

**The Nazi Party was not the only political party vying for power during the 1920's (the Weimar Republic period) and up to January 30, 1933 when the Nazi Party came to power. It is almost impossible to keep up with the number of elections which were held during this period and the frequency with which governments changed leadership. Here is a summary of the other political parties**

**Social Democratic Party:** wanted a parliamentary government but it was a party with many factions. It was divided among radicals who looked seriously to Marxism (Russian style Communism) ; members of the trade unions whose main objective was higher salaries and higher standard of living for the working class; It also had membership among the civil servants (postal employees, lawyers, train officials, teachers, etc.) in Germany who wanted a parliamentary government but were often not sure it would work effectively

**Independent Social Democratic Party:** once a members of the Social Democratic Party, they founded their own party after the Russian Revolution in 1917; They wanted to end the war immediately: they were joined by a very radical group of Communists who admired Russian Communism, wanted to establish such a government in Germany: the party was called the **Spartacists**, led by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg (both incidentally were Jewish and were murdered by the Weimar government with the help of the Freicorp (see Handouts), former WW1 veterans who hated the Weimar Republic but were willing to get rid of the radical Communists even though they also wanted to get rid of the Weimar democracy as well. Spartacists appealed to radical factory workers and were involved in countless strikes and street fighting.

**The German Communist Party = Independent Socialist Party:** They were made up of members of the Independent Social Democratic party; They became very strong during the Weimar years in opposing the Nazi Party; they used similar violent tactics, killing opponents and constant street fighting and promoting strikes among the workers. In the end, this party and the Nazi Party—both very extreme parties— competed with one another in countless elections.

**Democratic Party:** members were distinguished middle class intellectual, many were university professors and progressive industrialists; the party favored the Weimar Republic and wanted democracy to succeed in post WW1 Germany. Ironically or not surprisingly, in a society which considered this democracy to be a government imposed on Germany by the Versailles Treaty, the Social Democratic Party was not popular among most citizens; it never won an election.

**Catholic Center Party:** an amalgam of monarchists who would not have minded if the Kaiser were to have returned to power or they favored, at least, a strong leader in control of the government. For the most part, they wanted the Weimar Republic and the

democracy to survive. They had many adherents in the Catholic parts of Germany such as the Rhineland and Bavaria.

**National People's Party:** very conservative and skeptical of a democratic government surviving in Germany; a wealthy industrialist, Hugenberg, was very influential in the party and he was a fan of Hitler and began to gravitate toward the Nazi Party.

**People's Party:** the part of big business, conservative, right wing in leanings, yet had one of the best leaders, Gustav Stresemann, who became chancellor and was able to negotiate with the allies to reduce reparation payments (The Dawes Plan). He was also able to encourage foreign investments; to bring Germany into the league of Nations; and to sign treaties of non-aggression with neighboring countries.