

Germany

Key facts in 1929

Area: 468'787km²^[1]

Population: 65 Million^[2]

Life expectancy: 58 Years^[3]

Literacy rate: ~95%^[4]

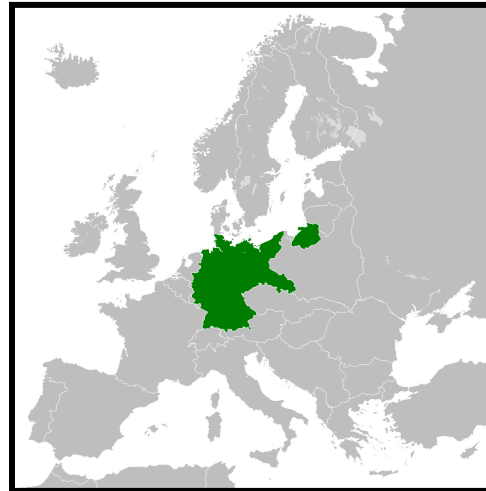
Biggest Minorities: Jews, Poles^[1]

Select Main Cities: Berlin, Munich, Frankfurt am Main, Hamburg, Cologne, Düsseldorf^[1]

Neighboring countries: Poland, Lithuania, France, Switzerland, Austria, Denmark, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Czechoslovakia, Free City of Danzig

Sea Access: Baltic Sea, North Sea,

GDP: 34'351'000'000 \$1929^[3,5]



Recent Historical Background

The Weimar Republic, established following Kaiser Wilhelm II's abdication, which was reiterated by the Versailles Treaty, encountered severe initial challenges including hyperinflation and political extremism. Germany lost significant territories including East Pomerania, all of its colonies, and several other regions, and was prohibited from expanding its military.^[6] By 1924, stability was restored, ushering in a period of relative prosperity known as the Golden Twenties. Efforts were made to normalize relations with other nations and to join the League of Nations, but resentment against the Treaty of Versailles persisted, particularly among the right-wing of German politics. Later, in 1929, the Great Depression severely impacted Germany, leading to high unemployment and social unrest. This created fertile ground for the rise of extremist political parties, including the Nazi Party.^[7] The Nazis capitalized on public dissatisfaction, garnering significant support with promises to address economic woes and restore national pride. By exploiting the economic turmoil and societal discontent, the Nazis were able to increase their influence and political power during this period.^[1]

Political Situation

Weimar Germany operated as a semi-presidential federal representative republic. Paul von Hindenburg held the presidency in 1929, while Hermann Müller served as Chancellor. Following the 1928 elections, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) secured the majority of parliamentary seats with 153, advocating for social democracy from a center-left position. Following the SPD were the German National People's Party (DNVP) with 73 seats, a right-wing nationalist party, and the Centre Party with 61 seats, representing centrist Catholic interests. The Communist Party of Germany (KPD) obtained 54 seats. Other notable parties included the German People's Party (DVP) with 45 seats, advocating liberalism, and the German Democratic Party (DDP) with 25 seats, a center-right party. Adolf Hitler's NSDAP garnered only 2.8% of the vote, securing 12 seats. The surge of far-right sentiments in 1929 led to a gradual increase in support for the NSDAP. Another important aspect is article 48 of the constitution, which granted the president a wide swath of emergency powers, which were frequently abused and exploited by von Hindenburg.^[1,8,9]

Economic Situation in 1929

After the first World War, numerous manufacturers, including BMW, Krupp, Mauser, and Rheinmetall, faced bankruptcy due to their inability to generate revenue from wartime activities. In addition, Germany was forced to pay significant reparations due to the Treaty of Versailles. In 1923 Germany suffered under hyperinflation, which was later fixed by several things, including currency reform, economic stabilization as well as strengthening of the Reichsbank, the German central bank of the time. Meanwhile, in 1929, the Great Depression, triggered by the collapse of US share prices, devastated the global economy. It resulted in massive unemployment in Germany, with six million men out of work, and the corresponding social effects. The reaction of the government, which included tax increases and spending cuts, failed to alleviate the economic crisis and instead worsened public suffering. Due to the new economic crisis, big companies like Deutsche Bank, IG Farben, Siemens, and Krupp went bankrupt, furthering the social and economic problems of Germany.^[9,10,11,12] Additionally, in 1928, Germany ran a significant trade deficit of 1.7Bn Reichsmark (=411Mln US\$), which however went to zero in 1929.^[13,14] Yet another important aspect of the German economy in 1929 is the subsequent development of political unrest and the rise of extremist ideologies, paving the way for tumultuous events that could unfold in the subsequent decade.

Military Strength in 1929

The German military was forced to be significantly limited by the Versailles Treaty. Once the strongest Army on the continent is weak and unable to realistically defend itself, not talking about any offenses. They still manage to produce most of the ammunition by themselves, except some equipment like planes ordered from the Netherlands (namely Fokker). The issue is limited access to oil, which makes use of their relatively small fleet somewhat limited. The research division is strong tho and the country produces advanced firearms and good artillery. It cooperates closely with USSR to study tanks and train pilots.^[15] Despite its significant funding however, the German military did not have many active personnel, the number being estimated at 114'000.^[16]

Additionally to the 100 planes declared

below this text, it also had about 60 secretly in the Lipetsk academy in the USSR.^[17] In addition to this, Germany had about 80'000 trained soldiers in the "Black Reichswehr"^[18]

Key Facts about Military Strength of Germany ^[15,16,17,19,20]	
Active Personnel	114'000 (+80'000)
Tanks	6
Cavalry	Unknown
Other vehicles	Unknown
Ships	36
Planes	100+60
Funding in 1929\$	290'000'000

Allies/Enemies/Existing territorial disputes in 1929

Allies: Soviet Union (Military cooperation)^[21]

Territorial disputes: Pomerania (with Poland)^[22], Danzig (with Free City of Danzig and with Poland)^[23], Klaipėda/Memel (with Lithuania)^[24], Eupen-Malmedy (with Belgium)^[25], Alsace-Lorraine (with France)^[26]

Some of the main goals for the 1930s

1. Seek to recover from the economic turmoil caused by the Great Depression:
Reduce unemployment, stabilize the economy and restore faith in the Government.
2. Aim to rebuild the military and the economy while either navigating around or renegotiating the Versailles Treaty.
3. Avoiding a takeover by the Nazis. (Self-explanatory)

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