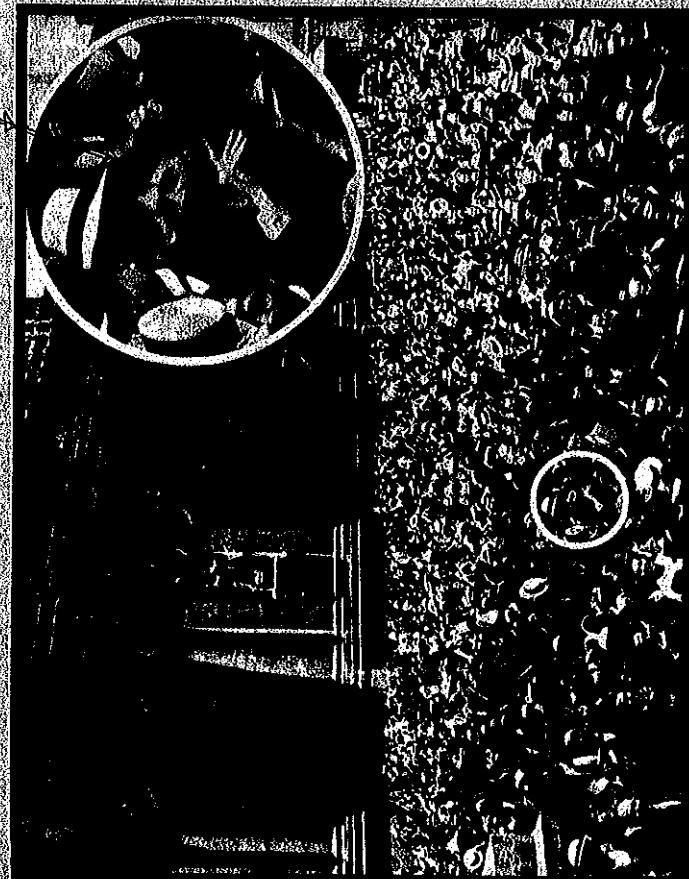


UN — WAR AND REVOLUTION

WHO'S
THIS
MAN?



March, 1915: a group of young German soldiers after having taken a lesson.

In the first week of August, 1914, a week of sordidness for both peoples, seven countries in Europe went to war with each other—Germans and Austrians against Serbs, Russians, Belgians, French and British. Germans felt much the same as their enemies when they heard the news—they were thrilled, fearful, brave, patriotic, unaccustomed. Then—Lieutenant Wilhelm, told his soldiers as they left, "You will be born to fight, to sacrifice, to fall." They took him at his word. Like most soldiers in Europe they thought it would be a short war. It would be a formality. There was glory to be won under the hot summer skies and smart uniforms to win pretty girls. War fever gripped the Germans just as it gripped the rest of Europe.

The following extract was written exactly ten years after the start of the war by Adolf Hitler, the happy

young man with a mustache shown in the photograph above. He remembers his feelings as he stood in the midst of that singing crowd:

I am nonashamed to admit today that I was carried away by the enthusiasm of the moment, and did sink down on my knees and thanked Heaven on of the fullness of my heart for having been allowed to live at such a time. —A.H.

But the soldiers did not return before the leaves had fallen. Autumn led them into mud and one winter lengthened into the next. The short war grew into a Great War lasting four years and then the year of 1918.

Part One of this book shows you how the Great War of 1914-18 ruined Germany and caused a revolution.

GERMANY AT WAR, 1914-1918

The home front

Less than a year after the start of the Great War, some Germans were starting to complain and protest about it. This report, written in 1915 by the American Ambassador to Germany, shows us why:

'Early in the summer the first demonstration took place in Berlin. About 500 women collected in front of the Reichstag [Parliament] building. They were promptly suppressed by the police, and no newspaper printed an account of the occurrence. These women were rather vague in their demands. . . . There was some talk of high prices for food and the women all said they wanted their men back from the trenches.'

By the following year, 1916, such anti-war demonstrations were getting bigger, even though they were against the law. Many Germans, fed up with war

and suffering, began to listen to anti-war speeches made by Communists and Socialists. In this extract, a German journalist and politician describes a meeting held in Berlin by Communist leaders Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg.

'May Day 1916 was chosen for the first trial of strength. . . . At eight o'clock in the morning a dense throng of workers—almost ten thousand—assembled in the square, which the police had already occupied well ahead of time. Karl Liebknecht . . . and Rosa Luxemburg were in the midst of the demonstrators and greeted with cheers from all sides. Liebknecht's voice rang out: "Down with the war! Down with the Government!" The police immediately rushed at him. . . . For the first time since the beginning of the war open resistance to it had appeared on the streets of the capital. The ice was broken.'

Berlin, 1917: women queue up to exchange potato peelings for firewood



What were the demonstrators about? For many people they were about the lack of food. British ships were blockading Germany's ports, preventing food ships from getting into the country. But worse was to come. The winter of 1916 - 17 was a bitterly cold one, and hard frosts destroyed the potato crop. Most people had to live on turnips instead. Ethel Coopes, an Australian living in Germany during the war, gives us an idea of what the 'turnip winter' was like in this extract from her weekly letter to her sister in Adelaide:

11.2.17

'My dear Emma,
We have got through a queer week - the worst week the German people has had to face up to the present. No coal, electric light turned off, the gas power turned down . . . and practically no food - there seems to be no more potatoes - each of us has been given half a pound of what they call potato-flocken. I know no English word for it - they seem to me to be the dried parings of potatoes - you have to soak them overnight, then rub them through a sieve. . . . We had that half pound, five pounds of turnips, 3½ pounds of bread, and that was all. I went the rounds of the restaurants and sometimes got some cabbage, or an infinitesimal [tiny] piece of chicken that cost 3/- [3 shillings] or either two shillings, and I bought tanned fish at 5/- a pound, but it passes my understanding to know how the poor are managing. Any other people on earth would rise against a government that had reduced it to such misery, but these folk seem to have no spirit left. . . .
Very much love to you all,
from your loving Ethel'

The soldiers' war
So the war was starving German civilians. What about the armed forces? Food shortages were leaving them just as hungry as their families at home. When the ratings of the sailors in the German fleet were put in 1917 they started a mutiny. This letter was written by the leader of the mutineers, and this extract tells us a lot about their attitudes to the war:

'My Dear Parents,
I have been sentenced to death today, September 11, 1917. Only myself and another comrade; the others have been let off with fifteen years imprisonment. You will have heard why this has happened to me. I am a sacrifice of the longing for peace, others are going to follow. . . . I don't like to die so young, but I die with a curse on the German-militarist state. These are my last words. I hope that some day you and mother will be able to read them,
Always
Your son
Albin Kibes'

Many soldiers in the army also had hatred in their hearts. There was little glory in the war they were fighting. French warfare meant living in muddy dugouts for weeks on end, with the constant dread of being blown to bits by shell-fire or of being suffocated by poison gas. So when 1918, the fourth year of the fighting, began, many Germans were thoroughly sick of war.

Work section

- A Using the documents in this chapter evidence how conditions for German civilians changed over time.
B How can documents from Ethel Coopes and Albin Kibes tell us more than conditions for German combatants?
C Why do you think the men on the German side changed?
D Some of the documents in this chapter were recorded in English. Write a short summary of one document from each category and answer the following questions:
1 Which of the documents are primary sources?
2 Which of the documents are secondary sources?
3 Which of the documents do you think is most reliable?
4 Which of the documents do you think is least reliable?
Give reasons for your answers.

So the war was starving German civilians. What about the armed forces? Food shortages were leaving them just as hungry as their families at home. When the ratings of the sailors in the German fleet were put in 1917 they started a mutiny. This letter was written by the leader of the mutineers, and this extract tells us a lot about their attitudes to the war:

German suffering

By 1918 the average adult German was living on 1000 calories a day - half the amount needed for a normal healthy diet. Coal was running short and, because gas and electricity were made from coal, there were power cuts as well. In many cities all public buildings, cinemas and theatres were closed down. Lights in apartment blocks were put out early. A German civilian describes life during the winter months:

'One of the most terrible of our many sufferings was having to sit in the dark. It became dark at four. . . . It was not light until eight o'clock. Even the children could not sleep all that time. And when they had gone to bed we were left shivering with the chill which comes from semi-starvation and which no extra clothing seems to relieve.'

There was worse to come. A killer virus, Spanish influenza, swept across Europe during the summer of 1918. Weak from years of hunger, 400,000 German civilians and 186,000 soldiers died of influenza in less than a year. On one day alone, 15 October, it killed 1700 people in Berlin.

In the armed forces conditions were just as bad. On 2 October, General Ludendorff, a leading army general, said this to shocked politicians in the Reichstag [Parliament]:

'We can carry on the war for a substantial further period, we can cause the enemy heavy loss, we can lay waste his country as we retreat, but we cannot win the war. . . . We must make up our minds to abandon the war as hopeless. Every day brings the enemy nearer to his goal, and makes him less likely to conclude a reasonable peace with us.'

So there was the choice: to fight on and risk total defeat in the end; or to make peace now on reasonable terms. 'The enemy' - the French, British and American Allies - was prepared to make peace with Germany, but there were strings attached. Woodrow Wilson, President of the USA, said that Germany's government must be made more democratic before they could even start talking about peace. He said that Kaiser Wilhelm and the army generals must give up some of their power and that the Reichstag, Germany's parliament, must have a greater share in running the country.

But the Kaiser refused to make any changes. Encouraged by Socialists and Communists, people began to talk of overthrowing him in a revolution.

THE START OF A REVOLUTION AND AN END TO THE WAR

Mutiny in the navy

The spark of revolution was lit on 28 October when Germany's navy chiefs ordered the sailors in Kiel port to put to sea for battle with the British. Sailors on two of the ships refused the order and put out the fires in the boiler rooms. This was mutiny, and 600 sailors were arrested. But their comrades on the other ships remembered the savage punishments given out after the 1917 mutiny (see page 5) and held a mass meeting to protest against the arrests. At their meeting eight were shot dead.

Within hours the mutiny began to spread. Workers and soldiers joined the sailors and took control of the town of Kiel. The same thing happened in other ports nearby. Led by Socialists, they set up their own workers' and soldiers' councils to run the towns. The red flags of the Socialists flew over government buildings.

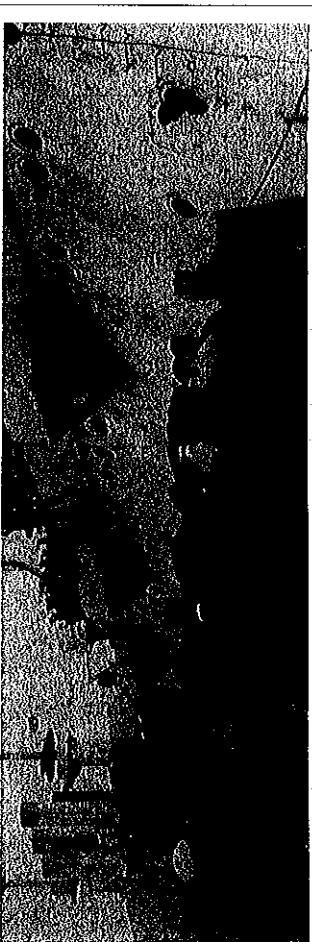
The mutiny in the ports quickly spread inland. It took only six days for cities all over Germany to join in. In the province of Bavaria in the south, Independent Socialists set up a republic. The same thing happened in Saxony. The country was breaking apart.

There was nothing that Kaiser Wilhelm could do to control his country, for the army generals refused to support him. All he could do was to abdicate [give up his throne]. On 10 November he secretly left Germany and went by train to Holland, never to return. Friedrich Ebert, leader of the Social Democratic party, took his place as leader of Germany. Ebert's first action was to sign an armistice with the Allies, bringing an end to the Great War.

The end to war

Many Germans were delighted that the war was over. But just as many were appalled. The young man whose face you saw in the Munich crowd in 1914 (see page 1) heard the news from a visitor to the hospital where he lay blinded after a gas attack. In 1924 he wrote:

'What! Was such a thing possible? I broke down completely when the old gentleman tried to resume the story by informing us that we must now end this long war. . . . It was impossible for me to stay and listen any longer. Darkness surrounded me as I staggered and stumbled back to my ward and buried my aching head between the blankets and the pillow. I had not cried since the day I stood beside my mother's grave.'



Sailors' meeting at Kiel, 28 October 1918

The German Socialists

Three groups of Socialists helped to start the revolution in 1918. They each had their own ideas about how to change Germany.

The Social Democratic Party

Leader: Friedrich Ebert

- Aims**
1. to improve workers' conditions
 2. to give democratic rights to all Germans – e.g. the right to vote

- Methods:** to support the government and try to make reforms by acts of parliament.
1. to improve workers' conditions
 2. to give democratic rights to all Germans – e.g. the right to vote

- Aims**
1. to improve workers' conditions
 2. to give democratic rights to all Germans – e.g. the right to vote

- Methods:** to oppose the government and force it to make reforms by organising strikes

The Independent Socialists

Leader: Hugo Haase

- Aims**
1. to improve workers' conditions
 2. to give democratic rights to all Germans – e.g. the right to vote

- Methods:** to overthrow the government in a revolution. Councils of workers, or 'soviets' would then make reforms

The Spartacists

(This group took its name from Spartacus, a Roman gladiator who led a rebellion of slaves against the slave-masters.)

Leaders: Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg

9. The eight-hour day will come into force. . . .
An order re the support of the unemployed is ready. . . . The housing difficulty will be dealt with by the building of houses. Efforts will be made to secure the regular feeding of the people. . . .

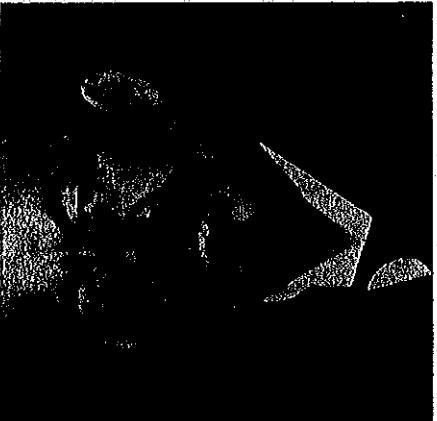
Surely this was what the people needed after four years of war: work, freedom, shelter, food? But, as you have found out, the Socialists were split into groups which disagreed about Germany's future. The Spartacists wanted Germany to be run by the councils which the sailors and workers had set up the previous week. The Social Democrats supported Friedrich Ebert and wanted an elected Parliament to make decisions about the country's future.

Violence breaks out

The two groups clashed. The Spartacists held a demonstration in December, but Ebert's government troops shot into the crowd, killing sixteen people.

Spartacists in Berlin mounting a machine gun onto the back of a captured lorry, January 1919





Friedrich Ebert, first President of the German Republic, February 1919



Rosa Luxemburg, Spartacist leader

Ebert seemed to have the whip hand among the Socialists.

But two days before Christmas 1918, a thousand hungry and underpaid sailors broke into the government headquarters and held Ebert prisoner at gunpoint, demanding more pay. This time Ebert's troops did not shoot. Many joined the sailors' revolt, and so Ebert had to give in to them.

The next sign of trouble came on New Year's Eve.¹⁹¹⁸ The Spartacists renamed themselves the German Communist Party and decided to work for a communist revolution. One of their leaders, Rosa Luxemburg, wrote in their newspaper:

'To battle! There is a world to conquer and a world to fight against! In this last class war of world history . . . our word to the enemy is: Thumb in eye and knee on chest.'

The Spartacists began their revolution a week later, on 6 January 1919. But in the fortnight since Christmas, Ebert had gained the support of the Free

Corps. These were ex-soldiers who had recently come home from the war. They were hard men who hated communism and loved brutality, so they were only too pleased to help Ebert fight off the Spartacists. On 10 January, 2000 of them attacked the Spartacists in Berlin. There was bitter street fighting for the next three days. On 15 January they arrested Rosa Luxemburg and her fellow leader Karl Liebknecht. After beating them savagely the Free Corps murdered them both and dumped Rosa's body in a canal.

The Weimar Republic

So the Spartacists, or communists, revolution had failed. Ebert was now able to hold an election for a parliament. His Social Democrats won more seats in parliament than any other party. So, for the moment, Ebert's position was safe. The new parliament went to Weimar, a town in southern Germany, far away from the violence in Berlin, and on 11 February 1919 elected Ebert President of the new German Republic - the Weimar Republic.

Threats to the new republic

When Germany's new parliament met in the peaceful city of Weimar in January 1919, it seemed that the revolution was over. Germany was now a republic, the Weimar Republic, run by a democratically elected government.

But there was more violence to come. In March 1919 the Communists organised riots and strikes in Berlin in another attempt to seize power. The government ordered anyone seen carrying weapons to be shot on sight. Again it called in the Free Corps to do this dirty work. Over the next few days the Free Corps shot over a thousand people dead; among them were thirty sailors who were doing nothing more dangerous than collecting their wages.

The next threat to the Weimar Republic came from the southern province of Bavaria. As you know, Independent Socialists in Bavaria had set up a republic in November 1918. Their leader, Kurt Eisner took

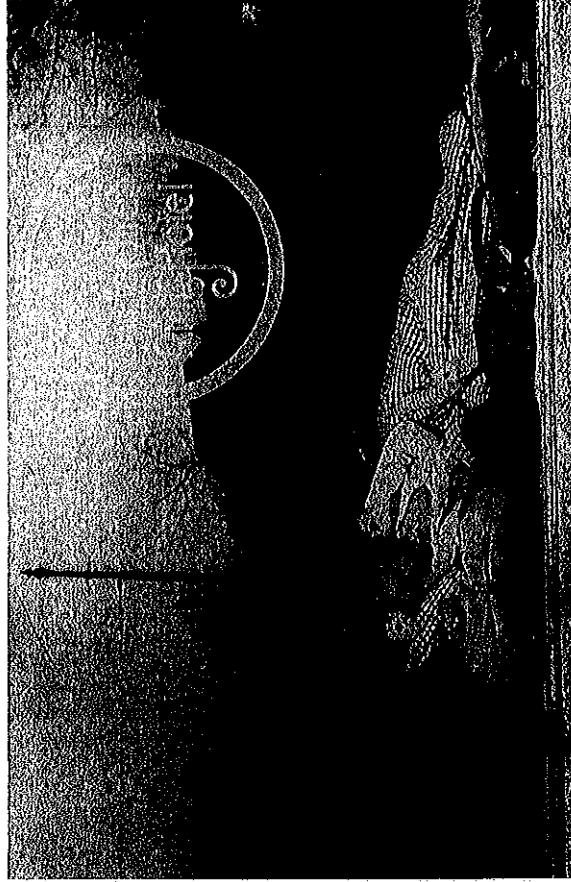
power. But in February 1919 a right-wing student shot Eisner dead in the street. Over 100,000 people attended his funeral and the city of Munich went into mourning.

With Eisner dead, the moderate Socialists and the Communists argued about which of them should take his place. The Communists soon got their way and, in March 1919, made Bavaria into a Soviet Republic on Russian lines. They took houses from the middle-class people of Munich and gave them to the workers. They took food, cars and clothing from the rich. They formed a Bavarian Red Army to protect themselves.

The government in Weimar put Munich under siege. By the end of April food was so short in Munich that to give milk to anyone but the dying was a crime punishable by death.

On 1 May the siege suddenly ended. Government soldiers, helped by the Free Corps, smashed into the starving city. No Communist was spared - man, woman or child. At least 600 people were killed.

Not dead but asleep: a Communist soldier resting during the battle for Munich, May 1919



Work section

1. To understand the importance of the following terms: Spartacists, Social Democrats, Free Corps.

2. Make a mind chart of the events of the German Revolution from 10 November 1918 to 1 January 1919. You should include the following:
a) What happened in Berlin?
b) What happened in the south?
c) What happened in the north?

3. Using the information you have read in this chapter make a list of the reasons why the Communists were able to overthrow Friedrich Ebert.

5

A DICTATED PEACE: THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

Many Germans would have preferred to fight again rather than sign the peace treaty being drawn up in Paris by the Allies. Field Marshal Hindenburg gave this advice to President Ebert:

'In the event of a resumption of hostilities we can . . . defend our frontiers in the east. In the west, however, we can scarcely count on being able to withstand a serious offensive. . . . The success of the operation as a whole is very doubtful, but as a soldier I cannot help feeling that it were better to die honourably than accept a disgraceful peace.'

A Free Corps unit in Munich. The handwriting on the photograph means 'An armed car which made a successful attack in the fighting', Munich, 2 May 1919



Peace terms

With the help of the Free Corps, the Weimar government had put down the Communists in both Berlin and Bavaria. But now it was faced with an even worse crisis. For the past four months, in Paris, the Allies had been working out a peace treaty with Germany. The German people were expecting it to be a peace treaty. After all, they had done what the Allies had demanded; the Kaiser had given up his throne and they had elected a democratic government to rule Germany in his place.

On 7 May the Allies announced the terms of the peace treaty. Germany was to lose one-tenth of her land, all her overseas colonies and most of her armed forces. She was blamed for starting the war and told that she must pay for the damage done in the fighting. The Germans were horrified. This was not the fair

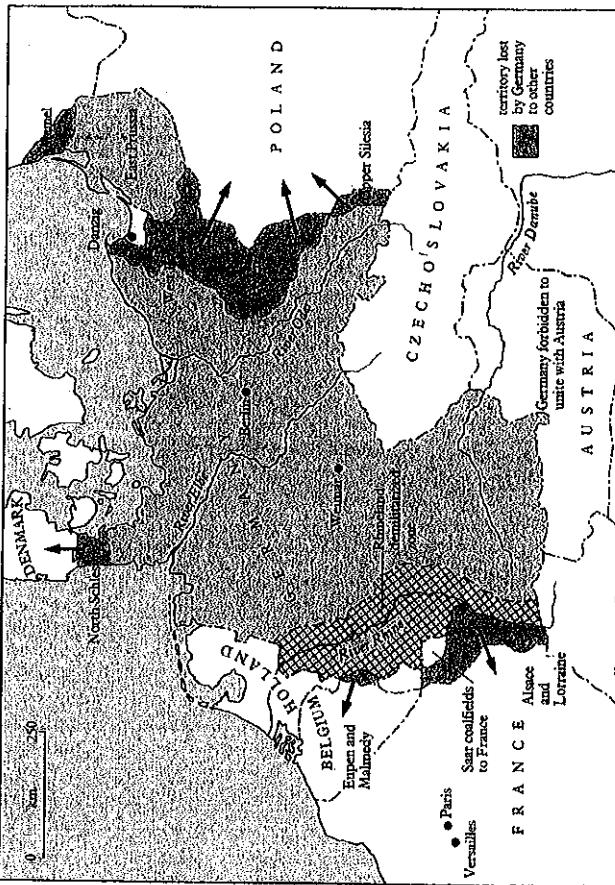
peace treaty they had expected. They had been betrayed, they said, not just by the Allies, but also by their own politicians who had signed the armistice in November. They called these politicians 'November Criminals' and said that they had 'stabbed Germany in the back' by making peace with the Allies. The German government protested angrily against the peace terms but the Allies would not change them. They ordered the Germans to sign within five days, or else they would invade. After considering the situation the government decided not to sign the treaty and the ministers then resigned. On the same day, the captains of the German fleet, which was being held by the British in the port of Scapa Flow, sank their ships in protest. The German army drew up plans to defend the country against invasion. Ebert got ready to stand down as President. It seemed that the Great War was about to start all over again.

ministers travelled to the palace of Versailles, near Paris, and on 28 June 1919 put their signatures to the document. That day, a German newspaper carried this headline:

'VENGEANCE! GERMAN NATION!' Today in the Hall of Mirrors a disgraceful treaty is being signed. Never forget it. There will be vengeance for the shame of 1919. Study these aspects of the Treaty of Versailles and find out why the Germans had such strong objections to it:

The other senior generals took the same view. To fight would be suicide. There was no way out but to sign the treaty. So Ebert stayed on as President and formed a new government which was prepared to do so. Within only ninety minutes to spare before the deadline for signing ran out, they sent a message to Paris saying that Germany accepted the treaty. Two

Land
The treaty took a great deal of land away from Germany and gave it to her neighbours. It also cut the country into two, as this map shows. Losing all this land meant losing people, factories,



Work section
1. Fill your answer sheet with the following terms: Weimar Republic, November Criminals.

- B** Study the photograph on the left and explain the following terms: German Republic, November Criminals.
1. What do you think the symbols on the car's radiator and on the driver's helmet are supposed to show?
 2. What do you think people in Munich did for the revolution of 1918? What similarities can you see with the Spartacist uprising on page 11?
 3. Compare this photograph with that of a Spartacist machine gun crew on page 11.
 4. What did Free Corps mean like in one of the photos on this worksheet?

SCAVER AND WOENNIC

Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her Allies.

Arms

earns, mines. Germany lost 13.5 per cent of her land, 12.5 per cent of her population, 16 per cent of her coal production, 15 per cent of her iron production, 48 per cent of her iron production. In addition, the treaty took away all of Germany's overseas colonies, a valuable source of raw materials and trade.

Arms

The treaty said:

By a date which must not be later than March 31st 1920, the German army must not comprise more than Seven divisions of infantry and three divisions of cavalry.

After that date the total number in the army of men . . . The army shall be devoted exclusively to the maintenance of order within the territory and to the control of the frontiers.

The total effective strength of officers must not exceed four thousand.

The treaty also said that the army was not to be Rhineland free.

Arms

The treaty said:

By a date which must not be later than March 31st 1920, the German army must not comprise more than Seven divisions of infantry and three divisions of cavalry.

After that date the total number in the army of men . . . The army shall be devoted exclusively to the maintenance of order within the territory and to the control of the frontiers.

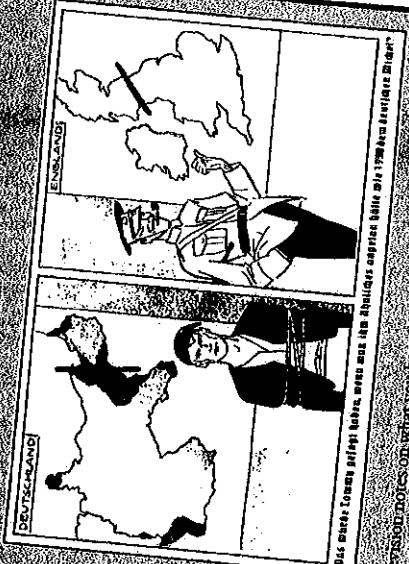
The total effective strength of officers must not exceed four thousand.

The treaty also said that the army was not allowed into Rhineland (see map). It cut down the navy to six battleships and banned it from using submarines. The air force was scrapped.

War guilt and reparations

... Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her Allies for causing all the loss and damage to which the Allied and Associated

Werkseiten

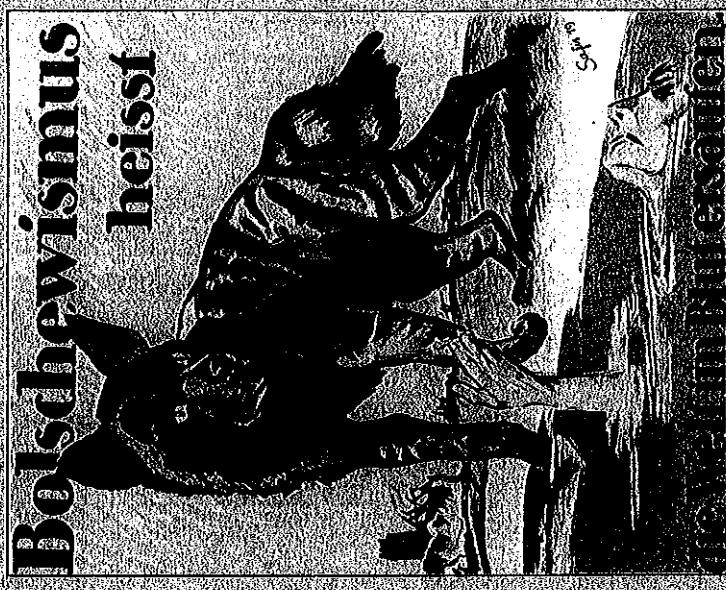


Was ist eigentlich ein Kult?

The first five years of the Weimar Republic were extremely difficult. Thousands were killed in strikes, riots and shootings. On several occasions there were attempts to overthrow the government. What was wrong with Germany? Why was there so much violence? The answer is simple: Hitler and the Nazis were terrified of communism. Many Germans were terrified of communism, or共产主义, as they called it. They believed the message of the poster, that the Communists in Germany would organise a violent revolution, killing those who opposed them and taking away people's property. Millions of Germans throughout the country were afraid of communists taking power. Socialists and Communists did better than the Communists, Inc., called the Socialists November Communists, and the Communists German Communists, by making peace.

When you hear stories of something they often find it hard to listen because it is not their book shows how many of the Germans who feared communists and communists stopped listening to reason, and fought their war with violence and bloodshed.

Beschwörung
Häissi



三

Other aspects of the treaty
Germany was not allowed to unite with Austria, her German-speaking neighbour. Allied armies were to occupy all Germany, less the Rhine Province, for a period of fifteen years.

As you can see, the Treaty of Versailles crippled Germany by taking away land, money and arms. The Germans had not been consulted about any of this, but were simply ordered to sign it without discussion. They called it a "Diktat" - a dictated peace. And who was to blame for it? At an enquiry Field Marshal Hindenburg was called to give evidence. His explanation was simple:

"The German army was stabbed in the back. No blame is to be attached to the sound core of the army. . . . It is perfectly clear."

He didn't name them, but Hindenburg's meaning was clear; the army could have won the war but it had been betrayed by the Socialist politicians who signed the armistice in November 1918. These 'November Criminals' were to pay dearly for it.

四

Л. Панютин

17

A small, stylized illustration of a person's hand reaching out from the left side of the frame. The hand is holding a rectangular object, possibly a book or a piece of paper, which has some faint markings on it. The background is plain white.

10

Digitized by srujanika@gmail.com



'Ked rising' in the Ruhr

But now there was a new danger. The workers stayed out on strike and, in the Ruhr Valley, Germany's richest industrial area, the Communists formed a Red Army, 50,000 strong. Government troops managed to defeat the Red Army after hard fighting but new risings broke out in other areas. Yet again, the Free Corps was sent in to put them down. They shot over 2000 workers before restoring order.

Increasing violence

The 'red rising' and the general strike scared many people and the authorities thought up rough new methods of dealing with the Communists. One right-wing police chief described what he would do if there was another big strike:

'You call the strike leaders together for a meeting and demand that the work be resumed the next day. If the first says no you shoot him and ask the second. If he says no you shoot him, too. Then the third will say yes. Then you have a total of two dead; using your negotiation methods there would be weeks of fighting with thousands dead.' Most right wingers simply talked tough. Some took the law into their own hands and did kill their opponents. Between 1919 and 1922 there were 356 political murders in Germany, most done by right-wing extremists. To find out more about why so many politicians were killed, read about the most famous murder of them all.

"The plan itself, how did that arise? It amounted to this: we must make an end to the policy of accepting the Versailles treaty and cooperating with the west. We had no wish to become a political party with mass support and all that that implies. So our means had to be different from those of the political parties. The only course open was to 'eliminate' every politician who accepted the Versailles treaty. To eliminate in that context is, of course, to kill. What order means were there at our disposal? 'Lists' were drawn up. And on one of our lists, among many others was Rathenau's name."

"Then list?" I said. It was, in fact, a single dirty

sheet of paper with names crossed out, some

written in again. Many of the names meant absolutely nothing to me and I had to take quite a lot of trouble to find out who they were. . . ."

Rathenau had been a popular minister. The day after his killing, a million people marched through Berlin in mourning. The killers and their accomplices were later sentenced to an average of four years in prison.

WOR SECTION

- A. Study the photograph on the opposite page.
1. Why do you think the Free Corps soldiers are trying to break through?
2. What sort of message do you think the news stories command?

- B. Rathenau had been a popular minister. He had been responsible for many good things. Do you think that his methods were good?
C. Rathenau's account of his execution in the Organisation Course section of *Workers' Education*. What judgement does it give?
D. Wolfgang Kapp, an extreme nationalist who hated the government for signing the Treaty of Versailles. His aim was to make the German army stronger, to give the land given to Poland by the treaty.

6 PUTSCHES AND MURDERS, 1920 - 1922



Free Corps soldiers entering Berlin during the Kapp Putsch, March 1920

13 March 1920 - the Kapp Putsch

Look at the photograph above. It shows one unit of a Free Corps brigade of 5000 men. They have just marched into Berlin to seize power. Ebert and the government have fled and the city is under Free Corps control. In short, a putsch - an attempt to take power by force - is taking place.

The rebels who took power that day were led by Wolfgang Kapp, an extreme nationalist who hated the government for signing the Treaty of Versailles. His aim was to make the German army stronger, to give the land given to Poland by the treaty.

Kapp was supported by the Berlin police, the Free Corps and some of the army. But he did not have the workers on his side. They organised a general strike in Berlin to support Ebert and the government and within a day No trains or buses ran. Government officials refused to provide Kapp with money. After just 100 hours as Germany's new ruler, Kapp gave in and fled to Sweden. Ebert and the government were able to return to Berlin as if nothing had happened.

