

Weimar Timeline

July 1917	Reichstag peace declared
November 9, 1918	Republic declared; Friedrich Ebert (SPD) is named Chancellor
November 11, 1918	Armistice declared; Emperor flees
January 1919	Communist uprising fails
January 19, 1919	Constituent Assembly elections; SPD wins 38%
February 13, 1919	First parliamentary government formed
April 1919	Communist revolution succeeds in Bavaria
June 28, 1919	Versailles peace treaty signed
July 31, 1919	Weimar Constitution adopted
March 1920	General Wolfgang Kapp leads coup attempt in Berlin
April 1920	Civil war in Ruhr area
June 6, 1920	Holborn: "a turning away from democracy". Nationalists, with 15%, go far right; Independents cut heavily into SPD vote; original Weimar coalition never again a majority.
1920-21	Poland attempts to take Upper Silesia by force
January 11, 1923	French occupy Ruhr; 100,000 German officials driven out; separatist movement in Rhineland supported by France and Belgium gains force; Germany ultimately forced to capitulate
July 1921	Hitler becomes leader of NSDAP
Fall 1923	Bavarian army units revolt over Ruhr policy; threaten to march on Berlin
October 24-25, 1923	Communist uprising in Hamburg
October 1923	Leftist coalition government in Saxony and Thuringia
November 1923	Sturmabteilungen (SA) formed
November 1923	Currency collapses from hyperinflation

November 9, 1923	Beer hall coup in Munich fails; Hitler arrested
April 1, 1924	Hitler sentenced to five years in jail
September 1, 1924	Dawes Plan on reparations; new currency introduced Economy begins to recover
December 7, 1924	Reichstag elections; ZP, SPD, Nationalists win; extremes weaken
December 20, 1924	Hitler released
February 28, 1925	Friedrich Ebert (SPD) dies; Weimar coalition can beat the Right so Right selects Hindenburg, who attracts votes as representative of German nationhood and social stability after hyperinflation; KDP runs separate candidate, allowing Hindenburg to win close election
April 16, 1925	Hindenburg elected president; openly favors monarchy
Fall 1925	Recession and industrial consolidation
1927	Junkers and Ruhr industrialists give Hindenburg a long-alienated family estate for his 80 th birthday
1927	Economy picks up; foreign loans resume; production reaches 1913 level, though distribution is unequal; modest unemployment insurance plan approved; big Junker estates survive resettlement; conflicts over religion continue to republican parties; Nationalists enter cabinet; accept “legal validity” of Weimar Constitution
May 20, 1928	Reichstag elections; Left gains; Nationalists lose; NSDAP wins 12 seats; middle parties decline
May 1928	SPD-led coalition under Hermann Müller; parties remain particularist and irresponsible
1928	Economic contraction; unemployment increases; Right reaches out to Hitler on foreign policy issues
March 27, 1930	Müller cabinet resigns over budget; no viable parliamentary majority; Brüning (ZP) appointed Chancellor as head of non-political Presidential cabinet; constitutional rule violated; Brüning rules by decree. Attempts to ride out Depression with orthodox economic policies and repeal of Versailles.

July 16, 1930	Brüning government loses no-confidence vote over emergency decree; parliament dissolved; Brüning reissues decree rejected by parliament
September 14, 1930	Reichstag elections ; huge turnout; Right is radicalized; liberal parties permanently defeated; 108 Nazi deputies elected; young voters defect from republic; no parliamentary majority is possible
December 1931	Reichsbanner creates “Iron Front”
December 8, 1931	Ban on public display of uniforms and insignia
February 25, 1932	Hitler given German citizenship
March 13, 1932	First-round of presidential election
April 10, 1932	Hindenburg reelected in second round
May 29-30, 1932	Brüning (ZP) dismissed over plans to investigate government subsidies to Junkers; eight months of political intrigue begins over bringing Hitler into the government
June 1-2, 1932	Franz von Papen appointed Chancellor; NSDAP acquiesces in return for a lifting of the ban on the SA
June 4, 1932	Reichstag dissolved; government publishes extreme rightist program ¹
June 14-15, 1932	Ban on display of uniforms rescinded; second decree revokes state-level bans; street violence escalates; appearance that public order has disappeared in parts of country
July 9, 1932	Lausanne Agreement limits German reparations payments
July 17, 1932	Nazi street violence culminates in “bloody Sunday” clashes in Altona between NSDAP and KDP; 15 dead

¹Count Harry Kessler: refers to plan as a “poorly concocted extract of political reaction at its worst, in comparison with which the government’s declarations of the imperial era are like rays of enlightenment.” (Mommssen: 438)

July 20, 1932	Deposition of caretaker Prussian government headed by Otto Braun; little response from Social Democrats; thorough purge of Prussian civil service ²
July 23, 1932	Germany withdraws from disarmament conference
July 30, 1932	Reichstag elections; NSDAP now the largest party with 37% of vote; SPD, 22%; KDP, 14%; Catholics and Bavarian parties, 16%.
July 31, 1932	Reichstag dissolved
Early August 1932	Nazi terror in attempt to gain Hitler's appointment as Chancellor
August 5, 1932	Hitler and Schleicher meet
August 9, 1932	Emergency decree to combat terrorism creates special tribunals without appeal
August 13, 1932	Hindenburg denies Hitler Chancellorship; Nazi party begins to splinter; Strasser-Hitler rift comes out into the open
September 12, 1932	Reichstag dissolved again
September 14, 1932	Reparations payments suspended
October 25, 1932	Supreme Court reinstates some Prussian ministers
November 6, 1932	Reichstag elections; Nazis suffer losses
December 1, 1932	Paper proposes open violation of the constitution; Schleicher rallies army and cabinet against move
December 3, 1932	Kurt von Schleicher appointed Chancellor; Strasser invited to join Cabinet as Vice-Chancellor and Minister-President of Prussia
December 7, 1932	Hitler rejects participation in Schleicher cabinet; threatens suicide to maintain party unity

²Why did the SPD not call a general strike? Various reasons: (a) unemployment has weakened labor movement, (b) elections are coming up, (c) Braun government could not pass a no-confidence vote, (d) hope that the Supreme Court might reverse some of the measures.

December 8, 1932	Strasser resigns from NSDAP; goes into voluntary exile
December 1932	German equality in armaments recognized
January 28, 1933	von Schleicher resigns
January 30, 1933	Hitler appointed Chancellor
February 27, 1933	Reichstag fire
February 28, 1933	Hitler granted emergency powers
February 1933	First concentration camp set up (Ornienburg)
March 5, 1933	Reichstag elections amid Nazi pressure and terror; Hitler succeeds in obtaining a majority by disqualifying all the Communist deputies; new parliament grants Hitler an “enabling bill”
March 8, 1933	German Federation of Trade Unions (ADGB) training school occupied by SA; Papen and Göring clear building and return it, but attacks on property persist; labor publications persist
March 15, 1933	Labor unions sever ties with SPD; Nazis insist on full integration of labor into NSDAP
March 31, 1933	German länder lose autonomy
April 26, 1933	Gestapo founded ³
May 1, 1933	Nazi May Day; new party membership suspended
May 2-13, 1933	Most labor union leaders arrested; property of independent unions confiscated
May 15, 1933	Reich Hereditary Farm Law ⁴

³Work of the Gestapo, 1933-45; cases by category (Overy: 35):

- Continuation of outlawed organizations: 30%
- Non-conforming behavior: 29%
- Acquiring or spreading prohibited matter: 5%
- Listening to foreign radio: 2%
- Political passivity: 1%
- Conventional criminality: 12%
- Other: 21%

At its peak, whole security apparatus numbers less than 51,000 for population of 90M; relies on informers.

⁴All medium-sized farms cannot be alienated.

May 19, 1933	Reich Trustees of Labor appointed
May 26, 1933	KPD assets confiscated
May 1933	Majority of Reichstag supports Hitler's foreign policy
May 1933	Work begins on mass-produced radio, subsequently used for Nazi propaganda
June 1, 1933	Law for the Reduction of Unemployment ⁵
June 22, 1933	SPD banned
July 14, 1933	Law prohibits new parties
July 26, 1933?	Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Progeny ⁶
November 12, 1933	Plebiscite and Reichstag elections ; 93% Nazi vote
1934-37	Economic recovery; rearmament; concessions from Allies
January 16, 1934	Law on the Organization of National Labor
January 30, 1934	Law on Reconstruction of the Reich
June 30, 1934	Night of the Long Knives ; Ernst Röhm and other SA leaders murdered
August 2, 1934	Hindenburg dies ; Hitler declares himself Führer, merging party, executive, and prime ministerial functions; armed forces swear oath of loyalty to Hitler
August 19, 1934	Plebiscite allows Hitler to combine Chancellorship and Presidency
January 30, 1935	Remaining state powers taken over by federal government
March 16, 1935	Conscription re-introduced; rearmament announced
April 1935	Justice system centralized
November 14, 1935	Reich Citizenship Law; ⁷ Law for the Protection of German

⁵Jobs program.

⁶Requires the compulsory sterilization of those with hereditary diseases.

⁷Defines who was and who was not a Jew. Goal is to encourage emigration, which results in exodus of approximately 500,000 Jews in Germany and Austria.

Blood and Honor⁸

February 10, 1936	Concentration camps come under SS control
1935	Reich Committee on Hereditary Health Questions (eugenics program) ⁹
September 9, 1936	Four-year plan announced
October 1936	Reich Office for Combating Homosexuality and Abortion established
November 9, 1938	Kristallnacht ¹⁰
May 1, 1939	NSDAP re-opens membership rolls

⁸Forbids intermarriage or sexual relations between Jews and Germans; also covers relations with blacks, Sinti, and Roma.

⁹Euthanasia for physically and mentally handicapped becomes policy in summer of 1939.

¹⁰National pogrom destroys 177 synagogues and 7,500 shops.