

# Brief Outline On Treaty Of Versailles

## Lecture/Discussion

### Germany 1920-1933

#### I. Treaty of Versailles

- A. [REDACTED] major aspects described in handout
- B. [REDACTED] following questions
  1. How might these penalties politically impact a country?
  2. How might these penalties economically impact a country?
  3. What would you think about the government who signed the treaty?
    - a) November Criminals - name Germans gave to those leaders who signed the Treaty
- C. Emotional Response
  1. Only months before the signing of the Treaty many Germans had been told by the government that Germany would win the war - Surprised and devastated at the outcome
  2. Myth that Germany lost the war not because of the soldiers but because the Jews, Communists, and other traitors stabbed the country in the back - this myth was called Dolchstoss
  3. The treaty included a war guilt clause that said Germany was responsible for World War I
  4. Germans felt humiliated and cheated

#### II. Weimar Germany 1919-1933

- A. Weimar the name of the government
- B. Democratic government
- C. Same government that signed the armistice and the Treaty
- D. 1923 Allies demand reparations payments in currency not manufactured goods
  1. Why Allies not want goods? Belief that Allies economies would be undermined and increase unemployment
  2. Germany prints out a vast amount of money
    - a) 1914: 1 mark = \$1, 1923 1 million marks = \$1
    - b) incredible hyper-inflation
- E. 1929 Great Depression
  1. Many Germans believe economic catastrophe demonstrates that a democratic government cannot deal with the Depression
  2. Larger numbers of Germans support extremes on the far right and far left

#### III. Why the Weimar could not survive

- A. Conservative Germans not like all things related to new democracy and

culture

1. Weimar support some women's rights
2. Nazi's say women should stay in the kitchen
3. More drugs and gays in Germany
4. Conservatives repulsed by societal changes
5. Conservatives say Weimar is moving too far too fast
6. Conservatives hold Weimar responsible for radical change and not taking tough necessary steps in order to resolve problems

#### **IV. The Turmoil**

- A. From 1930-1933 great political turmoil
- B. Several elections and Nazi Party quickly gaining more support
- C. Fighting in the streets between Communists and Conservatives
- D. Conservatives and Weimar government believe Nazis can be the only effective tool to combat the Communists in the streets
- E. Many politicians not take Hitler seriously

# LECTURE OUTLINE: GERMANY IN THE 1930s and THE INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

## I. Hitler becomes chancellor and centralizes his power

- ✓ A. Increase in popularity of nationalist extremism on right made moderate conservatives less inclined to resume cooperation with the socialists
- B. Conservatives leadership not willing to risk a serious political conflict with the National Socialists
- ✓ C. Hitler demand that he must be chancellor of any government supported by his party
- D. November 1932 slight decrease in National Socialist vote and economic crisis seemed to had reached its peak
  - 1. Conservatives, Nationalists, and Nationalist Socialists fear that may have missed chance to secure power: Masses might defect National Socialists thinking that they would never come to power
  - ✓ 2. Chancellor Franz von Papen, a conservative, try to form coalition with National Socialists
    - a) Conceded that Hitler would become chancellor
    - b) Only 2 members of cabinet could be Nazis and Papen would be vice-chancellor
    - c) Conservatives felt that they would maintain a vast amount of influence over Hitler because conservatives would be surrounding him in the government
  - ✓ 3. January 30, 1933 Hitler appointed chancellor
- ✓ E. February 27, 1933 Burning of Reichstag.
  - ✓ 1. Nazis immediately accused the Communists and that it was that it was meant to signal a Communists revolt
  - ✓ 2. February 28 government issue emergency decrees as "defensive measures against Communist acts of violence"
    - a) rescind free expression of opinion
    - b) rescind freedom of assembly
    - c) rescind privacy of postal and telephone communications
    - d) death penalty for an increased amount of crimes
    - e) spreading of rumors or false news classified as treason
    - f) Government empowered to take over the government of various federal states if necessary
- ✓ F. Enabling Law: transfer legislative power from Reichstag to the government for four years - accepted March 23, 1933
- ✓ G. With emergency decrees and Enabling Law all legislative and executive power was concentrated in hands of Hitler government and all punitive

laws against the chancellor were removed.

- H. July 14, 1933 government enactment proclaimed that "the National Socialist German Workers' Party constitutes the only political party in Germany" - to attempt to maintain or organize any other political parties became a crime

## II. Economic and Political Environment in Britain and France

### A. Depression

1. World trade decline 40% in value and 25% in volume from 1929 to mid-1933
2. Economic crisis widen gap between classes
3. Unemployment benefits cut
4. Industrial entrepreneurs tended to become antilabor

### B. Isolationism

1. Amid economic problems and in the aftermath of World War I isolationism prevailed
2. 1930s European political stability was shattered and torn with conflict

### C. Great Britain

1. In 1930s British government had to deal with struggle for independence of its colonies and economic difficulties
2. Government shied away from new, additional burdens that could have unbalanced the budget and hinder economic recovery
3. Reluctant to strengthen military arms or pursue international policies that required building up military
4. Minimized threat of Hitler
5. Fear of Communism and glad to see Germany not going communist

### D. France

1. After WWI France had a smaller population than before the war and by mid 1930s, as a result of the death of young men in WWI, the number of births was less than the number of deaths
  - a) manpower needed to work rather than be in the military
  - b) economic crisis
2. Politics
  - a) Battles between left, the Popular Front, who won elections in 1936 against the right
  - b) May-June 1936 worker sit-down strikes because believe government is obliged to support them
  - c) French employers saw it as an assault on private property and management authority
  - d) the right, especially employers appalled by Popular Front because they wanted to raise wages and companies could not afford it, also humiliated by the sit down strikes

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e) Many employers saw popular front as threat to good old days when labor was weak

### III. Pan Germanism

- A. October 1933 Hitler withdrew from the suffering League of Nations and denounced disarmament talks
- B. By 1935 Germany was rearming, building up its air force and army
- C. March 1936 Hitler order troops into the Rhineland which the Treaty of Versailles had declared permanently demilitarized
- D. October 1936 Germany and Italy create alliance and one month later Germany and Japan joined Anti-Comintern Pact aimed at Russia
- E. November 1937 Hitler secretly told his aides his plans of expansion into Central Europe to obtain more Lebensraum and natural resources.
- F. February 1938 Hitler proclaimed to the German government that he was concerned about the protection of Germans who lived outside of Germany and are unable to ensure their freedoms
- G. March 1938 German troops crossed into Austria and annexed it to the German Reich. Austria was 96% German-speaking. Hitler had threatened invasion if there was resistance. Austria's chancellor, Kurt von Schuschnigg, resigned and Austrian Nazi, Arthur Seyss-Inquart requested German intervention to put down supposed domestic disturbances.
- H. October 1938 Germany occupy Sudetenland
- I. March 1939 Germany occupies Czechoslovakia





## 1938 The Munich Agreement

As students of history consider the situation that Britain and France faced when they signed the Munich Agreement.

What prompted Britain and France to accept the agreement?

Did Britain and France have any other option?

What domestic situations influenced Britain's and France's decision?

What could Britain and France have done to avoid Germany's occupation of the Sudetenland?

Take into account the political and economic situations described during the lecture/discussion. In addition, consider the following issues that faced Britain and France prior to the Munich Agreement.

- The Sudetenland, part of Czechoslovakia and next to Germany, had more than 3 million Germans, many of whom wanted to be part of Germany
- Sudeten German Party formed in alliance with Hitler and the party on April 24, 1938 called for recognition of an autonomous German region aligned with Nazi Germany. It was rejected by Czechoslovakian government
- Clashes between Czechs and Sudeten Germans
- Britain and France encourage Czech government to negotiate
- Nazi troops had amassed on the border with the Sudetenland and Hitler informed Britain and France that he was prepared to go to war if his demands for land were not met
- Many Britons and French thought Germany had been treated unfairly in the 1919 Treaty of Versailles
- Britain and France had a great amount of trust in the League of Nations and the Geneva Disarmament Conference to limit armaments and prevent armed conflict. Consequently, Britain and France had reduced their armaments appropriations from 1926 to 1933.
- In 1938 Britain's rearmament program not yet in full swing
- France have strong faith in the Maginot Line. The Maginot Line was a highly French militarized territory in France along its border with Germany.
- On September 26, 1938 Hitler stated in regard to the Sudetenland, "It is the last territorial claim which I have to make in Europe," he insisted, "but it is the claim from which I will not recede. . . ."
- Under the Treaty of Versailles France was obliged to protect Czechoslovakia
- September 29-30, 1938, the Munich Agreement: Allow immediate German military occupation of the Sudetenland and called for a vote to determine areas for additional annexation
- Germany gained 11,000 square miles of land with 3.6 million people, Czechoslovakia's border defense and 75% of Czech's industrial resources