PARTEIEN DER WEIMARER REPUBLIK

3 For and against democracy: Supporting or fighting the new republic

SOURCE: Who supports the Weimar Republic? (→)

Caricature: “Sie tragen die Buchstaben der Firma aber wer trägt den Geist?”

 SPD Social Democrats
 Mostly working class
 For the republic to help working people

DDP German Democratic Party
 Mostly middle class
 For the republic
 Strong belief in individual freedom

Zentrum Centre Party
 Roman Catholics from all classes
 For the republic
 Supported the interests of the Roman Catholic Church

DVP German People’s Party
 Middle class, especially businessmen
 Really monarchist, but came to accept the republic
 Initially supported a government to support trade and industry

DNVP German National People’s Party
 Middle and upper classes
 Many scholars and students
 Against the republic
 For strong government
 Nationalisation

a. Against capitalist, monarchist and militarist thinking; revolutionary take-over of the state; nationalisation of industry and land; in favour of a soviet-style “democracy” (= party rule over the workers)

b. A centralised state led by the party and its leader, all other parties banned; factory owners keep their factories, land owners keep their land, total control of the media, for a secular school system under the control of the party

c. For the introduction of the monarchy, for a strong president, for a strong Prussian state, for a strong executive power, though not against parliament; against nationalisation

d. Against capitalist, monarchist and militarist thinking; for peaceful and parliamentary reform of society; nationalisation of industry and land; secular school system
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Analysing election propaganda – the parties:

1. Interpreting a cartoon (Source 1)
   a) Describe the cartoon and translate the caption (see the HISTORY SKILLS box).
   b) Read the descriptions of the parties (a, b, c, d) and match the descriptions to the posters (Sources 2–5).
   c) Match the figures in the cartoon to the appropriate parties (Source 1).
   d) Where do the Communists and Nazis fit into the semi-circle below the cartoon? Give reasons for your choice.
   e) Comment on the cartoonist’s message.

2. Analysing election posters
   a) Describe the posters (Sources 2–5) by using the information in the HISTORY SKILLS box.
   b) Find similarities (e.g. the use of the hands) and differences.
   c) Find evidence in Sources 2–4 that the parties are “enemies of democracy”.
   d) Compare these election posters to posters of today.

3. Comparing voting systems
   a) Find out about the differences between the ‘proportional system’ and the ‘majority system’.
   b) Assess how the proportional system helped a relatively unknown party (like the NSDAP).
   c) Describe the voting system of the German Bundestag.

HISTORY SKILLS

Analysing election propaganda
The poster ... evokes feelings of ...
   a) arouses sympathy for ...
   b) appeals to voter's feelings ...
   c) deals with ...
   d) criticizes ...
   e) attacks ...
   f) contrasts ...

The characters ... stand for ...
   a) symbolize ...
   b) political ideas ...
   c) enemies ...

Potential Voter
Poster
Party

Source 1
- Rüchstoben (here) the Constitution [ʁʊç̯ʃˈtoːbn] (noun)
- Geist feelings of loyalty; spirit
- (to) ban sth. forbid sth. officially
- secular [ˈsektəl] not concerned with spiritual or religious affairs, of this world

SOURCE 5:
Election poster of the Social Democrats, 1930