

Was the Treaty of Versailles Fair?



How did WWI end?	1918 - The German Spring offensive had failed – Germany was losing the war.
	The Allies were blockading German Ports – German people were suffering.
	Sailors in the Naval Base at Kiel mutinied when ordered to go to sea. (Military discipline breaking down).
	Generals Ludendorff & Hindenburg told the Kaiser the War could not be won.
	Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicated (9 November) a Republic was proclaimed – Led by SPD leader Friedrich Ebert.
	German people surprised – they thought they were winning the war (No foreign troops on German soil) – Stab in the Back myth generated.
	November 11th Ebert agreed to an Armistice (War was over).
	Arrangements made to assemble in Paris (Versailles) in January 1919 to begin Peace negotiations.
	32 Nations assembled in Versailles – German delegates not permitted into the negotiations.
What were Clemenceau's aims & why?	Security and Revenge.
	Germany had invaded France twice in 50 years – wanted a weak Germany to reduce the threat to France.
	Revenge – for the devastation wreaked on France (Esp. N. France – farmland the size of Wales rendered useless) & loss of life (1.4 million).
	Ideally – Rhineland to become an Independent & neutral state (creating a clear buffer between France & Germany)
What were Wilson's aims & why?	President described as an 'idealist' by Europeans. (14 POINTS) Wanted European 'reconciliation' over revenge.
	Main ideas 'self-determination', a League of Nations & world disarmament.
	'Fair' but 'Just' Peace – not interested in BLAME.
	USA not in war until 1917 – only lost c 100,000 men and not fought on US soil
What were Lloyd George's aims & why?	Similar to Wilson – 'Fair but Just' Peace, but British public wanted 'more'. (Had to give the British public what they wanted, or risk losing power)

	<p>'Hang the Kaiser' & 'Make Germany Pay' were 'popular slogans in Britain!</p>
	<p>Reparations important – GB had spent over £8 billion on the war.</p>
	<p>Weak German Navy – so it was no threat to Britain & her Colonies (Empire) BUT – economically Britain needed Germany for economic reasons – future trade.</p>
	<p>L-G worried about Communism (Russian Revolution in 1917) – Germany must not be made so weak so as to fall to it. Germany would be a 'buffer' to the spread of communism.</p>
What were the main military terms of the Treaty of Versailles?	<p>German army limited to 100,000 volunteers – so NO conscription. No armoured vehicles, tanks, aircraft or poison gas. No General Staff (Senior officers that 'plan for war') Rhineland demilitarised (To give France a buffer zone)</p>
	<p>Navy limited to 36 ships – of which 6 could be battleships. 15,000 naval personnel No submarines</p>
Describe the Territorial terms of the Treaty of Versailles?	<p>In total Germany lost 10% of land to other European countries.</p>
	<p>Alsace Lorraine returned to France (This was expected).</p>
	<p>Posen, West Prussia and Upper Silesia to Poland.</p>
	<p>All German overseas colonies taken away (Mandated to GB & France). Eupen & Malmedy to Belgium.</p>
	<p>Northern Schleswig to Denmark & Hultchin to newly formed Czechoslovakia (That worked out well!)</p>
Describe the War Guilt Clause.	<p>Clause 231 - Germany (& her allies) responsible for starting the War.</p>
	<p>Also responsible for all of the loss and damage incurred by the Allied Countries.</p>
	<p>Was the 'legal' basis on which reparations would be imposed.</p>
	<p>Bitterly resented by the German people who regarded it a 'national humiliation'.</p>
Describe the economic terms of the Treaty of	<p>Reparations set at £6.6 billion in 1921</p>
	<p>Paid in gold, livestock and commodities such as coal & wood (e.g telegraph poles)</p>

Versailles.	Saar coalfields – France permitted to mine them for 15 years.
	Coal fields in Upper Silesia (lost to Poland)
	No Anschluss with Austria (Prevent economic growth)
Where the Big 3 'satisfied' with the Treaty?	<p>Debateable.</p> <p>YES: Wilson 3 Empires broken up (German, Habsburg & Turkish) – SelfDetermination being applied. Got League of Nations.</p> <p>NO: Blame & 'heavy' reparations.</p> <p>Overall: Treaty based on 'punishment' not 'reconciliation' – so disappointed.</p>
	<p>YES: Clemenceau – War Guilt, reparations, exploitation of Saar coalfields, Germany disarmed & weakened , No Anschluss – sense of Germany being 'punished'.</p> <p>NO: Rhineland not made an Independent State, did not get the Saar permanently, reparations could have been bigger.</p>
	<p>YES: Lloyd George – Military imitations on Germany esp. Navy, reparations & received German Colonies as mandates.</p> <p>NO: 'Worried' Germany may have been weakened too much to be able to prevent communism and felt they had not achieved a lasting peace. He said they would need to fight another war in 25 years at three times the cost</p>
How & why did Germany object to the Treaty?	Had 'hoped' by becoming a democratic republic that the 14 Points would apply.
	Argued economic terms were 'unbearable' burden'. (This is debatable, but it's what they felt)
	War Guilt – 'assumed' not 'proven' (There was no independent enquiry into the causes of the war)
	Wilson had called for world disarmament – Germany forced to disarm whilst its neighbours such as France did not.
	12.5% of the German Population (8 million) now lived under foreign rule – argued self-determination not being applied to them.
	DIKTAT – location, Paris was not neutral and German delegates not permitted any say in the talks. Not a 'negotiated peace' – imposed on them.
	Being treated as a 'pariah' (Outcast') Humiliation e.g 231. France just taking an opportunity to humiliate Germany in the great game of 'power politics.

	<p>Left defenceless & vulnerable because of the military restrictions.</p> <p>Not allowed to join the League of nations (senseless punishment)</p>
<p>What was the impact of the Treaty on Germany to 1923?</p>	<p>Political – The New Weimar Republic associated with defeat in War and accepting the terms of the Treaty. (Stab in the back myth) damages ‘democracy’.</p> <p>The German Government under Philip Scheidemann resigned – he said ‘may the hand wither that signs this Treaty.’</p> <p>Newspapers filled with ‘anger’ at the Versailles DIKTAT & reparations.</p> <p>The Germans scuttled their Navy rather than hand it over to the British. (Scapa Flow)</p> <p>Damaged German national pride – gave ‘extremists’ (Like Hitler and the NSDAP) plenty to attack the New Republic with – thereby weakening democracy in Germany.</p> <p>In 1920 Dr, Wolfgang Kapp, leading a group of Freikorps, attempted a Putsch in protest at the harsh terms.</p> <p>Economically – reparations increased Germany’s war debt. Exacerbated inflation.</p>
	1922 Germany defaulted on reparations payments.
	France & Belgium occupied the Ruhr (Jan 1923).
	The German government ordered ‘passive resistance’ (Workers went on strike)
	The Government continued to pay the workers, but inflation got out of control –leading to hyper-inflation’.
	The French occupiers killed 130 Germans. (Brutal occupation)
	Hitler attempted his ‘Beerhall Putsch’ in Munich (November)
	Forced Germans (Under Gustav Stresemann) to negotiate a ‘settlement’ with the French.
<p>What were the reactions to the Treaty of Versailles from the Public?</p>	
<p>Britain</p>	<p>opinion in Britain was that the terms were fair and should probably have been more severe.</p>
	<p>British newspapers suggested that Germany would no longer threaten world peace.</p>
	<p>Any complaints by the Germans were dismissed as trickery and play-acting. (No sympathy for Germany)</p>

	<p>When Prime Minister David Lloyd George returned from Paris in June 1919, he received a hero's welcome.</p> <p>King George V came out to meet him at the railway station, which was completely unheard of in British history.</p>
France	<p>Reactions in France were mixed.</p> <p>People approved of the reparations that Germany had to pay. They also liked the fact that Germany's borders with France (the Rhineland) would be demilitarised.</p> <p>They appreciated that the coalmines of the Saar would bring prosperity to France instead of Germany. They also believed that the League of Nations would be a powerful force for peace. It would protect France if Germany recovered and tried to act aggressively again.</p> <p>However, there was a strong sense that Germany still threatened France. Many French people looked at the terrible cost of the war and believed that France had suffered far more than Germany and could afford to pay more.</p> <p>Soon after the Treaty, Clemenceau stood for election as President of France.</p> <p>He was outraged when other candidates stood against him. It was then that he realised how bitter many people were about the Treaty</p>
USA	<p>In the USA reactions to the Treaty were generally negative</p> <p>Many Americans felt that the Treaty was unfair on Germany – believing that WWI was firstly a clash of European Empires.</p> <p>More importantly, they felt that Britain and France were making themselves rich at Germany's expense and that the USA should not be helping them to do this.</p> <p>President Wilson led the Democratic Party. However, his rivals in the Republican Party dominated the US Congress. They used the Treaty as an opportunity to criticise Wilson</p> <p>Americans were also uneasy about Wilson's scheme for a League of Nations.</p> <p>They were concerned that belonging to the League would drag the USA into international disputes that were not their concern.</p> <p>In the end, the Congress rejected the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations</p>
Was the Treaty of Versailles 'justifiable'?	

YES	Germany only accepted the Fourteen Points when it was clear they were losing the war.
	In the harsh Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (March 1918), the Germans took away 34% of Russia's population and 50% of its industry and made them pay 300 million gold roubles in reparations.
	Clemenceau wanted the Treaty to be much harsher, with Germany broken up into smaller states, and the Saar being annexed & £44 billion in reparations - but Wilson stopped this happening.
	Lloyd George was put under immense pressure by the British public and Parliament to demand higher reparations and attacked in the Daily Mail when he 'settled' with c. £6 billion.
	The reparations payments cost Germany only 2% of its annual production. They could afford reparations & reparations were less than the British war debt.
	Germany's main economic problem was not reparations but war debt, which it had planned to pay by winning the war and making other countries pay reparations
	In 1924, Germany received huge loans from the USA to help its economy recover.(800 million Marks)
	The years 1924-29 were prosperous for Germany. For example, Germany produced twice as much steel as Britain in 1925
NO	John Maynard Keynes, a British economist criticised the Treaty for its economic implications for Europe. He argued the reparations would lead to financial collapse of Germany – said if Germany is to be 'milked', she must not first of all be ruined".
	Also argued that the Treaty did nothing to improve relations between Germany and her neighbour, especially France + Germany not permitted to join the League of nations. Antagonism was made more likely in the future.
	If self-determination was a guiding principle, it was not properly applied to Germany as they lost 12.5% of their population.
	The fact that Germany had become a democratic state was ignored – this weakened the foundations of German democracy. (Allies blinded by their focus on 'punishment') All it did was to create the foundations of a new German nationalism.
	None the 'Big Three' was actually satisfied with the outcome – and the US Congress even rejected the Treaty and the league of Nations – thus implying how bad it was.

	<p>War Guilt was not proven – all European countries were ‘in part’ responsible for war. E.g colonial rivalry, arms race, failure of diplomacy etc</p>
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