

Does the judiciary in the Weimar Republic apply a double standard?

- ① Using texts M2 and M3, verify whether the Weimar judiciary treated right-wing offenders differently than left-wing offenders.
- ② Already done? Given the evidence from texts M2 and M3, how might the potential biases within the Weimar judiciary have impacted the stability and public perception of the Weimar Republic? Discuss the implications this could have had on the broader political landscape of the time.

M2 on the murder of the Prime Minister of Bavaria, Kurt Eisner (USPD, died 21.09.1919)

On January 20, 1920, Arco was sentenced to death. After the death sentence was read out, the convict appealed to those who were sympathetic to him to refrain from rash actions and to contribute to national reconstruction. This prompted a massive outburst of applause from the audience, which continued for several minutes with repeated shouts of acclaim and clapping. The crowd on the street greeted the transport with resounding cheers, waving hats and handkerchiefs. („Deutsche Tageszeitung“, January 20, 1920.) Arco was subsequently pardoned to life imprisonment. In 1922, Arco's imprisonment was considerably relaxed, allowing him to work during the day as an intern on an estate near Landsberg.

Emil Julius Gumbel, Four Years of Political Murder, Berlin-Fichtenau: Verlag der Neuen Gesellschaft, 1922, p. 27.

M3: The Act of the Butcher Lindner

Eisner was highly popular among the workers. In the turmoil following his assassination, the butcher Aloys Lindner and the baker Georg Frisch entered the Landtag (state parliament). Lindner fired several shots at Minister Auer, a political opponent of Eisner's, believing that Auer was involved in Eisner's murder. When Major v. Gareis confronted Lindner, Lindner shot at him too, killing him. With the assistance of Karl Merkerts and Georg Schlunds, Lindner fled abroad. However, German-Austria extradited him, on the condition that he would not be sentenced to death, as the death penalty had been abolished there. The court did not believe Lindner's claim that he acted in self-defense against v. Gareis. On December 15, 1919, Lindner was sentenced to 14 years of penal servitude for attempted manslaughter and aggravated manslaughter.

Emil Julius Gumbel, Four Years of Political Murder, Berlin-Fichtenau: Verlag der Neuen Gesellschaft, 1922, p. 81.