

The Golden Years and Gustav Stresemann

- Stresemann restored confidence in the currency and ended hyperinflation. In Nov. 1923, Stresemann scrapped the mark and introduced the Rentenmark, backed up by property prices, then the Reichsmark backed by gold.
- He improved Germany's image abroad. This relaxed the terms of the T of V, increased the popularity of the Weimar Republic. He improved relations by signing the Locarno Pact in 1925 with Britain, France, Belgium and Italy. This accepted the existing borders between the countries which made them feel more secure. This is called the 'Locarno honeymoon.' To make this happen they also Germans joined the League of Nations and gained a permanent seat in 1926. In 1928 the Germans also signed the Kellogg Briand Pact along with 64 other nations which suggested no more war. For this and the Dawes and Young Plans, Stresemann got the Nobel Peace Prize in 1926.
- Gustav Stresemann managed to reduce the amount of reparations that the Germans had to pay and helped Germany to pay off its debts. He persuaded the French, British and Americans to change the terms of the reparations with the Dawes Act of 1924. 1 billion marks was to be paid in the first year and then it would increase over the next four years to 2.5 billion marks a year. This meant that the Allies agreed to withdraw from the Ruhr in 1925 and the US loaned the Germans 800 million marks which increased to 3,000 million marks over the next six years. Lastly in the Young Plan 1929, total reparations went down from £6.6 billion to £1.8 billion and the payment period increased to 59 yrs.
- There was far greater political stability but weak short-lived coalition governments with 25 separate governments in 14 years. There was far more support for moderate parties and less for extremist parties. e.g. 1928, the SPD had 153 in the Reichstag, the Nazis had 12. When Hindenburg was elected President in 1925 it made the Conservatives accept the Weimar Republic. However, Stresemann still faced opposition to his international policy from the right wing who felt the Treaty of Versailles should be destroyed.
- The German economy did well due to the loans of the US, large businesses were able to pay off their debts thanks to hyperinflation and when the economy recovered they rebuilt the economy with new roads, railways and 3 million new homes. There were better wages, 8 hour working days and no strikes. However, the economy was far too dependent on American loans to pay their reparations and without them the economy would have collapsed. Unemployment increased and peaked in 1926 farming faced a depression due to overproduction and by 1928, agricultural prices were still only 74% of its pre-war level. Middle Class people had had their savings wiped out by hyperinflation, they were too wealthy to claim benefits and professionals saw higher than average unemployment. Also Smaller businesses and skilled tradesman also faced greater competition.

Women and cultural changes in Nazi Germany

- In 1919, women over 20 years old were given the vote and there was equal access to education and pay in govt. jobs. Also by 1926 there were 32 female deputies (MPs) in the Reichstag.
- Although the number that decided to enter the workforce didn't really increase and many women who entered 'male jobs' were criticised for neglecting their families, they had more of a choice to work as teachers, social workers, shop assistants or factory workers. By 1933, there were 100,000 female teachers and 3,000 doctors.
- However, women could go out unescorted, smoke, drink, wear make-up and cut their hair short, dance and wear short skirts.
- Berlin came to rival Paris as the cultural centre of Europe. Before the war art depicted everyday life. During the Weimar years artists tried to show what the world was actually like in the Sachlichkeit or 'New objectivity' movement headed by Dix and Grosz.
- Architecture also flourished under the direction of the Bauhaus or 'School of Building' using and making efficient buildings in basic shapes of unusual design made of unusual materials. The chief designer was Walter Gropius who, fled to America in 1933.
- It was also a golden age for German cinema. The best known director was Fritz Lang who produced the film *Metropolis*. Also a German actress became Marlene Dietrich became a global star of expressionist movies.
- Right wingers like Arthur Moeller and Oswald Spengler were highly critical of the Weimar Republic but left-wingers like Erich Remarque and Ludwig Renn who were anti-war.
- These were called Zeittheatre (like Piscator) and zeitopera and championed realism

Recovery of the Republic 1924 - 1929

Nazi Support

- Hitler was imprisoned for 9 months and the Nazi were banned so met in secret with weak Rosenberg in charge. The party split into factions and but they got 32 seats in the 1924 election thanks to Hitler's work during the trial – but this dropped due to the Golden Years.
- Hitler wrote a political manifesto in prison called Mein Kampf and got the ban on the Nazis lifted in Feb 1925 in Munich – where they established their HQ. He created areas called Gaue run by Gauleiters but united under the Führerprinzip (Hitler in charge). Hitler took power at the Bamberg conference and Strasser and Goebbels got key positions. He fired Rohm and replaced him with Von Salomon and created the SS to protect him – he was in full control by 1926. Their popularity increased with rallies, speeches, propaganda, women and youth groups, the poor, farmers and the peasants and evening classes for supporters and criticising the Jews, the Dawes and the Young Plan and Communists. Between 1925 and 1928 support increased from 27,000 to 100,000.
- In 1928 they got 12 seats in the Reichstag in 1930 they got 107 thanks to the Wall Street Crash.

Standards of Living in Nazi Germany

- The best paid workers in Europe with a 10% rise in wages (above inflation)
- However, the Middle Class had their savings wiped out by hyperinflation and professionals faced high unemployment and stagnant wages. In April 1928 184,000 middle class were seeking employments and half did not qualify for benefits. However, architects, planners and house builders as they built 3 million houses and homelessness fell 60%. In 1927 an unemployment insurance scheme came in and war veterans, families of the war dead, the disabled and single mothers benefitted.