

Friedrich Ebert Delivers the Opening Speech at the First Session of the National Assembly in Weimar (February 6, 1919)

Abstract

The national assembly was elected on January 19, 1919, and on February 6 it held its constitutive meeting in the National Theater in Weimar. The body met away from the capital because revolutionary unrest had made it appear too insecure. The national assembly met in this theater from February 6 to August 11. Its main tasks were to establish the separation of powers, to form a government, and to draw up a constitution. Friedrich Ebert, who had chaired the Council of People's Deputies, was elected president of Germany and Philipp Scheidemann, also a former people's deputy, was tasked with forming a government. On February 13, the so-called Weimar Coalition (SPD, DDP, and the Center Party) was founded. Soon it was put to the test, when the national assembly, under pressure by the Entente powers, signed the Versailles treaty on June 23 despite strong opposition inside the Scheidemann cabinet. Debates over the republic's future constitution were also passionate. The Weimar constitution, drafted by Hugo Preuss, was finally passed on July 31, and President Ebert signed it on August 11. The February 6 photograph here shows Ebert before the representatives of the national assembly, mainly men, during his opening speech. The election to this body was the first in which women could also vote, or be elected. Of the 423 seats in the national assembly, 37 were won by women.

Source



Source: First session of the National Assembly in Weimar - People's Representative Friedrich Ebert gives the opening speech, February 6, 1919.

bpk picture agency, picture number 30008637. For rights inquiries, please contact Art Resource at

requests@artres.com (North America) or bpk-Bildagentur at kontakt@bpk-bildagentur.de (for all other countries).

Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz

Recommended Citation: Friedrich Ebert Delivers the Opening Speech at the First Session of the National Assembly in Weimar (February 6, 1919), published in: German History in Documents and Images, <<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/weimar-germany-1918-1933/ghdi:image-4158>> [March 16, 2026].