In What Ways Could The Signing By Germany Of The T Essay, Research Paper

After the new Weimar government, led by the Social Democrats, signed the Treaty of Versailles it may have signaled the beginning of the end for the new republic. The consequences of Versailles were severe to Germany, and many were looking for someone to blame, and the government was the ideal scapegoat. Communists and the right saw an opportunity to create a state that they wanted, and were prepared to challenge the new republic. Many richer Germans had lived well under the Kaiser, and distrusted the new government. These forces of the extreme right and left would always be critical of the republic, but the bitterness and humiliation of the Treaty of Versailles made it extremely difficult for the supporters of democracy to make it work. While Versailles did not stop Germany’s economic and military recovery in the long run, it did destroy the German people’s faith in the democratic system. The treaty was associated with defeat and betrayal (the ’stab in the back’ legend), and the imposition of reparation payments meant that Germany was faced with serious economic and political instability. The treaty also failed to set up a situation for long lasting peace the provisions were such that German people wanted to overturn it rather than support it. Therefore, the Weimar Republic could be seemed as “doomed from the start”, with no chance for success. One of the problems created by the Treaty of Versailles was political unrest. Since the Weimar government was seen as the group to blame for the actual signing of the treaty, the government was attack from all sides. Even from the start, the new Weimar government faced opposition from both left and right. The Left wing Spartacist group, lead by Luxemburg and Liebknecht, admired the new Russian Communist political system, and with the fall of the Kaiser, saw an opportunity to attempt to place Germany into a similar system. In January 1919 they revolted, and tried to take control of Berlin, with the support of the USDP they proclaimed a new revolutionary government. However, Ebert had already won the support of the military with the Ebert-Groener pact, and the troops suppressed the revolt. This pact was significant, the government had associated itself with the right, and perhaps this early incident is one of the factors, which would convince the government to appoint Hitler Chancellor in 1933. The Right was next to revolt. In 1920 the Kapp Putch revolt occurred. Monarchists seized government buildings in Berlin, and even forced the government to flee to Stuttgart. The rebels however, surrendered on March 17 as unions declared a general strike. The government had another close escape. The early major activities of Hitler included his ‘Beer Hall Putch’ where he tried to seize control of The Bavarian government. His revolt was like the others, crushed, but clear opposition to the republic had been established. This political turmoil after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles also caused immense violence. Between 1919 and 1922 there were 356 political murders in Germany. Walter Rathenau, Germany’s Foreign Minister, was murdered as part of the escalating violence. In the Treaty of Versailles, Germany had agreed to pay for war damages, or reparations. The amount was set at 6,600 million pounds. Germany made the first payment of the reparations in 1921 and in 1922 Germany failed to pay the second installment to France and Belgium. The French refused to believe that Germany did not have the money and decided to take what they were owed by force. They invaded the Ruhr valley, Germany’s richest industrial area. Within days the French had taken over coal mines, railways, factories and steelworks. The German government called on the Germans to passively resist the French.. The citizens of the Ruhr began to hate the French who were exploiting them, and so again needed someone to blame. They decided to blame the people who had agreed to pay reparations, the government. By November 1923, the shut down of the richest industrial region of Germany brought an economic crisis to Germany by bringing about hyperinflation. Money was becoming more and more worthless by the day. The middle classes had their savings devalued considerably, and there was general discontent within the German public, and once again, hurting the fragile Weimar Republic. This general discontent was within the German public was not only due to the French invasion of the Ruhr. When the new government signed the Treaty of Versailles, it immediately caused great anguish. The people had no one to blame but the government, the majority of the country were angered, and it could be considered that with universal criticism, and perhaps some hatred, the new republic was doomed to fail. The people did not like the fact that it had lost its territory, its powerful army and its pride. The German people had the perception that they had admitted to taking full responsibility of the outbreak of the war, something that they did not truly believe in their hearts. When inflation occurred, the German public once again looked only to blame the government and the Treaty of Versailles for the problem, when it may have been much more complex than just the fact that reparations were owed due to the Treaty of Versailles, thus the perception that the treaty caused inflation also created a problem for the republic. However, the mid 1920’s were much different from the beginning of the republic. 1923 saw Stresemann appointed as Chancellor. Stresemann developed a policy he called ‘Fulfillment’. This was to try and show good faith in attempting to carry out the terms of peace, so to show how impossible the task was, and to try and persuade the allies to be more lenient. This policy made the German public believe that the government was accepting the terms of the treaty, thus, felt like the government was betraying the German people. In 1924 came the Dawes Plan. This reorganized the Reichsbank, and levels of reparations were set to prevent a balanced budged, and to prevent inflation. This would prove essential in Germany’s improving economy. Stresemann was significantly involved in introducing the Rentenmark. This began to stabilize the currency and began to settle inflation. This improved economic situation which was reflected in the general economic improvements recorded. Between 1920 and 1925, car sales had increased by over 250%, and production from the staple industries was beginning to return to pre war levels. Investment was pored into Germany, as the allied supervision was attractive to investors. National border anxieties were settled in 1925, when the Locarno treaties were signed in London. A greater feeling of security began to embrace Germany for the first time in over ten years. By 1926, Germany had joined The League of Nations, and Germany had a voice at the international level. Germany could now do more for her people abroad and at home, by 1929 even the withdrawal of the allies from the Rhineland was on the cards. However, there was a definite downside to these treaties and plans. By signing these new treaties it once again gave the feeling to the general public that the Weimar Republic had accepted the terms of the evil Treaty of Versailles, and the majority of the public did not wish to see this. They wanted to see a revision of the whole treaty. They did not want to be blamed for the outbreak of the war, and they did not want to lose everything that they enjoyed before the war.

The signing of the Treaty of Versailles by the Weimar Republic would also lead indirectly to the rise of Hitler in Germany. This is because Hitler promised that he would rid the German people of the treaty that had caused them so many problems. Hitler constantly attacked the Weimar government and the Treaty of Versailles for causing all of Germany’s problems. However, the German people were more uplifted during the late 1920’s, and cultural improvements were occurring throughout the country. There was greater production and use of literature, music, and theatre. Germany was beginning to get back on its feet after a hard war, and relations with the allies and between the government and the people were improving. The extremist Nazi’s had only 12 seats in 1928, and had little or no voice in national government. The socialists were in control with 153 seats and had a steady recovery in progress with no radical changes planned. The government itself had progressed form an imperial autocracy to a democratic republic. There was universal suffrage for all over 21, their head of state could be changed every seven years if the people were unhappy. There was optimism for the republic, the economy, and German culture. This optimism was dashed however, by the world depression and the Wall Street crash of 1929. Investment was withdrawn from the economy, causing it to go into decline again. Thus, if the Germans did not have to pay reparations, it may have never had to rely on foreign loans, thus would not have been hit as hard by the depression. This caused unemployment to reach record levels of six million. Many people began to turn to Hitler, who preached employment and greatness, instead of accepting the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. This was reflected by the Nazis, who gained 107 seats in the 1930 election. This shows people were looking for a more extremist solution. There were thousand of demonstrations against the government from most political groups. 13,00 Nazi demonstrations took place during 1930 alone. Bruing relied on decrees to keep order. But the Nazi message went beyond traditional anti-republican feeling. The Nazi idea of Volksgemeinschaft, for example, gave a vision of social unity and coherence to a society that was about to be torn apart by political and social antagonisms. The Volksgemeinschaft idea was a powerful propagandistic motive mainly among the young. The Nazis also managed to gather splintered older groups and infuse them with a spirit of unity. The very vagueness of the Nazi ideology and message proved more of an advantage than a drawback. The Nazis could promise many things to everybody; contradictions did not bother them. The Nazi’s also believed that only a national catastrophe would see them win power, and they were correct. The Nazi’s stirred up opposition to the government and republic, by linking the government to Versailles, and linking Versailles to all of Germany’s problems. The Nazi’s also blamed other political groups, especially the communists. Hitler had such a wide appeal. He was attractive to the workers because he promised employment, and appealed to the middle classes because they distrusted the current government. Hitler also promised that he would act legally and with order. However, the elections of 1932 saw the Nazi’s lose two million votes at the expense of the communists, the KPD. The country was showing signs of splitting into two. The one thing that both groups had in common was that they wanted to change the system of government. That did not bode well for the Weimar republic. By now is was clear that the country was going to go one way and the republic was doomed. The Nazi’s appeal embraced simultaneously anti-elitist, anti-capitalist as well as fiercely anti-socialist and elitist notions. The party showed Janus faces on many sides: it appeared as reactionary and revolutionary, anti-modernist and dynamic-modern, agrarian-romantic and technologically-enthusiastic. The Nazis made promises to everybody and expected that all internal contradictions would be resolved in a “pure” Volksgemeinschaft. Soon after the Nazi’s gained power, Hitler declared himself Fuhrer, and the Weimar Republic officially ended. From the very start, the Weimar republic faced opposition from both sides of the political spectrum. There was potential for the reintroduction of a monarch, or even a communist state, and several attempted revolutions occurred. The public blamed their problems on the Treaty of Versailles, and in turn, blamed the government that signed it. The new government had inherited a difficult situation. It was inevitable that the new government would have faced difficulties from the start, but to say doomed is unfair. The republic was beginning to overcome it’s difficulties during the mid 1920’s as economic, political, and cultural improvements were occurring, and if it hadn’t been for circumstances, mainly the Wall Street Crash, the republic may have prospered for many years. These circumstances gave the extremists, the Nazi’s, an opportunity for advancement as the people searched for a more radical solution to the depression, who also blamed Germany’s problems on the Treaty of Versailles. Therefore, the signing of the Treaty of Versailles caused many problems for the Weimar Republic and eventually led to the end of the republic and the beginning of Nazi rule in Germany.