

THE INTERBELLUM

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The Interbellum is the period between the First World War (1914-1918) and the Second World War (1939-1945).

THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC

Just before the armistice (= laying down the weapons) in 1918, the German Emperor abdicated (=resigned) and fled to the Netherlands. From that moment on Germany was no longer an empire but a republic. A new constitution (= most important set of laws) was written and in 1919 the Republic of Weimar was founded. The government met in the city of Weimar, rather than in Berlin because there was much civil unrest and it was too dangerous to meet in Berlin.

The Weimar Republic was confronted with a lot of problems:

- ☞ Shortage of work.
- ☞ Left- and right wing violence
- ☞ Coups

Economical problems:

- ☞ Germany had to pay huge reparations to the allied powers;
As stated in the Treaty of Versailles Germany had to pay for all the damaged it caused during the war. As a result of this Germany wasn't able to spend a lot of money on its own economy.
- ☞ Important industries were shut down or occupied (i.e. Ruhr-conflict).
Because Germany couldn't fulfill its obligations France and Belgium tried to take the money from Germany, damaging German economy even further. The workers called for and a strike and the were payed by the German government. They started with printing additional money. This resulted in **inflation**. Germany recovered this with American loans, these loans stopped after the **stock market crash** in 1929

Other problems:

- ☞ Many Germans opposed the Treaty of Versailles;
Because the Treaty of Versailles was very harsh on Germany a lot of Germans saw this treaty as something bad. They thought the German government should have rejected the Treaty.
- ☞ '**Dolchstoßlegende**' (Stab-in-the-back-legend).
A myth in Germany. During the war the German people were influenced with propaganda. Every day they heard the were winning the war, and suddenly they lost. Because of this people thought that the German government had left the German army on its own and pulled back support at the moment the army was winning: a stab in the back.

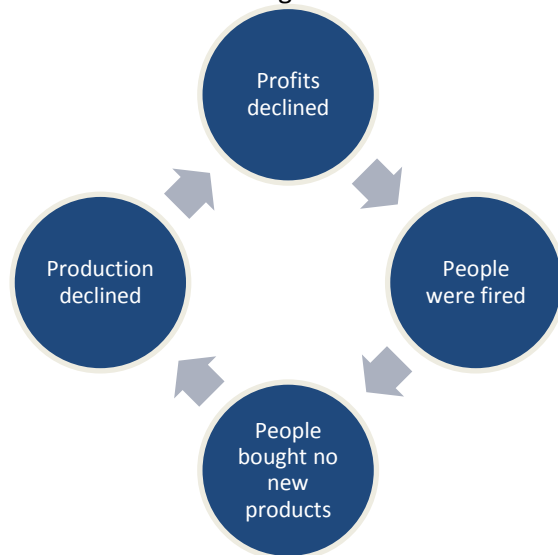
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: BOOM AND BUST

After the First World War the economy of the United States prospered. With the returning of the soldiers and the little damage to the country and the factory the USA were able to produce a lot of products. Everybody wanted these products like refrigerators and cars. These products could be bought with hire purchase (= comparable to leasing). Although the price was higher a lot of people preferred this method of buying because one could immediately have his product. After the war a lot of people lived by the day.

Because of the many purchases a lot could be produced and everybody believed in the American economy. Also a lot of products could be exported to Europe that could not produce for themselves because of the war damage. The American economy boomed (= grew fast).

Not everybody could enjoy the boom. There was a lot of crime (especially because of the Prohibition (= it was illegal to drink alcohol)) and violence (KKK). A lot of poor people could not enjoy the wealth.

As easy as the Boom came it disappeared around 1929. The economical market was satisfied and almost everybody enjoyed a good life. Because of this the sales dropped and the profits of companies began to shrink. A lot of people had bought shares (= part of company so you gained a part of the profit) with loans and had to sell these taking a loss. This is called the stock market crash. Because of this people lost the



houses (mortgages) and laborers were fired. Nobody believed in the economy anymore and there was bust (= quick decline of the economy). The American economy declined and people lost believe in their country. In 1932 the new president, Roosevelt, was able to turn this feeling around with his New Deal (= new method of handling the economy). Although a lot of people still had no jobs they believed in their own country again.

DEPRESSION IN EUROPE

Because the economies of the USA and Europe were linked to each other because of massive loans the economy also struck Europe. Especially Germany was hit hard because it borrowed money to pay the reparations. Because Germany was no

longer able to pay money to France and England they could pay back their loans to the USA. The international economy declined fast between 1929 and 1932.

FASCISM

Fascism and National Socialism have a lot of similarities but there are also differences.

Below you can find general characteristics of Fascism and National Socialism. You can also see the differences between the two.

General characteristics of Fascism and National Socialism

- ⌘ Fascism focuses primarily on what they oppose.
- ⌘ Fascism is nationalistic.
- ⌘ Fascism is based on the inequality of men.
- ⌘ Fascism has a leader principle.
- ⌘ Fascism is totalitarian.
- ⌘ Fascism emphasizes more on feeling than on reason.
- ⌘ Fascism glorifies the act of violence.
- ⌘ Fascism gives women a separate place.

Separate features of **National Socialism**.

- ⌘ The German people must be kept pure.
- ⌘ The German people needs to have living space.

After World War One Italy though they thought that all of their demands were granted, this didn't happened and the veterans were disappointed in their government. One of these veterans was Benito Mussolini. He founded the fascist movement, this name came from an old Roman symbol for power, the Fases. The Roman Empire was his example and he wanted that Italy would rule the countries around the Mediterranean Sea.

In 1922 Mussolini marched on Rome to take over the power. The king and the Italian government were afraid for him and gave him the power. He drew al power to himself. Italy became a totalitarian state. This was a state who ruled the entire society, including daily life.

NAZI GERMANY

The leader of the NSDAP [national socialistische arbeiter partei] was Adolf Hitler. He was also a veteran from World War One. Hitler was a gifted speaker and could stir up groups. He became leader of the NSDAP. Hitler tried to take over the power with a coup in 1924. This was a failure and he was arrested and went to jail. During his months in jail he wrote Mein Kampf [my struggle].

After his time in jail he wanted to get the power true politics. In 1928 the NSDAP only got 12 of the 489 seats in the Reichstag. But that the economic crisis broke out en Hitler used this to become very popular. He blamed the democrats en Jews for this. In his speeches he promised to erase the Treaty of Versailles. This made him very popular.

In January 1933 Hitler became chancellor of Germany. With help of the Reichstag fire he got 44% with the next elections. This wasn't enough to take over power. Hitler wanted to change the constitution. He needed support of two-thirds of the government. With intimidation, two-thirds dis approve an enabling act which gave Hitler all power for four years. After this he quickly became dictator.

GERMANY UNDER HITLER

Germany became a totalitarian state. With propaganda Hitler wanted to get through to the entire population. The Nazi's controlled everything from radio too newspapers. Boys and girls had to join the Hitlerjugend or Bund Deutsche Mädels.