

Germany Key Words

Anti-Semitism Hatred of the Jews.

Article 48 Part of the Weimar Constitution, giving the President special powers to rule in a crisis. Used by Chancellors to rule when they had no majority in the Reichstag – and therefore an undemocratic precedent for Hitler.

Aryan Someone who belongs to the European type race. To the Nazis this meant especially non-Jewish and they looked for the ideal characteristics of fair hair, blue eyes...

Autobahn Motorway – showpieces of the Nazi job creation schemes

Bartering Buying goods with other goods rather than money. (As happened in the inflation crisis of 1923)

Bavaria Large state in the South of Germany. Hitler & Nazis' original base. Capital – Munich

Beerhall Putsch Failed attempt to seize power by Hitler in November 1923. Hitler jailed for five years – in fact released Dec 1924

Brown Shirts The name given to the S.A.

Centre Party Party representing Roman Catholics – one of the Weimar coalition parties. Dissolves itself July 1933.

Chancellor Like the Prime Minister – the man who is the chief figure in the government,

Coalition A government made up of a number of parties working together, Because of the election system under Weimar, all its governments were coalitions. They are widely seen as weak governments.

Conscription Compulsory military service – introduced by Hitler April 1935 in his drive to build up Germany's military strength (against the terms of the Versailles Treaty)

Conservatives In those who want to 'conserve' or resist change. In Weimar Germany it means those whose support for the Republic was either weak or non-existent as they wanted a return to Germany's more ordered past.

DAF "Deutsche Arbeitsfront". See German labour Front.

Dawes Plan 1924. Named after Charles Dawes, an American, who organised loans to help Weimar Germany deal with its reparations crisis.

Demilitarised No troops allowed to be stationed. Applied to the Rhineland for German troops under the Versailles Treaty – overthrown by Hitler in March 1936 when he ordered his troops in.

Enabling Law March 1933. Gives Hitler power to rule without the Reichstag for four years.

Freikorps Organisation of ex-soldiers. Helped to brutally crush Spartacist uprising in Jan 1919. Exerted extreme right-wing pressure – involved in failed Kapp putsch, March 1920

Führer 'Leader'. Title taken by Hitler

German Labour Front Organisation set up by Nazis in May 1933 to replace Trade Unions – to ensure control of workers. Run by Robert Ley.

Gestapo 'Geheime Staatspolizei' = secret police. Came under the control of Himmler. An important part of maintaining absolute obedience to Nazi rule.

Gleichschaltung= 'Coordination'. The process of bringing all aspects of life and organisations in Germany under Nazi control (from 1933).

Hitler Youth Hitler Jugend (HJ). Organisation under Baldur von Schirach. A very important part of Nazi control: by indoctrinating the country's youth they could ensure that Nazi ideas would come to be held by all.

Infallibility Someone or something that cannot fail, always right. In this case Hitler. Also claimed by Popes and History teachers.

Kapp Putsch March 1920. Failed attempt by Freikorps and other extreme right-wingers to seize power from Weimar government. Led by Dr Kapp. Defeated by a general strike.

KDF "Kraft Durch Freude" (= 'Strength through Joy'). Part of the German Labour Front. Organised cheap recreation & holidays.

Kristallnacht 9–10 November 1933. In revenge for the shooting of a German diplomat in Paris Jewish shops were looted and synagogues burnt. So-called after all the broken glass.

Lebensraum 'Living Space'. Land to the East which Hitler in Mein Kampf declared the German population needed

Left-wing Those who believe in radical change in society, usually to improve the lot of the working classes. e.g. Socialists

Marxist Supporter of Karl Marx and his theory of Communism.

Master Race Hitler promoted the idea that there was competition between different races and that the 'fittest would survive'. The master race was to be the Aryans – Slavs would become their slaves, and Jews must be eliminated.

Mein Kampf Part autobiography, part ideas: written by Hitler when in jail following the Munich putsch of 1923. Became the (unread) bible of Nazi Germany

Middle Class Those who saw themselves as being above the working class – often professional people, small businessmen, small farmers. Many of these who suffered in the crises of the '20s & 30s turned to the Nazis.

Nationalist Party Party which opposed the Weimar Constitution for much of its existence. Believed in a strong Germany – as before defeat in 1918. Formed alliances with Nazis after 1929 – shared in Jan 1933 government.

Night of the Long Knives 30 June 1934: Hitler's destruction of rivals, esp S.A. under Röhm.

November Criminals Those who signed the armistice by which Germany gave up fighting the First World War and who were thus accused of 'stabbing the German army in the back'. Used to attack Weimar & esp Socialist politicians.

NSDAP "Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei" (National Socialist German Workers' Party), founded by Hitler from the German Workers' Party in 1920.

Nuremberg Laws 1935: laws depriving Jews of many rights.

Propaganda Spreading ideas or telling news in a way that is designed to gain support for one's own ideas. The Nazis were expert at using propaganda.

Prussia The largest state in Germany – covering about 2/3 of the country. Capital – Berlin.

Putsch An attempt to seize power – usually by force (same as a 'coup'). Kapp (1920) and Hitler (1923) attempted putsches.

Reichstag The German Parliament.

Reichstag Fire 27 February 1933. Used by the Nazis to crush the Communists and force through the 'Enabling Law'.

Reparations Amount Germany was made to pay to repair the damage caused during the First World War. Fixed at \$6 600 000. Worsened the economic crisis Germany faced in the 1920s and a source of great ill-feeling.

Rhineland The part of Germany to the west of the River Rhine and 50 km to the East. 'De-militarised' under the Versailles Treaty to protect France but remilitarised by Hitler in March 1936.

Right-wing Those who stand for order and authority and who are usually resisting change. e.g. Nationalists & Conservatives.

S.A. 'Sturmabteilung' (= Storm troops). The Nazis' army of thugs used to intimidate rivals. Merged into the police in 1933. Called 'Brownshirts'. Leaders purged in 'Night of the Long Knives'.

S.S. 'Schutzstaffel' (= protection squad). Began as Hitler's bodyguard. Developed into one of the main Nazi weapons of control. Led by Heinrich Himmler. Wore black.

Slavs The people of Eastern Europe – seen as inferior by the Nazis.

Spartacists Communist organisation. Attempted revolution in Jan–Feb 1919 crushed.

SPD Socialist Party – formed part of most Weimar coalitions, being the largest party until 1932.

Stab in the Back Nationalists who could not accept Germany's sudden collapse in late 1918 accused the politicians who signed the armistice as betraying the German soldiers.

Stormtroopers See S.A.

Third Reich Reich means Empire. "Third" was intended to point out continuity with previous 'glorious periods of German History': First created by Frederick the Great in the 18thC, 2nd by Bismarck in the 19thC.

Totalitarian A system in which every aspect of life is controlled by the government, as under Fascism and Communism.

Trade Union Organisation which campaigns for the rights of workers – for pay and working conditions.

Versailles Treaty Signed 28 June 1919. Hated by most Germans, for the 'War Guilt Clause', for being one-sided, for taking land from Germany, for destroying its military power, for the crushing reparations...

Volk Means 'people' or 'race'. An important idea to the Nazis who emphasised this aspect of the whole country pulling together.

Wall Street Crash Oct 1929. When the Stock Market in the USA collapsed many Americans needed the money they had invested abroad. This helped spread Depression round the world.

War Guilt One of the clauses of the Versailles Treaty – which Germany was forced to sign – declared that Germany was responsible for the First World War (and therefore had to pay reparations).

Weimar Where the new constitution for Germany after World War I was decided (Berlin being too dangerous). Gave its name to the Republican system of government from 1919 until the Nazi take-over in 1933.

Young Plan 1929. Named after an American, Owen Young. Plan to help Germany with its continuing problems in paying reparations. Nazis and Nationalists joined in a campaign against it.

