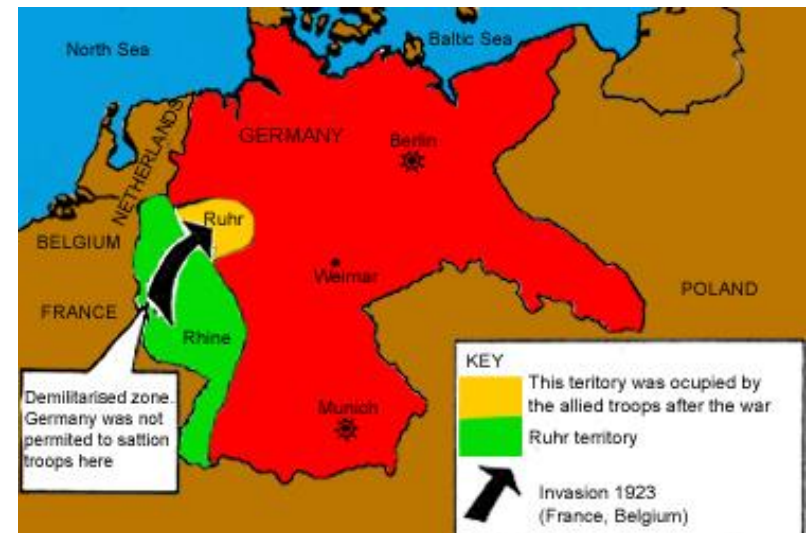
- In your pods: Come up with three things that you would have given the German people to help in the transition from Kaiser to post-WWI.
- Be prepared to **SHARE** with the rest of class!

# Bellwork

1. Who is the Chancellor of Germany that was referenced in the current event article on Friday?
2. What are the conditions for the bailout of Greece called?
3. Who was the author and the paper that published the article?
4. How much is the bailout worth in Euros?
5. How much is bailout worth in Pounds?

# The Crises of 1923: The Invasion of the Ruhr

- The **Reparations bill for Versailles** was set in **April 1921** at **£6,600 million** to be paid in annual installments
- This was to be **2% of Germany's annual output**
- The first installment of **£50 million** was paid in 1921
- **1922 nothing was paid**
- **January 1923** French and Belgian troops invaded Ruhr to take raw materials





# The Crises of 1923: The Invasion of the Ruhr

- The government ordered workers to follow **passive resistance** which meant go on strike
- The French reacted harshly by killing over **100 workers** and expelling **100,000 protestors** from the region.
- It also led to **the collapse of the German currency**.








# The Crises of 1923: Hyperinflation

- Passive resistance led to Germany having no goods to trade
- This led to the government **printing** off money
- This led to **inflation** spiraling out of control
- People lost **their life savings** and were forced to sell their valuables to buy food. Workers wives had to take suitcases to work to collect their wages twice a day.



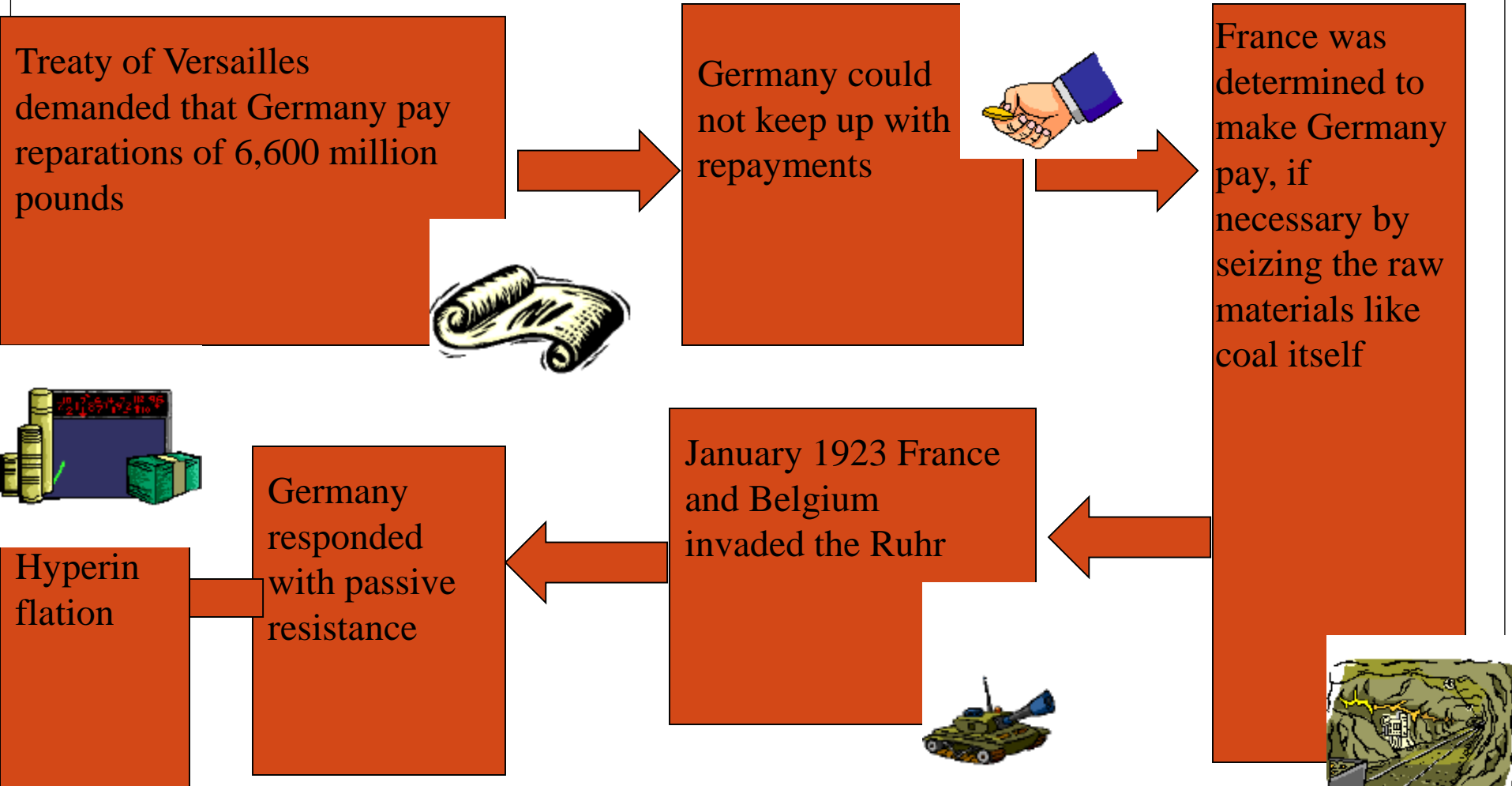
# The Crises of 1923: Hyperinflation

- Middle class people on monthly salaries suffered because pay could not keep up with price rises. Any investments they had become worthless.
- Old age pensioners, disabled people and the unemployed who were on fixed incomes faced starvation because they did not have enough to buy food.
- Not everyone lost out. People who had borrowed money found it easy to repay in worthless marks. Some businessmen made fortunes in this way.
- Trade with other countries became impossible and Germany was unable to pay for imports of food and other necessary products.

The effect of Hyperinflation in Germany in 1923		ITEM	PRICES	IN	MARKS
			1913	SUMMER 1923	NOVEMBER 1923
	1KG BREAD	0.29	1,200		428 BILLION
	1 EGG	0.08	5,000		80 BILLION
	1KG BUTTER	2.70	26,000		6,000 BILLION
	1 KG BEEF	1.75	18,800		5,600 BILLION
	1 PAIR OF SHOES	12	1 MILLION		32,000 BILLION

# What caused Hyperinflation?

## The Occupation of the Ruhr



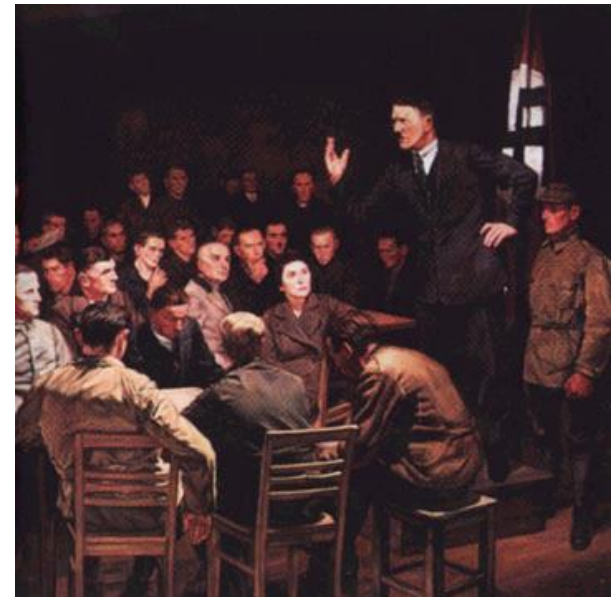
# The threat from the Right: The Munich Putsch

- In 1923 when the French had invaded the Ruhr and inflation was at its worst Adolf Hitler made his first bid for power. He led an armed uprising in Bavaria.
- Hitler intended to overthrow the Bavarian government and then organise a march on Berlin. He was convinced that the army and the people would support him.



# The threat from the Right: The Munich Putsch

- At a meeting in Munich's largest Beerhall **Hitler and a group of armed Nazis** took members of the **Bavarian government as hostages**.
- The next day Hitler and his supporters marched through Munich on their way to army barracks. Police and troops stopped them, **16 Nazis** were killed.



# The threat from the Right: The Munich Putsch

- Hitler was put on trial and sentenced to 5 years. He only served **9 months**. He decided from then on to use legal methods to gain power.



Hitler in Landsberg  
Prison

# The Stresemann Era 1924-1929: Economic achievements

- In early 1924 Stresemann became chancellor of Germany. He persuaded Ebert to use his emergency powers. (Article 48)
- Ebert and Stresemann **scrapped the worthless mark** and introduced new money called the **Rentensmark**.
- Government spending was also cut (**700,000** government workers lost their jobs).
- The hyperinflation finally came to an end when the Americans agreed to lend money to Germany (The **Dawes Plan**).
- In 1924 the French pulled out of the Ruhr.





# The Stresemann Era 1924-1929: Had the economy recovered?

## Yes

- In the late 1920s the **economy was clearly recovering** from the crisis of 1923.
- **Shops and theatres were doing good business.** Cafes were full. Architects were creating exciting new buildings. Film makers were producing successful new films.
- In 1924 Germany was helped by the USA. The **Dawes plan** gave Germany huge loans (800 million marks). The USA also reorganised Germany's reparations repayments. This gave Germany economic stability. Wages for workers rose. Industrial production went up. Big businesses, like chemicals and steel did well. So did the big cities where these industries were based.

# The Stresemann Era 1924-1929: Had the economy recovered?

## No

- Germany's **recovery was totally dependent on American loans**. These loans were for a short period only. The American banks could demand their money back at a very short notice if they wanted.
- **Farmers found it hard to sell their goods at a decent price**.
- **Small businesses** (such as local shops) suffered from competition from big business (for example, department stores)
- **The wages of people working in public services did not go up as fast as wages for industrial workers**. As a result many people in these sections of society felt bitter towards the Weimar Republic.

# The Stresemann Era 1924-1929: Foreign affairs

- Stresemann was chancellor for just four months, but he was foreign minister for five years.
- **Dawes plan 1924**. The USA agreed to loan Germany **800 million Gold marks**. It was also decided that the annual reparation payments should be reduced and that Germany should be given longer to pay.

# The Stresemann Era 1924-1929: Foreign Affairs

## The Locarno Treaty

- In 1925, Stresemann signed the Locarno Treaty. This meant that Germany agreed to accept the borders between Germany, France and Belgium which had been set out in the Treaty of Versailles.
- The Locarno improved Germany's relations with France, Britain and the USA.
- The Locarno Treaty left Poland and Czechoslovakia feeling a bit nervous. It did not say anything about their borders with Germany

# The Stresemann Era 1924-1929: Foreign affairs

## The League of Nations

- In 1926 Germany was invited to join the League of Nations.
- Being invited to join the League of Nations showed that Germany was accepted by the rest of the world again.

# The Stresemann Era 1924-1929:

## Foreign affairs

### Other achievements

- Being Part of the league of nations helped Stresemann to negotiate some of the other terms of the Treaty of Versailles.
- In 1928 Germany was one of sixty countries that signed the **Kellogg-Briand pact**. This stated that they would not use war as part of their foreign policy.
- Stresseman agreed to the **Young plan** (1929) with the USA. This reduced Germany's reparations payments and spread out the payments to make them easier.
- Some extremists accused Stresemann of being a Traitor for cooperating with Britain, France and the USA.

# The Stresemann Era 1924-1929: Cultural achievements

- With the economy recovering after 1924 the period from 1924 to 1929 is seen as a golden age of culture.
- There had been censorship under the Kaiser but now there was **greater freedom** in which criticism of the government and songs and books mentioning sex were allowed.
- Berlin became a **centre** of the arts with over **120** newspapers and **40** theatres.



# The Stresemann Era 1924-1929: Cultural achievements

- German literature also flourished, Erich Remarque's '**All Quiet on the Western Front**' selling over half a million books.
- Playwrights such as Bertolt Brecht and painters like George Grosz won international fame too.
- Films such as **Nosferatu** and **Metropolis**





# The Stresemann Era 1924-1929: Cultural Achievements

- **However..**
- Some Germans hated the new ideas in art and saw them as **decadent** and **unpatriotic**.
- They wanted art to celebrate the traditional values of German society. They saw the new artistic styles, popular music, jazz and clubs showed how Germany was going into moral decline.

# Summary: Was Weimar stable by 1929?

## Yes

- There were **several peaceful elections** in the period. Most Germans voted for **parties that supported the Weimar Republic.**
- The **army, civil service, judges and others all co-operated with the government.**

# Summary: Was Weimar stable by 1929?

- Gustav **Stresemann** was an important member of every government during this period. He was opposed to the republic at first, but then changed his views and became a strong supporter. **He convinced many other Germans to do the same.**

# Summary: Was Weimar stable by 1929?

- In 1925 there were elections for the post of President. The winner was Paul von Hindenburg. He was a hero of the Great War. The fact that a great military leader was prepared to be part of the Weimar Republic encouraged more Germans to support it.

# Summary: Was Weimar stable by 1929?

## No

- **Proportional Representation** (PR) was causing problems. One aim of PR was that no political party would dominate the Reichstag. Parties would have to form **COALITION** governments and work with each other.
- The parties did form coalitions but were not keen to cooperate. The longest government lasted for only two years. **People got fed up with so many elections and squabbling politicians.** This damaged their faith in democracy

# Summary: Was Weimar doomed from the start?

## Yes

1. Blamed for defeat and humiliation of Versailles (stab in the back and war guilt)
2. Weaknesses of Constitution
3. Had to rely on Freikorps to defeat Spartacists
4. Existence of extremist parties throughout 1920s wanting to end Weimar
5. Many of the elite opposed to Weimar and democracy

# Summary: Was Weimar doomed from the start?

## No

1. The army had not supported the Munich Putsch
2. The people had gone out on general strike during the Kapp putsch
3. The Republic had survived the crises between 1919 and 1923. Under Stresemann between 1924-1929 there was a golden age which was ended by the Depression.

# Past Questions

1)

- (a) What were the main features of the Weimar Constitution? [4]
  - (b) Explain why 1923 was a difficult year for the Weimar Republic. [6]
  - (c) How far was the Weimar Republic a failure? Explain your answer. [10]
- (2005)

2)

- (a) Describe the problems which Germany faced in 1919. [4]
- (b) Explain why revolts against the Weimar Republic failed between 1919 and 1921. [6]
- (c) These events threatened the Weimar Republic in 1923:
  - (i) the French invasion of the Ruhr;
  - (ii) hyperinflation;
  - (iii) the Munich (Beer-Hall) Putsch.

Which do you think was the greatest threat? Explain your answer, referring only to (i), (ii) and (iii). [10] (2006)



# Past Questions

3)

a) Describe the Kapp Putsch of 1920. (4)

b) Explain why 1923 was a year of crisis for the Weimar Republic. (6)

c) How successful was the Weimar Republic in dealing with Germany's problems? Explain your answer. (10)

(2008)

4)

(a) What were the main features of the Weimar Constitution?

(b) Explain why the Weimar Republic faced opposition between 1919 and 1923.

[4]

[6]

(c) 'The most important reason for the success of the Weimar Republic between 1924 and 1929

was US loans.' Do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [10]

# Bellwork

1. What action by the government led to hyperinflation occurring in the economy?
2. How much did 1 kg of beef cost in November 1923?
3. Who led the Munich (or Beerhall) Putsch?
4. What city's government was he attempting to overthrow before marching to Berlin?
5. How many months did the leader of the Munich (or Beerhall) Putsch spend in jail?

## Closure...

- Please read the primary source “The German Spirit.”
- Highlight three sentences that back up your opinion of whether the excerpt is for or against Jewish writers and influence in Germany.
- On the bottom of the page please write your opinion and why you believe that it is the correct one.
- In your pods discuss the tone of the source and whether you believe this to be a writing that is for or against Jewish writers and influence.
- Be prepared to share with the class!

# Primary Source Time!

- Read the primary source on the Dawes Plan.
- While reading please identify three key facts by highlighting the information.
- When complete share with the person sitting besides you and then with the rest of the pod when they are done sharing with each other.
- Be prepared to share with the entire class what you come up with!

## Closure- On your own...

- It is the year 2025 CE. America has been placed under social, political, and economic restrictions following a humiliating defeat by the North Korean and Chinese Armies. What efforts would you undertake in order to get America out from under the following conditions? First, Americans cannot own private property any longer, all businesses and homes are owned exclusively by the Chinese and North Korean companies that run this “colony.” Second, Americans are unable to sing the national anthem, say the pledge of allegiance, or attend any social group, sports events, union meetings, or church gatherings. Finally, all Americans are unpaid workers that live in community housing and are fed communal meals. Come up with at least 5 (FIVE) actions you would take to help America break the bonds of these restrictions.

# Bellwork

1. What region was invaded by the French after Germany failed to make reparations payments in 1922 and 1923?
2. What was the name of the group of former German soldiers that led the Kapp Putsch?
3. Who did Ebert turn to to protect the Weimar Republic and force out Kapp from Berlin?
4. Give two thoughts the German people had on the Treaty of Versailles.
5. What was the name of the port city that was given to Poland to provide them with access to the Baltic Sea?