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A Flawed Peace

TERMS & NAMES

- Woodrow Wilson
- Georges Clemenceau
- David Lloyd George
- Fourteen Points
- self-determination
- Treaty of Versailles
- League of Nations

MAIN IDEA

After winning the war, the Allies dictated a harsh peace settlement that left many nations feeling betrayed.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

Hard feelings left by the peace settlement helped cause World War II.

SETTING THE STAGE World War I was over. The killing had stopped. The terms of peace, however, still had to be worked out. On January 18, 1919, a conference to establish those terms began at the Palace of Versailles, outside Paris. For one year this conference would be the scene of vigorous, often bitter debate. The Allied powers struggled to solve their conflicting aims in various peace treaties.

The Allies Meet at Versailles

Attending the talks, known as the Paris Peace Conference, were delegates representing 32 countries. However, the meeting's major decisions were hammered out by a group known as the Big Four: **Woodrow Wilson** of the United States, **Georges Clemenceau** of France, **David Lloyd George** of Great Britain, and Vittorio Orlando of Italy. Russia, in the grip of civil war, was not represented. Neither were Germany and its allies.

HISTORY MAKERS



Georges Clemenceau
1841–1929

Woodrow Wilson
1856–1924

The most hostile relationship at the Paris Peace Conference was that between two allies: Wilson and Clemenceau. These two highly intelligent and committed leaders brought very different visions of peace to the negotiating table.

Woodrow Wilson was the son of a Presbyterian minister. He had been a history scholar, professor, and president of Princeton University before becoming president. A morally upright man, he was guided by a deep inner religious faith.

Clemenceau, by contrast, had been a physician, journalist, and

sometime playwright before becoming premier of France.

In Paris, the two men clashed. Wilson's idealism, as embodied in the Fourteen Points, stood in stark contrast to Clemenceau's desire to punish Germany.

The stubborn personalities of the two men made reaching agreement even harder. Lloyd George of Britain summed it up nicely when he was asked how he did at the Paris Peace Conference. "Not badly," he replied, "considering I was seated between Jesus Christ and Napoleon."

Wilson's Plan for Peace

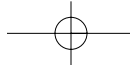
In January 1918, while the war was still raging, President Wilson had drawn up a series of proposals. Known as the **Fourteen Points**, they outlined a plan for achieving a just and lasting peace. The first five points included an end to secret treaties, freedom of the seas, free trade, and reduced national armies and navies. The fifth goal was the adjustment of colonial claims with fairness toward colonial peoples. The sixth through thirteenth points were specific suggestions for changing borders and creating new nations. The guiding idea behind these points was **self-determination**. This meant allowing people to decide for themselves under what government they wished to live.

Finally, the fourteenth point proposed a "general association of nations" that would protect "great and small states alike." This reflected Wilson's hope for an organization that could peacefully negotiate solutions to world conflicts.

THINK THROUGH HISTORY

A. Summarizing

What were Wilson's general goals for the postwar world?



The Allies Dictate a Harsh Peace As the Paris Peace Conference opened, Britain and France showed little sign of agreeing to Wilson's vision of peace. Both nations were concerned with national security. They also wanted to strip Germany of its war-making power. The French, in particular, were determined to punish Germany. France was where much of the fighting had occurred. The nation had lost more than a million soldiers and had seen large amounts of its land destroyed. Clemenceau wanted Germany to pay for the suffering the war had caused.

The differences between French, British, and U.S. aims led to heated arguments among the nations' leaders. Finally a compromise was reached. The **Treaty of Versailles** between Germany and the Allied powers was signed on June 28, 1919—five years to the day after Franz Ferdinand's assassination in Sarajevo.

Adopting Wilson's fourteenth point, the treaty created a **League of Nations**. The league was to be an international association whose goal would be to keep peace among nations. The five Allied powers—the United States, Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan—were to be permanent members of the league's Executive Council. Its General Assembly would consist of representatives of 32 Allied and neutral nations. Germany was deliberately excluded. Also left out was Russia. Russia's early withdrawal from the war and its revolutionary leadership had made it an outcast in the eyes of the other Allies.

The treaty also punished Germany. The defeated nation lost substantial territory and had severe restrictions placed on its military operations. As punishing as these provisions were, the harshest was Article 231. It was also known as the "war guilt" clause. It placed sole responsibility for the war on Germany's shoulders. As a result, Germany had to pay reparations to the Allies.

All of Germany's territories in Africa and the Pacific were declared mandates, or territories to be administered by the League of Nations. Under the peace agreement, the Allies would govern the mandates until they were judged ready for independence.

Vocabulary

reparations: money paid by a defeated nation to compensate for damage or injury during a war.

The Treaty of Versailles: Major Provisions

League of Nations	Territorial Losses	Military Restrictions	War Guilt
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International peace organization; membership to include Allied war powers and 32 Allied and neutral nations Germany and Russia excluded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Germany returns Alsace-Lorraine to France; French border extended to the west bank of the Rhine River Germany surrenders all of its overseas colonies in Africa and the Pacific 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limits set on the size of the German army Germany prohibited from importing or manufacturing weapons or war materiel Germany forbidden to build or buy submarines or have an air force 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sole responsibility for the war placed on Germany's shoulders Germany forced to pay the Allies \$33 billion in reparations over 30 years

SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Charts

1. In what ways did the treaty punish Germany?
2. What two provinces were returned to France as a result of the treaty?

The Creation of New Nations The Versailles treaty with Germany was just one of five treaties negotiated by the Allies. The Western powers signed separate peace treaties in 1919 and 1920 with each of the other defeated nations: Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, and the Ottoman Empire.

These treaties, too, led to huge land losses for the Central Powers. Several new countries were created out of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia were all recognized as independent nations.

THINK THROUGH HISTORY

B. Recognizing

Effects How did Wilson's Fourteen Points influence the postwar world?



GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Maps

- Region** Which Central Powers nation appears to have lost the most territory?
- Location** On which nation's former lands were most of the new countries created?

The Ottoman Turks were forced to give up almost all of their former empire. They retained only the territory that is today the country of Turkey. The Allies carved up the lands that the Ottomans lost in Southwest Asia into mandates rather than independent nations. Palestine, Iraq, and Transjordan came under British control; Syria and Lebanon went to France.

Russia, alienated by the Allies, suffered land losses as well. Romania and Poland both gained Russian territory. Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, formerly part of Russia, became independent nations.

"A Peace Built on Quicksand" In the end, the Treaty of Versailles did little to build a lasting peace. For one thing, the United States—considered after the war to be the dominant nation in the world—ultimately rejected the treaty. Many Americans objected to the settlement and especially to President Wilson's League of Nations. Americans believed that the United States' best hope for peace was to stay out of European affairs. The United States worked out a separate treaty with Germany and its allies several years later.

In addition, the treaty with Germany—in particular the war-guilt clause—left a legacy of bitterness and hatred in the hearts of the German people. Other countries felt cheated and betrayed as well by the peace settlements. Throughout Africa and Asia, people in the mandated territories were angry at the way the Allies disregarded their desire for independence. The European powers, it seemed to them, merely talked about the principle of national self-determination. European colonialism, disguised as the mandate system, continued in Asia and Africa.

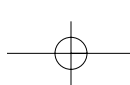
Some Allied powers, too, were embittered by the outcome. Both Japan and Italy, which had entered the war to gain territory, had gained less than they wanted.

Lacking the support of the United States, and later other world powers, the League of Nations was in no position to take action on these complaints. The settlements at

THINK THROUGH HISTORY

C. Analyzing Issues

What complaints did various countries voice about the Treaty of Versailles?



THINK THROUGH HISTORY

D. Making Inferences

What was the “quicksand” that could swallow up and destroy the peace settlements at Versailles?

Versailles represented, as one observer noted, “a peace built on quicksand.” Indeed, that quicksand eventually would give way. In a little more than two decades, the treaties’ legacy of bitterness would help plunge the world into another catastrophic war.

The Legacy of the War

World War I was, in many ways, a new kind of war. It involved the use of new technologies. It ushered in the notion of war on a grand and global scale. It also left behind a landscape of death and destruction such as was never before seen.

The War’s Extreme Cost Both sides in World War I paid a tremendous price in terms of human life. About 8.5 million soldiers died as a result of the war. Another 21 million more were wounded. In addition, the war led to the death of countless civilians by way of starvation, disease, and slaughter. Taken together, these figures spelled tragedy—an entire generation of Europeans wiped out.

The war also had a devastating economic impact on Europe. The great conflict drained the treasuries of Europe. One account put the total cost of the war at \$338 billion—a staggering amount for that time. The war also destroyed acres of farmland, as well as homes, villages, and towns.

A Lost Generation The enormous suffering and apparent pointlessness of the Great War left a deep mark on Western society as well. A sense of disillusionment settled over the survivors. The insecurity and despair that many people experienced are reflected in the art and literature of the time. In a poem written in 1919, the Russian poet Anna Akhmatova captured these feelings:

A VOICE FROM THE PAST

Why is our century worse than any other?
Is it that in the stupor of fear and grief
It has plunged its fingers in the blackest ulcer,
Yet cannot bring relief?

Westward the sun is dropping,
And the roofs of towns are shining in its light.
Already death is chalking doors with crosses
And calling the ravens and the ravens are in flight.

ANNA AKHMATOVA, from *You Will Hear Thunder*, translated by D. M. Thomas

The Great War shook European society to its foundations. While the war would continue to haunt future generations, its more immediate impact was to help ignite one of the most significant events of the 20th century. In Chapter 14, you will learn about that event: the Russian Revolution.

Section 4 Assessment

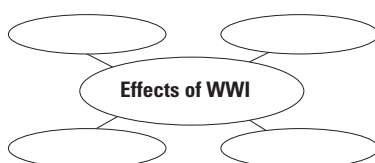
1. TERMS & NAMES

Identify

- Woodrow Wilson
- Georges Clemenceau
- David Lloyd George
- Fourteen Points
- self-determination
- Treaty of Versailles
- League of Nations

2. TAKING NOTES

Using a web diagram like the one below, show the effects of World War I.



Which effect do you think was most significant? Why?

3. FORMING OPINIONS

Do you think the peace settlements at Versailles were fair? Why or why not? Consider the warring and nonwarring nations affected.

THINK ABOUT

- Germany’s punishment
- the creation of new nations
- the mandate system

4. THEME ACTIVITY

Power and Authority

In small groups, create a list of 8-10 interview questions a reporter might ask Wilson, Clemenceau, or Lloyd George about the Paris Peace Conference. Ask about such topics as:

- Wilson’s Fourteen Points
- the handling of Germany and Russia
- the numerous demands from different nations and groups