

MODERN WORLD GCSE / AS LEVEL HISTORY REVISION
NOTES

The Peace Treaties after World War One : 1919 - 1923

- A. Background to the Treaty of Versailles
- B. Aims of the different leaders
- C. Terms of the Treaty of Versailles
- D. German reaction to the Treaty of Versailles
- E. terms of the other peace treaties
- F. How was the peace threatened between 1919 and 1923 ?

A. Background to the Treaty of Versailles

WWI had been the most destructive war in history. Millions had died on all sides ; large areas of land (eg. France and Belgium) were ruined. Germany and Austria were defeated and exhausted. The winners were bankrupt due to the the costs of the war

In Britain and particularly in France, public opinion was anti - German. Many believed Germany had started the war and so should be severely punished.

Leaders of the winning countries met in Paris in January 1919 . Their main objective was to design a peace settlement that would prevent any future wars breaking out. Of the treaties that were drawn up and signed, the most important was the Treaty of Versailles

B. Aims of the different leaders

When the talks began, there were 5 leading countries - America, France, Britain, Italy and Japan. By the spring of 1919, 3 from these 5 had come to have the greater influence - France, America and Britain

Georges Clemenceau : Prime Minister of France. France had been devastated by the war. The French people wanted revenge against Germany - this would mean weakening Germany, so that she could never pose a threat

to France ever again. In particular, France wanted to make sure that her border with Germany was safe and securely protected.

Woodrow Wilson : President of America .Wilson wanted a fair and lasting peace for Europe. He believed that punishing Germany would create problems for the future. His "blueprint" for a peace settlement was outlined in his "14 Points". The 4 main ideas were :

- (i) national self - determination - people ruling themselves, not being ruled by a foreign power
- (ii) disarmament
- iii) no secret agreements
- (iv) the creation of a peace keeping organisation - "The League of Nation"

David Lloyd George : British Prime minister The British people wanted revenge against Germany and a harsh peace treaty. Lloyd George believed that this would create problems for the future and delay Britain's economic recovery as Germany had been an important trading partner before the war. In many ways, he found himself in the "middle ground" between Wilson and Clemenceau.

C. Terms of the Treaty of Versailles 1919

1. **Land** : Germany lost 15% of her land ; much of this was important industrial and agricultural land.
 - Alsace Lorraine - given to France (had been taken by Germany in 1871 / French speaking)
 - Eupen & Malmedy - given to Belgium (industrial lands)
 - North Schleswig - given to Denmark (Danish speaking / taken by Germany in 1861)
 - Posen & West Prussia - given to Poland
 - Hultschin - given to Czechoslovakia
 - Saar, Danzig and Memel - put under League of nation's control for 15 years
 - Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania - lands gained from Russia in 1918 ; given independence

2. **Armed forces** : (i) army - cut to 100,00 (ii) navy - 6 battleships / no submarines (iii) airforce - none
3. **Colonies** - all taken from Germany eg. in Africa, Togoland, Cameroons, German East Africa ; in the Pacific, Mariana Islands, Caroline Islands, Western Samoa
4. **Austria** : an "anschluss" or union between Germany and Austria was forbidden
5. **War Guilt** : clause 231 ("the war guilt") made Germany solely responsible for starting the war
6. **Reparations** : clause 232 stated that because Germany had started the war, she would pay war damages. The reparations were fixed at £6600 millions in 1921
7. **League of Nations** : a peace keeping organisation was set up. Germany was not invited to join.

D. Germany's reaction to the Treaty of Versailles

- most Germans were angered and outraged by the Treaty Why ?

- ~ Germany had been told that if she became a democracy she would be treated fairly. In February 1919, the new democratic Weimar Republic was set up.
- ~ the Treaty was a "diktat"(a dictated peace). The German government had no say in the drawing up of the treaty. If Germany refused to sign she would be invaded.
- ~ it was unfair to make Germany solely responsible for the war - others should share blame
- ~ the cuts in the armed forces made Germany extremely weak. It was unfair that Germany should be forced to disarm on this scale.

- ~ much of the land lost was important industrial and agricultural land, vital for *Germany's recovery*.
- ~ within the lands taken, there were now substantial *German minorities* eg. 2 millions in Poland
- ~ the reparations figure was too high and bound to lead to economic problems in *Germany*
- ~ *Germany* was not invited to join the League of nations
- ~ the treaty was not in keeping with Wilson's "14 Points"

- long - term problems of the Treaty of Versailles

- ~ *Germany's anger* at the Treaty of Versailles is a theme in the history of the 1920's and 1930's. In particular, Hitler was able to exploit the *German peoples' anger* in the early 1930' and use it as one of the "promises" that helped him gain power. The failure of the Treaty of Versailles is a long - term cause of world War Two.

E. Terms of the Other Peace Treaties

Country	Treaty	Terms
Austria	St. Germain 1919	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- separated Austria from Hungary- cut in armed forces- payment of reparations- land lost to create new countries of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia- land lost to Poland, Roumania and Italy
Hungary	Trianon 1920	
Bulgaria	Neuilly 1919	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- reparations and cuts in armed forces- land lost to Greece, Roumania and Yugoslavia

<p>Turkey</p>	<p>Sevres 1920</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - loss of control of straits to Black sea - armies of occupation within Turkey - reparations - lands lost : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Palestine, Iraq, Jordan (GB) ~ Syria (France) ~ Smyrna (Greece) these lands became mandates
----------------------	---------------------------	--

F. How was the peace threatened between 1919 and 1923 ?

Unfortunately for the peacemakers, the Paris peace treaties came under threat between 1920 and 1923. Three examples clearly illustrate this :

1. Germany and the Treaty of Versailles : The Ruhr Crisis , 1923

By the Treaty of Versailles, Germany had to pay reparations ; the amount to be paid was finally fixed at £6600 millions in 1921. Germany met her first payment in 1922 ,however she was unable to make her second payment due in January 1923. France and Belgium used this as a reason to invade one of Germany's most important areas, the Ruhr. French and Belgian troops took iron, coal and steel in place of the money owed to them . The German government's response was to order the workers in the Ruhr to go on strike. The invasion lasted until September,when both armies withdrew. This had been a major incident that threatened the peace made just four years before.

2. Turkey and the Treaty of Sevres

Like Germany, Turkey felt that their treaty (Sevres) was far too harsh and unfair. Soon after the signing of the treaty, a Turkish army general, Kemal, seized control of the country and set about forcing the occupying armies to leave. In 1922, Kemal defeated a Greek army and forced the Greek population of the port of Smyrna to leave. Kemal then turned his army against the British at Chanak. The British feared that this crisis might end in a major war and so agreed to negotiate a change to the treaty of Sevres.

In 1923, a new treaty was drawn up - the Treaty of Lausanne. This replaced the Treaty of Sevres and was much fairer in that it restored Turkey's armed forces, abolished the payment of reparations, led to the withdrawal of all foreign troops, restored Turkey's control of the straits. Once again, a harsh treaty had threatened the peace.

3. Italy's reaction to the peace treaties

During WW1, Italy had agreed by the Treaty of London (1915) to support Britain and France. In return, Italy was secretly promised land after the war was over. By the peace treaties, Italy did receive some lands, most importantly, South Tyrol, Istria and Trentino all of which had been part of the Austrian empire. Nevertheless, Italy remained dissatisfied as she was not given the port of Fiume. This led to a minor incident. In 1919, a group of Italian troops led by a poet, D'Annunzio, took control of Fiume, which they held for one year until driven out the Italian government.

All of these three examples help to illustrate the fact that a lasting peace was no easy thing to achieve even following the most devastating and destructive war in history.