Dancing On The Volcano: Weimar Chronology
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(1918-1933)

This is a short chronology of some major dates and events that happened. The emphasis is primarily on the political situations in order to “frame” the various moments of the Weimar Republic. It highlights the ongoing turmoil and complexities of the times.

1918

Nov. 9 - Philip Scheidemann, who was prime minister from February-June 1919, proclaims a republic.
Nov. 10 - The Kaiser flees to Holland.
Nov. 11 - Armistice signed in Compiegne.
Dec. 30 - Foundation of the German Communist Party (KPD).
    Eight hour working day established by law.

1919

Jan. 5 - Foundation of the German Worker’s Party, later the National Socialist Party (NSDAP), Hitler was member # 555.
Jan. 5-12 - Heavy fighting in Berlin.
Jan. 15 - Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg of the Marxist Spartacus League were murdered.
Jan. 19 - Elections to a National Assembly to be held in Weimar; a republican majority results.
April 7- May 2 - Soviet Republic in Munich.
June 28 - Germany signs the Treaty of Versailles.
Aug. 11 -The Weimar Constitution becomes law.

CULTURAL EVENTS

Nov. 28 - Opening of Reinhardt’s Grosses Schauspielhaus.
    Walter Gropius, L. Feininger, and Gerhard Marcks found the Bauhaus in Weimar.

1920

March 13 - Erhardt division enters Berlin to overthrow the government (Kapp Putsch) — — leaves Berlin in Mar. 17.
March/May - “Uprising" in the Ruhr, The Red Army is destroyed by the
Reichswehr.
Uprisings of rightist and leftist extremist groups.

CULTURAL EVENTS
Opening of the UFA Palast am Zoo with the film, “The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari”, directed by Robert Wiene.
“Der Golem” directed by Paul Wegener and Carl Boese.

1921
March - Communist uprisings in Saxony and Hamburg.
Aug. 18 - 550 marks = 1 dollar
Aug. 26 - Murder of Matthias Erzberger, who was held responsible for the Versailles Treaty, by members of the secret right-wing group, “Organization-Consul”.

1922
June 24 - Assassination of Walter Rathenau, Reich foreign minister.
June 24 - 550 marks = 1 dollar.
December - 7500 marks = 1 dollar

CULTURAL EVENTS
Wilhelm Furtwangler takes over the Berlin Philharmonic.
First public performance of a talkie in the Alhambra, Berlin.
“Nosferatu”, directed by F. W. Murnau.
Equality for women in academic life.

1923
Jan. 11 - The French and Belgians occupy the Ruhr.
Jan. 22 - 22,400 marks = 1 dollar.
Oct. 19 - Berlin stock market goes on strike.
Nov. 8 - Hitler putsch in Munich.
Nov. 20 - 4,200 billion marks. 4.20 Rentenmarks = 1 dollar.

Gustav Stresemann, the Reich chancellor, organized a government in Berlin that could make laws; creating stability. The Dawes Plan was named after Charles Dawes, the American director of the budget. The Plan finally ended the hyperinflation.

CULTURAL EVENTS
First public radio broadcast for entertainment (Oct. 29).

1924

April 1 - Hitler condemned to five year’s fortress arrest.
Sept. 25 - Zeppelin ZR III visits Berlin.

CULTURAL EVENTS

Grosses Schauspielhaus becomes a variety theater (Oct. 22).
“The Last Man”, directed by F.W. Murnau.
“The Niebelungen” directed by Fritz Lang.
The Magic Mountain by Thomas Mann.

1925

Feb 24 - Re-founding of the NSDAP after Hitler’s release.
April 26 - Paul von Hindenburg elected president.

CULTURAL EVENTS

Beginnings of television—first public broadcast will take place in 1928.
Josephine Baker appears in Berlin.
“The Friendless Street” with Asta Nielson, Greta Garbo, directed by W. Pabst.
Publication of the first part of Hitler’s Mein Kampf.
Publication of Jud Suss by Lion Feuchtwanger.

1926

Sept. 28 - Germany enters League of Nations.

CULTURAL EVENTS

Gropius moves the Bauhaus to Dessau from Weimar.
“Metropolis”, Directed by Fritz Lang.

1927

Aug. - First Nazi Nuremberg rally.

CULTURAL EVENTS

Otto Klemperer takes over orchestra at the Kroll Opera, Berlin.
Alfred Hugenberg, wealthy businessman and ardent nationalist, takes over UFA. “Berlin, Symphony of a Great City”, directed by Walter Ruttman.

1928

First utilization of telex via post office cables.

CULTURAL EVENTS

Aug. 30 - Opening of “The Three Penny Opera”, by Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill. Erich Maria Remarque publishes All Quiet on the Western Front.

1929

May 1 - Communist uprising in Berlin.
July 9 - Alfred Hugenberg and Hitler unite to oppose the Young Plan; a plan to settle German reparation debts.
Oct 3. - Death of Gustav Stresemann, who had served as chancellor in 1923.
Oct. 24 - Black Friday” on Wall Street unleashes a world economic crisis.

CULTURAL EVENTS

Graf Zeppelin goes round the world.
Completion of new UFA sound stages in Neu Babelsberg.
First TV broadcast in Berlin.
“Menschen am Sonntag”, directed by Robert Slodmak.
First German talkies.
Thomas Mann wins the Nobel Prize.

1930

June 30 - Last French troops leave German soil.
Sept. 14 - Elections; Nazis increase their representation from 12 to 107 seats in the Reichstag.
Dec. - 4.8 million unemployed.

CULTURAL EVENTS

Alfred Doblin publishes Berlin Alexanderplatz.
“The Blue Angel” with Marlene Dietrich and Emil Jannings, directed by Josef von Sternberg.

1931
Jan 1 - Five million unemployed.
July 13 - All banks, savings trusts and stock exchanges closed by law.
Oct. 11 - Union of all right-wing groups.
Oct. - National Socialist Student organization gains a majority in the union of German students.

**CULTURAL EVENTS**

“The Three Penny Opera” with Lotte Lenya, directed by G. W. Pabst.
“Mädchen in Uniform”, directed by Leontine Sagan and Carl Froelich.

**1932**

Jan. 1 - Six Million unemployed.
April 10 - Re-election of von Hindenburg.
April 13 - Banning of the SA and SS.
June 14 - Lifting of ban on SA and SS.
July 31 - NSDAP get 37.8 percent of the vote, 230 seats in the elections.
Sept. 12 - Von Papen dissolves the Reischtag.
Oct. 1 - 7.5 million unemployed.
Nov. 6 - Elections. Nazis lose two million votes and 34 seats. Communists gain 42 seats.

**CULTURAL EVENTS**

“M” with Peter Lorre, directed by Fritz Lang.
The Bauhaus closed by the National Socialist Regional Government in Dessau.

**1933**

Jan. 4 - Hitler meets Franz von Papen at von Schroeder’s house.
**Jan. 30 - Hitler becomes chancellor.**
May 10 - Books and writings deemed “un-German” are burned at the Opernplatz, Berlin.

*Most of this chronology comes from *The Weimar Chronicle* by Alex de Jonge.*

“In 1934, in exile, the Social Democratic Party a little ruefully acknowledged that it had made a tragic mistake: “That the German working class movement, disoriented during the war, should have taken over the old state apparatus practically unchanged, was its historical error.” True enough. Not content with inviting the Trojan horse into the city, the men of Weimar watched over its construction and solicitously sheltered its designers.”
Film Viewings

I have listed all of the films in their appropriate weeks, but this is a separate list for clarity. They can be found on YouTube and some on Netflix.

For Week #1:

“Die Sinfonie der Grosstadt” (Berlin, Symphony of a Great City), Walter Ruttmann, 1927.

For Week #3:


“Metropolis” (Metropolis Restored), Fritz Lang, 1926.

“Das Triadische Ballet” (The Triadic Ballet). Oskar Schlemmer, 1922.

For Week #4:

“Die Buchse der Pandora” (Pandora’s Box), G. W. Pabst, 1929.

“Der Blaue Engel” (The Blue Angel). Josef von Sternberg, 1930.

“M” (M), Fritz Lang. 1931.

For Week #5:

“Die Dreigroschenoper” (The Threepenny Opera), G.W.Pabst,1931.

“Hexentanz” (Witch Dance), Mary Wigman, 1926.

“The Green Table”, Kurt Jooss, 1932.

For Week #6:
“Berlin – Metropolis of Vice” (Episode Two), 2005.

For Week #7:

“I Am A Camera” (Julie Harris), 1955.

“Cabaret” (Liza Minelli), 1972.

“Cabaret” on Broadway with Alan Cummings, 1998. There are also clips from other Cabaret Broadway productions.

Supplemental Viewing:

There are two German TV series that you might want to look at. The first one is “Berlin Alexanderplatz” directed by Rainer Werner Fassbinder, 1980. It has 14 episodes.

And the recent $40,000,000 German TV series, “Babylon Berlin”, that just came out in 2018. There are 16 episodes in the first part with a second season to come out in 2019 or 2020?