

## Weimar Republic -- Short-Term Government Between Two World Wars

One of the effects after the ending of [World War I](#) in 1918 was the implementation of Germany's Weimar Republic. This liberal democratic parliamentary government definitely had its fair share of good times; coming to an end good fourteen years later with the [Third Reich](#) and the Nazis.

Shall I start with the good, or shall I start with the bad?

Tough decisions... so how about we start chronologically?

### Start Of The Weimar Republic

The Weimar Republic officially began its government on November 9, 1918, just two days before the official end of [World War I](#), so named because of where the new government assembly took place after the German Revolution.

Um, that would be [Weimar](#), not Republic. Ha-ha, I'm just kidding, I'm sure you knew that. ;-)

One of the biggest problems facing this fledgling republic was Germany's dreaded Treaty of Versailles. Historians say that it had "oppressive requirements," but that's just a nice way of saying Germany's hands were tied.

Forced to pay 34 billion dollars (132 billion marks), the Weimar Republic started by printing money. What they did was cause hyperinflation. This isn't your average, run of the mill inflation. No, this was like inflation with a bad attitude on steroids, mixed with a growth serum.

I'll give you an example...

A 50 million mark banknote was printed (sounds like a lot of money, right?). Based on the rate of exchange in 1923, it was equal to about one United States Dollar; a month later it wasn't worth the paper it was printed on. You'll find pictures where people are wallpapering their houses with worthless paper money.

Does that sum it up enough?

One of the greatest achievements of the Weimar Republic doesn't have anything to do with its military strength (oh, wait — it didn't have any because of the Treaty of Versailles). It was called the Weimar Culture.

Throughout the 1920's Germany saw a reemergence of art, literature, music, dance, theater, and

architecture. Names like Greta Garbo and Marlene Dietrich came on the scene in Germany and eventually Hollywood, USA. Even the filmmaker Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau, who gave us the “scary” *Nosferatu* (it’s like the first vampire movie EVER), was a product of this artsy scene.

It also started a social reform that included things like a modern 8-hour work day, with improvements on [Otto von Bismarck’s](#) health program, and better labor relations.

Weimar Culture wasn’t enough to sustain the Republic. It had its fair share of detractors from both right and left-wings. The “Old Guard” thought this new Germany was becoming too much like American culture, losing its long traditions and its own unique culture.

This was especially felt when the Weimar Republic could no longer afford to pay the Allies its tribute (I mean reparations); and the United States helped it pay when the [Ruhr Region](#) was occupied by the Belgians and French.

## **The End Of The Weimar Republic**

[Adolf Hitler](#) and the Nazis used these reparation problems to gain strength and improve the morale of the broken Germany (they also stopped paying reparations when they got to power). The government also ignored other parts of the Treaty of Versailles to gain advantage.

By aligning itself with disrespected Russia (because of its withdraw from the First World War due to revolution) it received military training in exchange for the most sought after [German engineering](#).

The Weimar Republic did stand up to a Communist push, although it couldn’t when the Nazis and Hitler (with help of Weimar Republic President Paul von Hindenburg) made a grab for power in 1933.

January 1933 is considered the end of the Weimar Republic, but Hitler does show up in the history books as the last Chancellor of Germany of the Weimar Republic. Some believe the end came with the Enabling Act of 1933 (on March 23rd).

Through years of propaganda by the Nazi Party, the Weimar Republic’s good works and deeds often go unnoticed. But, to be fair, the Parliament was up against some pretty tough opposition.

Too bad they didn’t have the chance to bring Germany into the modern age. But, they sure did give us some of the most memorable names, faces, and movies — and that’s classic.