

# IA The political structure of the Second Reich 1871-1918



**Kaiser (Emperor)**  
 Hereditary monarch (King of Prussia)  
 Appointed/dismissed government  
 Could dissolve the Reichstag  
 Controlled foreign policy and the armed forces



**Government: Chancellor and other ministers**  
 Appointed/dismissed by Kaiser  
 Proposed new laws to the Reichstag  
 Not dependent upon support in the Reichstag to stay in office

**Reichstag** \*

Members (called deputies) elected by universal male suffrage  
 Could agree to or reject laws proposed by Kaiser or the government  
 Could not remove the Chancellor or the government

**Political parties**

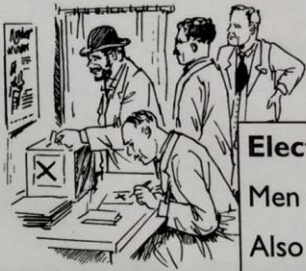
- Conservatives
- National Liberals (moderate conservatives)
- Progressives (Liberals)
- SPD\* (socialists)
- Z\* or Centre (representing the interests of Catholics)

\* Parties that carried on into the Weimar Republic



**REICHSRAT (assembly of ambassadors from the 26 state governments) \***

Had veto on legislation passed by Reichstag



**Electorate**

Men over 25 voted in Reichstag elections every three years  
 Also voted for local state assemblies  
 Written constitution but no statement of individual rights

**Number of deputies of main political parties in Reichstag**

Political party	1884	1898	1912
Conservatives	78	56	43
Progressives	67	41	42
SPD	24	56	110

Summons and dismisses

Appoints

Summons

Elect