

Cambridge  
IGCSE®

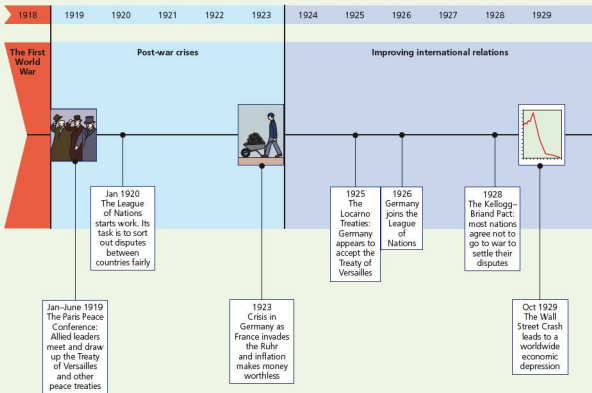
# Modern World History

Option B: The 20th century



# The Inter-War Years, 1919–39

## PART 1



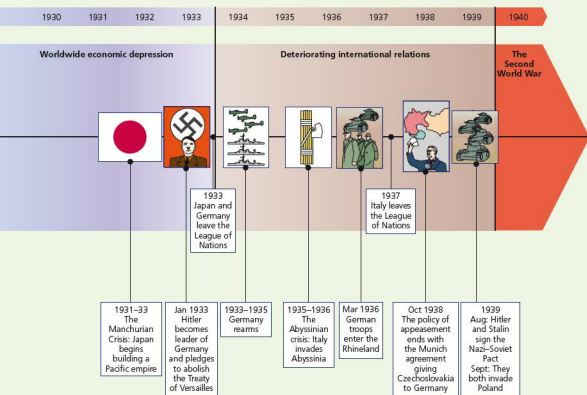
## Focus

Chapters 1–3 of this book cover a turbulent period of European history. After the trauma of the First World War, citizens of European countries were hoping for peace, prosperity and calm. Instead they got revolutions, economic depression, international disputes, dictatorships, and in the end a Second World War. How did this happen?

## In Part I:

- ♦ You will examine the peace treaties at the end of the First World War and consider whether they were fair (Chapter 1). Some would say that the peace treaties created problems for the future; others that they were the fairest they could have been given the very difficult situation after the First World War.
- ♦ The League of Nations was set up in 1920 to prevent war between countries. In Chapter 2 you will evaluate its successes (it did have many) and its failures (which tend to be remembered rather more than the successes) and reach your own view on how we should remember the League – as a success or a failure or something between.
- ♦ Finally in Chapter 3 you will examine the events of the 1930s which finally tipped Europe back into war. It is common to blame Hitler and his foreign policy for this slide to war but this chapter will help you to reach a balanced view that sees what other factors played a part.

The events in this chapters overlap in time. The timeline below gives you an overview of the main events you will be studying. It would be helpful if you made your own copy and added your own notes to it as you study.





### THE RECKONING.

PAN-GERMAN. "MONSTROUS, I CALL IT. WHY, IT'S FULLY A QUARTER OF WHAT WE SHOULD HAVE MADE *THEM* PAY, IF *WE*'D WON."

Post WWI Peace Se...

4 of 21

# 1

## Were the peace treaties of 1919–23 fair?

### FOCUS POINTS

- What were the motives and aims of the Big Three at Versailles?
- Why did all the victors not get everything they wanted?
- What was the impact of the peace treaty on Germany up to 1923?
- Could the treaties be justified at the time?

However long or violent a war is, eventually the opposing sides must make peace. But because war is destructive and leaves a bitter legacy, the peacemaking after a long conflict can be the hardest job of all.

The people who had that role in 1919 had a particularly hard task. The First World War involved more countries, using more powerful weapons, causing greater casualties and physical destruction, than any war before it. The war had bankrupted some countries. It led to revolutions in others. There was bitterness and resentment.

In this post-war atmosphere almost everyone agreed that part of the job of the peacemakers was to avoid another war like it – but no one agreed how to do that.

Any treaty is a balancing act. The peacemakers have to keep the victors happy but ensure that the defeated country accepts the terms of the peace. Was it really possible to produce a treaty which all sides would have seen as fair? That's the key question you will have to think about in this chapter.

You are going to investigate what happened when these peacemakers got together to draw up the peace treaties.

You will focus on

- ♦ what the peacemakers were hoping to achieve
- ♦ how they worked
- ♦ what they decided
- ♦ why they decided it.

Then you will reach conclusions about the key question – how 'fair' were the treaties they came up with, which means thinking about:

- ♦ whether people at the time thought the treaties were fair, and why or why not
- ♦ whether historians (with the benefit of hindsight) think they were fair.

### And remember...

the peace process was not just about Germany. Between 1919 and 1923 the peacemakers drew up four treaties (one for each of the defeated powers) although in this chapter you are going to focus most on the Treaty which dealt with Germany: the Treaty of Versailles.

◀ This British cartoon was published in 1919 shortly after the terms of the Treaty of Versailles had been announced. A German man is holding the treaty terms saying that Germany has to pay for the damage caused by the war.

- 1 Does he think the Treaty is fair? Why or why not?
- 2 Does the cartoonist think the Treaty is fair? Why or why not?
- 3 What is the message of this cartoon?

## Profile

**Woodrow Wilson**  
(President of the USA)



### Background

- Born 1856.
- Became a university professor.
- First entered politics in 1910.
- Became President in 1912 and was re-elected in 1916.
- From 1914 to 1917 he concentrated on keeping the USA out of the war.
- Once the USA had joined the war in 1917, he drew up the **Fourteen Points** as the basis for ending the war fairly, so that future wars could be avoided.

### Character

- An idealist and a reformer.
- As President, he had campaigned against corruption in politics and business. However, he had a poor record with regard to the rights of African Americans.
- He was obstinate. Once he made his mind up on an issue he was almost impossible to shift.

## High hopes for peace

Looking back it may seem that the peacemakers in 1919 had an impossible job. But that is not how people saw it at the time. There was great optimism. One of the main reasons for these high hopes was the American President Woodrow Wilson.

In 1918 Wilson made a speech outlining **Fourteen Points** (see Factfile), which were to be the guidelines for a just and lasting peace treaty to end conflict.

When he arrived in Europe for the Paris Peace Conference, Wilson was seen almost as a saintly figure. Newspaper reports described wounded soldiers in Italy trying to kiss the hem of his cloak and in France peasant families kneeling to pray as his train passed by.

## Wilson's ideas

How did Wilson think the peacemakers could build a better and more peaceful world?

- **Don't be too harsh on Germany.** Wilson did believe Germany should be punished. But he also believed that if Germany was treated harshly, some day it would recover and want revenge. He was also concerned that extremist groups, especially communists, might exploit Germans' resentment and communists might even seize power in Germany as they had in Russia in 1917.
- **Strengthen democracy in defeated countries.** For Wilson the key to peace in Europe was to strengthen democracy in the defeated nations so that their people would not let their leaders cause another war.
- **Give self-determination to small countries that had once been part of the European empires.** He wanted the different peoples of eastern Europe (for example, Poles, Czechs and Slovaks) to rule themselves rather than be part of Austria-Hungary's empire.
- **International co-operation.** Wilson also believed that nations should co-operate to achieve world peace. This would be achieved through a 'League of Nations'. Wilson believed this was the most important of his Fourteen Points.

You can see from these principles that Wilson was an idealist. However he was not a politician who could be pushed around. For example, he refused to cancel the debts owed to the USA by Britain and its Allies so that he could put pressure on them to accept his ideas.

## Focus Task

**What were the motives and aims of the Big Three at Versailles?**

Using the information and sources on pages 6–9, fill out a chart like the one below summarising the aims of the three leaders at the Paris Peace Conference. Leave the fifth column blank. You will need it for a later task.

Leader	Country	Attitude towards Germany	Main aim(s)	
Wilson				
Lloyd George				
Clemenceau				

## Revision Tip

Your completed chart should be perfect for revision on this topic. The basic requirement is to be sure you can name:

- each of the Big Three
- one priority for each of them at the peace talks
- two issues that they disagreed about.



THE MELTING POT.

A cartoon published in 1919 in an Australian newspaper.

### Source Analysis

- 1 Study the main features of Source 1. Who is making the soup? Who is helping him? What are they adding to the mix? What is already in there?
- 2 Would you say Source 2 is optimistic about the prospects for peace? Make sure you can explain your answer by referring to specific features of the cartoon.

### Factfile

#### THE FOURTEEN POINTS (a summary)

- 1 No secret treaties.
- 2 Free access to the seas in peacetime or wartime.
- 3 Free trade between countries.
- 4 All countries to work towards disarmament.
- 5 Colonies to have a say in their own future.
- 6 German troops to leave Russia.
- 7 Independence for Belgium.
- 8 France to regain Alsace–Lorraine.
- 9 Frontier between Austria and Italy to be adjusted.
- 10 Self-determination for the peoples of eastern Europe (they should rule themselves and not be ruled by empires).
- 11 Serbia to have access to the sea.
- 12 Self-determination for the people in the Turkish empire.
- 13 Poland to become an independent state with access to the sea.
- 14 League of Nations to be set up.

### Factfile

#### The Paris Peace Conference, 1919–20

- ▶ The Conference took place in the Palace of Versailles (a short distance from Paris).
- ▶ It lasted for twelve months.
- ▶ Thirty-two nations were supposed to be represented, but no one from the defeated countries was invited.
- ▶ Five treaties were drawn up at the Conference. The main one was the Treaty of Versailles, which dealt with Germany. The other treaties dealt with Germany's allies (see Factfile on page 19).
- ▶ All of the important decisions on the fate of Germany were taken by Clemenceau (Prime Minister of France), Lloyd George (Prime Minister of Britain) and Wilson (President of the USA) who together were known as 'The Big Three'.
- ▶ The Big Three were supported by a huge army of diplomats and expert advisers, but the Big Three often ignored their advice.

## Profile

**David Lloyd George**  
(Prime Minister of Britain)



### Background

- Born 1863.
- First entered politics in 1890.
- He was a very able politician who became Prime Minister in 1916 and remained in power until 1922.

### Character

A realist. As an experienced politician, he knew there would have to be compromise. Thus he occupied the middle ground between the views of Wilson and Clemenceau.

## Did everyone share Wilson's viewpoint?

Not surprisingly, when Wilson talked about lasting peace and justice other leaders agreed with him. After all, who would want to stand up in public and say they were *against* a just and lasting peace?

However, many were doubtful about Wilson's ideas for achieving it. For example 'self-determination': it would be very difficult to give the peoples of eastern Europe the opportunity to rule themselves because they were scattered across many countries. Some people were bound to end up being ruled by people from another group with different customs and a different language. Some historians have pointed out that while Wilson talked a great deal about eastern and central Europe, he did not actually know very much about the area.

There were other concerns as well. So let's look at the aims and views of the other leaders at the Paris Peace Conference: David Lloyd George (from Britain) and Georges Clemenceau (from France).

## Did Lloyd George agree with Wilson?

In public Lloyd George praised Wilson and his ideas. However, in private he was less positive. He complained to one of his officials that Wilson came to Paris like a missionary to rescue the European savages with his little sermons and lectures.

He agreed with Wilson on many issues, particularly that Germany should be punished but not too harshly. He did not want Germany to seek revenge in the future and possibly start another war.

Like Wilson he was deeply concerned that a harsh treaty might lead to a communist revolution like the one in Russia in 1917. He also wanted Britain and Germany to begin trading with each other again. Before the war, Germany had been Britain's second largest trading partner. British people might not like it, but the fact was that trade with Germany meant jobs in Britain.

However, unlike Wilson, Lloyd George had the needs of the British empire in mind. He wanted Germany to lose its navy and its colonies because they threatened the British empire.

### SOURCE 2

*We want a peace which will be just, but not vindictive. We want a stern peace because the occasion demands it, but the severity must be designed, not for vengeance, but for justice. Above all, we want to protect the future against a repetition of the horrors of this war.*

Lloyd George speaking to the House of Commons before the Peace Conference.

### SOURCE 3

*If I am elected, Germany is going to pay . . . I have personally no doubt we will get everything that you can squeeze out of a lemon, and a bit more. I propose that every bit of [German-owned] property, movable and immovable, in Allied and neutral countries, whether State property or private property, should be surrendered by the Germans.*

Sir Eric Geddes, a government minister, speaking to a rally in the general election campaign, December 1918.

## Source Analysis ▲

- 1 In what ways are Sources 2 and 3 different?
- 2 Are there any ways in which they are similar?

## Profile

### Georges Clemenceau (Prime Minister of France)



#### Background

- Born 1841 (he was aged 77 when the Paris Conference began).
- First entered French politics in 1871.
- Was Prime Minister of France from 1906 to 1909.
- From 1914 to 1917 he was very critical of the French war leaders. In November 1917 he was elected to lead France through the last year of the war.

#### Character

A hard, tough politician with a reputation for being uncompromising. He had seen his country invaded twice by the Germans, in 1870 and in 1914. He was determined not to allow such devastation ever again.

## Pressures on Lloyd George

Lloyd George faced huge public pressures at home for a harsh treaty (see Source 2). People in Britain were not sympathetic to Germany in any way. They had suffered over 1 million casualties in the fighting as well as food shortages and other hardships at home. They had been fed anti-German propaganda for four years. They had also seen how Germany had treated Russia in 1918 when Russia surrendered. Under the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk Germany had stripped Russia of 25 per cent of its population and huge areas of Russia's best agricultural land.

Lloyd George had just won the 1918 election in Britain by promising to 'make Germany pay', even though he realised the dangers of this course of action. So Lloyd George had to balance these pressures at home with his desire not to leave Germany wanting revenge.

### Think!

One of the ideas put forward at the Paris Conference was that Germany should lose some of its key industrial areas. How would you expect Lloyd George to react to a proposal like this? You could present your answer as a short speech by Lloyd George or in a paragraph of text.

## Did Clemenceau agree with Wilson?

In public, Clemenceau of course agreed with Wilson's aim for a fair and lasting peace. However, he found Wilson very hard to work with. While he did not publicly criticise the Fourteen Points, Clemenceau once pointed out that even God had only needed Ten Commandments!

The major disagreement was over Germany. Clemenceau and other French leaders saw the Treaty as an opportunity to cripple Germany so that it could not attack France again.

## Pressures on Clemenceau

France had suffered enormous damage to its land, industry, people – and self-confidence. Over two-thirds of the men who had served in the French army had been killed or injured. The war affected almost an entire generation.

By comparison, Germany seemed to many French people as powerful and threatening as ever. German land and industry had not been as badly damaged as France's. France's population (around 40 million) was in decline compared to Germany's (around 75 million).

The French people wanted a treaty that would punish Germany and weaken it as much as possible. The French President (Poincaré) even wanted Germany broken up into a collection of smaller states, but Clemenceau knew that the British and Americans would not agree to this.

Clemenceau was a realist and knew he would probably be forced to compromise on some issues. However, he had to show he was aware of public opinion in France.

### Think!

Here are some extracts from the demands made by France before the Peace Conference started:

- a) German armed forces to be banned from the bank of the River Rhine (which bordered France).
- b) Germany to pay compensation for damage done by German forces in lands they occupied during the war.
- c) Germany's armed forces to be severely limited.

Which of these terms do you think made it into the final Treaty? Give each term a percentage chance and keep a note of your guesses. You will find out if you were right later in the chapter.

# How did the peace-making process actually work?

In theory, the major issues like borders and reparations (compensation for war damage) were discussed in detail by all the delegates at the conference (see Source 4) – over 32 leaders with all their officials and advisers! As Source 5 shows, it quickly became impossible to consult everyone.

## SOURCE 4



An official painting showing the delegates at the Paris Peace Conference at work.

## Source Analysis ▲

Study Source 4 carefully and then discuss these questions.

- 1 Why was this picture published?
- 2 What impression was it trying to give of the conference and the delegates?
- 3 After studying Source 4 and the other information in this section, do you think the impression is accurate? Make sure you can explain your view.
- 4 If you were using this image to introduce a documentary on the Treaty of Versailles, what main points would you make in the commentary that the viewer would hear?

## SOURCE 5

*'Wilson the Just' quickly disappointed expectations. Everything about him served to disillusion those he dealt with. All too soon the President was qualifying the Fourteen Points with 'Four Principles' and modifying them with 'Five Particulars'. Finding that one principle conflicted with another, he made compromising declarations about both. The Big Three abandoned Wilson's principle of open covenants openly arrived at, consulting others only when they needed expert advice. They were occasionally to be seen crowding round their maps on the hearth rug. Sometimes they agreed and, according to one British official 'were so pleased with themselves for doing so that they quite forgot to tell anyone what the agreement was'. Sometimes they almost came to blows. Lloyd George made rapid, quick fire points but they were ineffective against Clemenceau's granite obstinacy. Even Wilson's self-important confidence crashed against the rock of Clemenceau ... Clemenceau was delighted when the American President fell ill. He suggested that Lloyd George should bribe Wilson's doctor to make the illness last.*

Historian Piers Brendon writing in 2006.

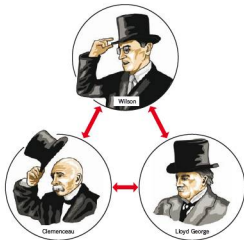
It soon became clear it would be impossible to agree terms that everyone would agree about.

- **Clemenceau clashed with Wilson over many issues.** The USA had not suffered nearly as badly as France in the war. Clemenceau resented Wilson's more generous attitude to Germany. They disagreed over what to do about Germany's Rhineland and coalfields in the Saar. In the end, Wilson had to give way on these issues. In return, Clemenceau and Lloyd George did give Wilson what he wanted in eastern Europe, despite their reservations about his idea of self-determination. However, this mainly affected the other four treaties, not the Treaty of Versailles.
- **Clemenceau also clashed with Lloyd George,** particularly over Lloyd George's desire not to treat Germany too harshly. For example, Clemenceau said that 'if the British are so anxious to appease Germany they should look overseas and make colonial, naval or commercial concessions'. Clemenceau felt that the British were quite happy to treat Germany fairly in Europe, where France rather than Britain was most under threat. However, they were less happy to allow Germany to keep its navy and colonies, which would be more of a threat to Britain.
- **Wilson and Lloyd George did not always agree either.** Lloyd George was particularly unhappy with point 2 of the Fourteen Points, allowing all nations access to the seas. Similarly, Wilson's views on people ruling themselves were somewhat threatening to the British government, for the British empire ruled millions of people all across the world from London.

## Think!

### Who said what about whom?

Here are some statements that were made by the Big Three at the Paris Peace Conference. Your task is to decide which leader made the statement and also who he was talking about. You will need to be able to explain your answer.



- He is too anxious to preserve his empire to want self-determination for colonies.
- His country has been ruling the waves for too long to accept the need for freedom of the seas.
- He wants to wreck a country which in a few years could be a valuable trading partner and a source of vital jobs.
- Freedom of the seas is all very well but who or what will protect my country's ships and trade?
- What does he know about colonies and how they should be ruled? He probably doesn't know where most of them are!
- How can I work with a man who thinks he is the first leader in 2000 years who knows anything about peace?
- If he is so anxious to make concessions to the Germans then they should look overseas and make naval or colonial concessions.
- He is stuck in the past. If he gets his way Germany will be left bitter and vengeful and there will be another war in a few years.
- He is very happy to give concessions to Germany in areas which do not threaten his country.
- If you carry on annoying me I am going to punch you!
- There are new, better ways of making a peace agreement. He should accept that all states should disarm.
- He must make concessions to the Germans, perhaps over the Rhineland or Alsace-Lorraine.

# The terms of the Treaty of Versailles

None of the Big Three was happy with the eventual terms of the Treaty. After months of negotiation, each of them had to compromise on some of their aims, otherwise there would never have been a treaty. The main terms can be divided into five areas.

## 1 War guilt

This clause was simple but was seen by the Germans as extremely harsh. Germany had to accept the blame for starting the war.

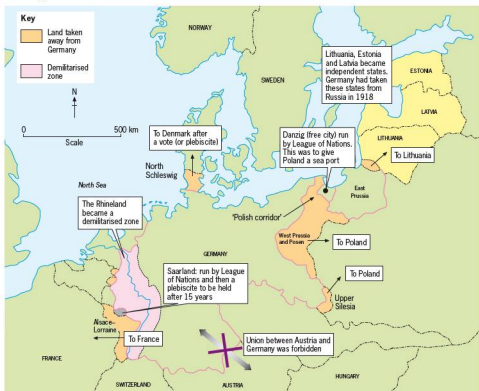
## 2 Reparations

The major powers agreed, without consulting Germany, that Germany had to pay reparations to the Allies for the damage caused by the war. The exact figure was not agreed until 1921 when it was set at £6,600 million – an enormous figure. If the terms of the payments had not later been changed under the Young Plan in 1929 (see page 236), Germany would not have finished paying this bill until 1984.

## 3 German territories and colonies

**a) Germany's European borders** were very extensive, and the section dealing with German territory in Europe was a complicated part of the Treaty. You can see the detail in Source 6. In addition to these changes, the Treaty also forbade Germany to join together (Anschluss) with its former ally Austria.

### SOURCE 6



Map showing the impact of the Treaty of Versailles on the borders of Europe.

**4 Germany's armed forces**

**b) Germany's overseas empire** was taken away. It had been one of the causes of bad relations between Britain and Germany before the war. Former German colonies such as Cameroon became mandates controlled by the League of Nations, which effectively meant that France and Britain controlled them.

The size and power of the German army was a major concern, especially for France. The Treaty therefore restricted German armed forces to a level well below what they had been before the war.

- The army was limited to 100,000 men.
- Conscription was banned – soldiers had to be volunteers.
- Germany was not allowed armoured vehicles, submarines or aircraft.
- The navy could have only six battleships.
- The Rhineland became a demilitarised zone. This meant that no German troops were allowed into that area. The Rhineland was important because it was the border area between Germany and France (see Source 6).

**5 League of Nations**

- Previous methods of keeping peace had failed and so the League of Nations was set up as an international 'police force'. (You will study the League in detail in Chapter 2.)
- Germany was not invited to join the League until it had shown that it was a peace-loving country.

**Focus Task A****Why did the victors not get everything they wanted?**

- 1 Work in threes. Look back at the profiles of Clemenceau, Wilson and Lloyd George on pages 6, 8 and 9. Choose one each. Study the terms of the Treaty on these two pages. Think about:

- ◆ which terms of the Treaty would please your chosen leader and why
- ◆ which terms would displease him and why
- ◆ how far he seemed to have achieved his aims.

Report your findings to your partners.

- 2 Look back at the chart you compiled on page 6. There should be a blank fifth column. Put the heading 'How they felt about the Treaty' and fill it in for each leader with a one-sentence summary.

- 3 a) Choose one of the following phrases to finish off this sentence:

The victors did not all get what they wanted because . . .

- ◆ Clemenceau bullied Wilson and Lloyd George into agreeing to a harsh treaty.
- ◆ the leaders' aims were too different – they could not all have got what they wanted and someone was bound to be disappointed.
- ◆ public opinion in their home countries affected the leaders' decisions.

- b) Write a paragraph to explain why you chose that phrase.

- c) Write two more paragraphs to explain whether there is evidence to support the other two.

**Revision Tip**

The more you know about the Treaty of Versailles, the more it will help you. Make sure you can remember one or two key points under each of these headings: Blame, Reparations, Arms, Territory.

**Focus Task B****Was the Treaty of Versailles fair?**

It is important to make up your own mind about this key question and be able to back up your view with evidence and arguments. So place yourself on this scale and write some sentences to explain your position. This is provisional. You will return to it again.

The Big Three wasted a golden opportunity to achieve a fair and lasting peace settlement.

The Big Three were in a no-win situation from the start.



# How did Germans react to the Treaty?

The terms of the Treaty were announced on 7 May to a horrified German nation.

## War guilt and reparations

Germany had to accept the blame for starting the war and therefore had to pay reparations.

- This 'war guilt' clause was particularly hated. Germans did not feel they had started the war. They felt at the very least that blame should be shared.
- They were bitter that Germany was expected to pay for all the damage caused by the war even though the German economy was severely weakened.

## Disarmament

The German army was reduced to 100,000 men. It could have no air force, and only a tiny navy.

Germans felt these terms were very unfair. An army of 100,000 was very small for a country of Germany's size and the army was a symbol of German pride.

Also, despite Wilson's Fourteen Points calling for disarmament, none of the Allies were being asked or forced to disarm in the same way.

## German territories

Germany certainly lost a lot of territory.

- 10 per cent of its land in Europe
- All of its overseas colonies
- 12.5 per cent of its population
- 16 per cent of its coalfields and almost half of its iron and steel industry.

This was a major blow to German pride, and to its economy. Both the Saar and Upper Silesia were important industrial areas.

Meanwhile, as Germany was losing colonies, the British and French were increasing their empires by taking control of German territories in Africa.

## The Fourteen Points and the League of Nations

- To most Germans, the treatment of Germany was not in keeping with Wilson's Fourteen Points. For example, while self-determination was given to countries such as Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, German-speaking peoples were being hived off into new countries such as Czechoslovakia to be ruled by non-Germans. *Anschluss* (union) with Austria was forbidden.
- Germany felt further insulted by not being invited to join the League of Nations.

## GERMAN REACTIONS

### Non-representation

Germans were angry that their government was not represented at the peace talks and that they were being forced to accept a harsh treaty without any choice or even comment. Germans did not feel they had lost the war so they should not have been treated as a defeated country.

The government that took Germany to war in 1914 was overthrown in a revolution and the new democratic government in Germany was hoping for fair and equal treatment from the Allies. When the terms were announced the new German government refused to sign the Treaty and the German navy sank its own ships in protest. At one point, it looked as though war might break out again. But what could the German leader Friedrich Ebert do? Germany would quickly be defeated if it tried to fight. Reluctantly Ebert agreed to accept the terms of the Treaty and it was signed on 28 June 1919.

## SOURCE 7

THE TREATY IS ONLY A SCRAP OF PAPER! We will seek vengeance for the shame of 1919.

German newspaper Deutsche Zeitung,  
June 1919.

## SOURCE 8



Cartoon from the German magazine *Simplicissimus*, June 1919. The caption in the magazine read: 'The Allies are burying Germany with the peace terms'.

## Source Analysis ▲

Study Source 8. If you did not know this source was German would you be able to work this out? Explain how.

## Focus Task

**What was the impact of the peace treaty on Germany up to 1923?**

Summarise the impact of the Treaty under each of these headings:

- a) Political
- b) Economic
- c) Morale

## Revision Tip

There are two problems Germany faced in the period 1919–23:

- ♦ political violence, and
- ♦ hyperinflation.

Make sure you can explain how each one was linked to the Treaty of Versailles.

## The impact of the Treaty on Germany

The Treaty of Versailles had a profound effect on Germany for the next ten years and more. The Treaty was universally resented. The historian Zara Steiner contends that hatred of the Versailles Treaty was almost the only issue which all Germans in this period agreed on.

## Political violence

Right-wing opponents of Ebert's government could not bear the Treaty. In 1920 they attempted a revolution. This rising, called the Kapp Putsch, was defeated by a general strike by Berlin workers which paralysed essential services such as power and transport. It saved Ebert's government but it added to the chaos in Germany – and the bitterness of Germans towards the Treaty.

Although Kapp was defeated, political violence remained a constant threat. There were numerous political assassinations or attempted assassinations. In the summer of 1922 Germany's foreign minister Walther Rathenau was murdered by extremists. Then in November 1923 Adolf Hitler led an attempted rebellion in Munich, known as the Munich Putsch (see page 239). Hitler's rebellion was defeated but he was got off lightly when he was put on trial and it was clear many Germans shared his hatred of Versailles. Over the next ten years he exploited German resentment of the Treaty of Versailles to gain support for himself and his Nazi party.

## Conflict in the Ruhr

Under the Treaty Germany agreed to pay \$6,600 million in reparations to the Allies. The first instalment of \$50 million was paid in 1921, but in 1922 nothing was paid. Ebert tried to negotiate concessions from the Allies, but the French ran out of patience. In 1923 French and Belgian soldiers entered the Ruhr region and simply took what was owed to them in the form of raw materials and goods. This was quite legal under the Treaty of Versailles.

The results of the occupation of the Ruhr were disastrous for Germany. The German government ordered the workers to go on strike so that they were not producing anything for the French to take. The French reacted harshly, killing over 100 workers and expelling over 100,000 protesters from the region. More importantly, the strike meant that Germany had no goods to trade, and no money to buy things with. This in turn led to hyperinflation (see below).

There is much debate about the developments in the Ruhr. Most Germans believed that the crisis arose because the reparations were too high and Germany was virtually bankrupted. Many commentators at the time (including the British and French leaders) claimed that Germany was quite able to afford reparations, it just did not want to pay! Some historians argue that Germany stopped paying reparations in order to create a crisis and force the international community to revise the terms of the Treaty. The debate goes on, but there is no doubt that most Germans at the time believed the Treaty was responsible for the crisis and that the reparations were far too high.

## Hyperinflation

The government solved the problem of not having enough money by simply printing extra money, but this caused a new problem – hyperinflation. The money was virtually worthless so prices shot up. The price of goods could rise between joining the back of a queue in a shop and reaching the front (see page 234)! Wages began to be paid daily instead of weekly.

Some Germans gained from this disaster. The government and big industrialists were able to pay off their huge debts in worthless marks. But others, especially pensioners, were practically wiped out. A prosperous middle-class family would find that their savings, which might have bought a house in 1921, by 1923 would not even buy a loaf of bread.

Germany eventually recovered from this disaster, but it left a bitter memory. The bitterness was directed towards the Treaty of Versailles. It is no coincidence that when Germany faced economic problems again in 1929 many Germans believed Hitler's claims that the Treaty was to blame and they should support his plans to overturn it.

## Summary

While the treaty did cause some genuine problems for Germany the important thing to realise is that many Germans blamed it for other problems which had little to do with it. This resentment was then in turn exploited by extreme groups in Germany to gain power and influence for themselves.

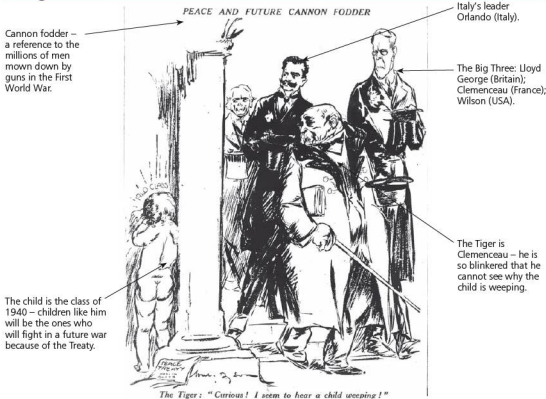
## How was the Treaty seen at the time?

### It was unfair!

None of the Big Three was happy with the Treaty (although for different reasons) and some of the diplomats who helped shape the Treaty were dissatisfied.

Some commentators at the time believed that the Treaty was unfair and unjust (see Source 9 for example).

#### SOURCE 9



A cartoon published in the socialist newspaper *The Daily Herald* in 1919.

#### SOURCE 10

*The historian, with every justification, will come to the conclusion that we were very stupid men . . . We arrived determined that a Peace of justice and wisdom should be negotiated; we left the conference conscious that the treaties imposed upon our enemies were neither just nor wise.*

Harold Nicolson, a British official who attended the talks.

Source 9 is probably the most famous cartoon produced about the Treaty of Versailles. The artist, Will Dyson, thought that the peacemakers were blind and selfish and as a result they produced a disastrous treaty that would cause another terrible war. It is a powerful cartoon. Because history proved it right (the cartoonist even gets the date of the Second World War almost right) this cartoon has been reproduced many times ever since, including in millions of school textbooks.

Another powerful critic of the Treaty was a British economist, John Maynard Keynes. He wrote a very critical book called *The Economic Consequences of The Peace* published in 1919. This book was widely read and accepted and has influenced the way people have looked at the Treaty.

It is easy to think that everyone felt this way about the Treaty – but they did not!

## It was fair!

### SOURCE 11

*The Germans have given in ... They writhe at the obligation imposed on them to confess their guilt ... Some of the conditions, they affirm, are designed to deprive the German people of its honour ... They thought little of the honour of the nations whose territories they defiled with their barbarous and inhuman warfare for more than three awful years.*

British newspaper *The Times*, 24 June 1919.

### SOURCE 13

#### TERMS OF TREATY BETTER THAN GERMANY DESERVES WAR MAKERS MUST BE MADE TO SUFFER

*Germany's chickens are coming home to roost, and she is making no end of a song about it. That was expected, but it will not help her much ... If Germany had her deserts, indeed, there would be no Germany left to bear any burden at all; she would be wiped off the map of Europe ... Stern justice would demand for Germany a punishment 10 times harder than any she will have to bear ...*

*The feeling in this country is not that Germany is being too hardly dealt by, but that she is being let off too lightly.*

From the British newspaper *The People*, May 1919.

### Source Analysis

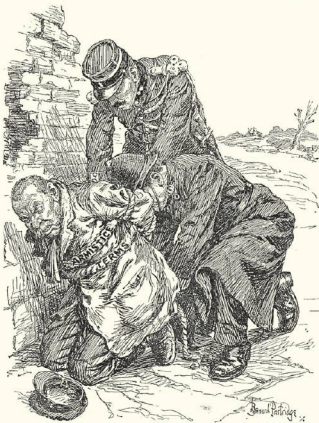
- Study Source 12. On your own copy, analyse Source 12 the way we have analysed Source 9 on page 16.
- What does Source 13 reveal about British opinions on the Treaty?

*At the time* German complaints about the Treaty mostly fell on deaf ears. There were celebrations in Britain and France. If ordinary people in Britain had any reservations about the Treaty it was more likely to be that it was not harsh enough.

- Many people felt that the Germans were themselves operating a double standard. Their call for fairer treatment did not square with the harsh way they had treated Russia in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in 1918. Versailles was a much less harsh treaty than Brest-Litovsk.
- There was also the fact that Germany's economic problems, although real, were partly self-inflicted. Other states had raised taxes to pay for the war. The Kaiser's government had not done this. It had simply allowed debts to mount up because it had planned to pay Germany's war debts by extracting reparations from the defeated states.

### SOURCE 12

PUNCELL OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.—PUNCELL 19, 1919.



#### GIVING HIM ROPE?

GERMAN GENERAL (to Allied Police).—HERE, I SAY, STOP! YOU'RE HURTING ME! (And) IF I ONLY WHINE ENOUGH I MAY BE ABLE TO WHIGGLE OUT OF THIS YET."

A British cartoon published in 1919.

## How has the Treaty been seen with hindsight?

Looking back at the Treaty from the present day we know that it helped to create the cruel Nazi regime in Germany and helped cause the Second World War. We call this hindsight – when you look back at a historical event and judge it knowing its consequences. You would expect hindsight to affect historians' attitudes to the Treaty and it has – but maybe not exactly as you might expect.

Some historians side with critics of the Treaty and its makers. Others point out that the majority of people outside Germany thought that the Treaty was fair and that a more generous treaty would have been totally unacceptable to public opinion in Britain and France. They highlight that the peacemakers had a very difficult job balancing public opinion in their own countries with visions of a fairer future. Some say that the Treaty may have been the best that could be achieved in the circumstances.

### SOURCE 14

*The Treaty of Versailles has been repeatedly pilloried, most famously in John Maynard Keynes' pernicious but brilliant The Economic Consequences of the Peace, published at the end of 1919 and still the argument underpinning too many current textbooks ... The Treaty of Versailles was not excessively harsh. Germany was not destroyed. Nor was it reduced to a second rank power or permanently prevented from returning to great power status ... With the disintegration of Austria-Hungary and the collapse of Tsarist Russia it left Germany in a stronger strategic position than before the war ... The Versailles Treaty was, nonetheless, a flawed treaty. It failed to solve the problem of both punishing and conciliating a country that remained a great power despite the four years of fighting and a military defeat. It could hardly have been otherwise, given the very different aims of the peacemakers, not to speak of the multiplicity of problems that they faced, many of which lay beyond their competence or control.*

Historian Zara Steiner writing in 2004.

### SOURCE 15

*The peacemakers of 1919 made mistakes, of course. By their offhand treatment of the non-European world they stirred up resentments for which the West is still paying today. They took pains over the borders in Europe, even if they did not draw them to everyone's satisfaction, but in Africa they carried on the old practice of handing out territory to suit the imperialist powers. In the Middle East they threw together peoples, in Iraq most notably, who still have not managed to cohere into a civil society. If they could have done better, they certainly could have done much worse. They tried, even cynical old Clemenceau, to build a better order. They could not foresee the future and they certainly could not control it. That was up to their successors. When war came in 1939, it was a result of twenty years of decisions taken or not taken, not of arrangements made in 1919.*

Historian Margaret MacMillan writing in *Peacemakers*, 2001.

### Focus Task

Look back at your work in Focus Task B on page 13. Have you changed your views after reading the information and sources on these three pages?

## Factfile

### The other peace settlements

#### Treaty of St Germain 1919

- Dealt with Austria.
- Austria's army was limited to 30,000 men and it was forbidden to unite with Germany.
- The Austro-Hungarian empire was broken up, creating a patchwork of new states in central and eastern Europe including Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia.
- Many of these new states contained large minority groups such as the large number of Germans in the Sudetenland area of Czechoslovakia.
- Austria suffered severe economic problems as a result of the Treaty.

#### Treaty of Neuilly 1919

- Dealt with Bulgaria.
- Bulgaria lost land to Greece, Romania and Yugoslavia.
- Army was limited to 20,000 and it had to pay £10 million in reparations.
- Bulgaria was probably treated less harshly than Germany's other allies overall.

#### Treaty of Trianon 1920

- Dealt with Hungary.
- Hungary lost territory to Romania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia.
- Hungary was due to pay reparations but its economy was so weak it never did.

#### Treaty of Sevres 1920

- Dealt with Turkey.
- Turkey lost lands to Bulgaria, Italy and Greece (see Source 16) and also lost much of its empire along with Tunisia and Morocco.
- Armed forces limited to 50,000 men, navy strictly limited and no air force at all.

## The other peace settlements

The Treaty of Versailles dealt with Germany, but Germany had allies in the First World War (Austria–Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey) and there were four other treaties which dealt with them.

The Versailles Treaty usually gets the most attention but these other treaties were important, too. They set out what Europe and the Middle East would look like for the next few decades and in many ways these treaties still have a powerful impact on the world today. Looking at the other treaties may also help you to decide whether you think the Treaty of Versailles was fair. To help with this, we are going to look in more detail at just one other treaty, the Treaty of Sevres.

## The Treaty of Sevres 1920

This Treaty was signed in August 1920. As you can see from Source 16, Turkey lost a substantial amount of territory and its original empire was broken up. Most historians agree it was a harsh treaty. As well as losing the territories shown in Source 16 parts of Turkey were defined as zones of influence controlled by the British, French or Italians. Armenia and Kurdistan became independent regions. Turkey's tax system, finances and budget were to be controlled by the Allies. Turkey had long been a great and proud empire and Turks were angered and humiliated by the terms.

### What were the Allies trying to achieve?

#### SOURCE 16



#### Treaty of Sevres (1920)

Remaining Turkish territory

Possible Kurdish territory

#### Territory ceded to:

Armenia

Greece

France (France also took Tunisia and Morocco in Western North Africa)

Britain

#### Zones of influence

France

Britain

Italy

International control, demilitarised

**What the Allies said in public:**

- All of the Big Three agreed that Turkey's time as a great power had to end.
- Turkey had been unstable for some time. Many of its people (including Greeks, Armenians and Arab peoples) wanted independence so the Treaty should try to establish stable new states in Eastern Europe and the Middle East.
- They agreed that Turkey would be punished for supporting Germany in the war.
- President Wilson was keen for Armenia to become an independent state and that Armenians should rule themselves.

**What was going on behind the scenes:**

- Italy essentially wanted Turkish territory as a reward for supporting the Allies in the First World War.
- France and Britain wanted to strengthen or extend their empires and especially their commercial interests. France, Britain and Italy actually signed a secret Tripartite Agreement in August 1920 in which they effectively protected their commercial interests. Britain was particularly interested in the oilfields of Iraq and already had a large involvement in the oil industry of neighbouring Iran.
- Britain had made promises to Arab peoples in return for their help in the war but was effectively unable or unwilling to honour these promises.

## Did the Treaty bring peace and stability?

The simple answer is no!

Originally the Turkish government intended to accept the Treaty even though almost all Turks were outraged by its terms. However, Turkish nationalists under Mustafa Kemal Pasha set up a new Grand Assembly. They stopped the government signing the treaty and began to reverse the Treaty terms by force. The nationalists were unable to restore the Turkish empire's territories but they drove the Greeks out of Smyrna and forced the French to negotiate withdrawing from Turkish territory. They reached terms with the British over access to the Straits.

Wilson was unable to get support at home for his policies on Armenia. Armenia was forced to abandon its hope of becoming an independent state and opted to become part of the Soviet Union rather than be forced to become part of Turkey. There were many alleged atrocities in the fighting, such as the burning of Smyrna. However, the most controversial was the forced movement and mass killing of Armenians, which today is regarded as genocide by Armenians and most historians although Turkey rejects this claim bitterly.

## Treaty of Lausanne 1923

Eventually the changes that the Turks had brought about were recognised in the Treaty of Lausanne. Smyrna, Anatolia and parts of Thrace became Turkish lands. Turkey's borders were fixed more or less as they are today.

### Revision Tip

It will help you answer questions about the period if you can name at least one of the treaties; who it affected; plus one way it was similar and one way it was different from the Treaty of Versailles.

## Focus Task

### Were the peace treaties fair?

The key question for this topic is 'Were the peace treaties fair?' If you compare the Treaty of Versailles with another treaty it should help you reach a judgement.

- 1 The table below lists various features of the Treaty of Sevres. Work in pairs or small groups and discuss the features and fill out the centre columns of this table to judge whether you think this feature was fair. Use a score of 1–5 where 1 is not at all fair; 5 is very fair.
- 2 Now think about the Treaty of Versailles. See if you can agree on whether Turkey was treated in a similar way to Germany. Make a table with three headings: 'Feature of Sevres'; 'Fair?' (Give reasons); and 'Similar or different to treatment of Germany?' (Give examples). Consider the following features of Sevres:
 

◆ Allies wanted to punish Turkey	◆ Control of Turkey's finances
◆ Allies wanted to achieve peace and stability	◆ Loss of territories
◆ Allies had differing aims and also looked after their own interests	◆ Loss of empire
◆ Treaty terms were imposed on Turkish government	◆ Foreign forces controlling areas of Turkey
◆ Strict controls on Turkish military	◆ Resentment of Turkish people
	◆ Violent resistance against terms
	◆ Renegotiated.
- 3 Now reach your judgement: do you think that the Treaty of Sevres was more or less fair than the Treaty of Versailles? Make sure you can give reasons.

## Keywords

Make sure you know what these terms mean and be able to define them confidently.

### Essential

- ◆ Anschluss
- ◆ Big Three
- ◆ demilitarised zone
- ◆ democracy
- ◆ disarmament
- ◆ Fourteen Points
- ◆ hyperinflation
- ◆ idealist/realist
- ◆ Kapp Putsch
- ◆ League of Nations
- ◆ mandates
- ◆ Paris Peace Conference
- ◆ reparations
- ◆ Rhineland
- ◆ Ruhr
- ◆ Saar
- ◆ self-determination
- ◆ Treaty of Brest-Litovsk
- ◆ Treaty of Versailles
- ◆ war guilt
- ◆ Young Plan

### Useful

- ◆ co-operation
- ◆ conscription
- ◆ free trade
- ◆ general strike
- ◆ hindsight
- ◆ public opinion
- ◆ right-wing
- ◆ secret treaties
- ◆ territories

## Chapter Summary

### The peace treaties after the First World War

- 1 The Paris Peace Conference was set up to sort out what would happen to the defeated countries after the First World War.
- 2 The Conference was dominated by 'The Big Three': Wilson, Clemenceau and Lloyd George representing the USA, France and Britain (the countries that won the war).
- 3 The Big Three did not agree on many things. In particular they disagreed on how to treat Germany, the League of Nations and Wilson's Fourteen Points.
- 4 There were a number of Treaties – one for each of the defeated countries. The Treaty of Versailles was the treaty that dealt with Germany.
- 5 The main terms of the Treaty of Versailles were that Germany accepted blame for starting the war; had to pay reparations; lost land, industry, population and colonies; and was forced to disarm.
- 6 People in Germany were appalled by the Treaty but Germany had no choice but to sign it.
- 7 Germany had many post-war problems such as attempted revolutions and hyperinflation, which they blamed on the Treaty. But the Treaty was not the sole reason for these problems.
- 8 The Treaty also set up a League of Nations whose role was to enforce the Treaty of Versailles and to help prevent another war.
- 9 Opinion on the Treaty of Versailles varied at the time: some people thought it was too lenient on Germany, others that it was too harsh and would lead to Germany wanting revenge.
- 10 The other treaties dealt with Germany's allies and were built on similar principles to the Treaty of Versailles.

## Exam Practice

See pages 168–175 and pages 316–319 for advice on the different types of questions you might face.

- 1 (a) What were the main terms of the Treaty of Versailles? [4]  
 (b) What impact did the Treaty of Versailles have on Germany up to 1923? [6]  
 (c) 'The Treaty of Versailles was fair on Germany.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [10]
- 2 Study Source 12 on page 17. What is the message of the cartoonist? Explain your answer by using details of the source and your own knowledge. [7]
- 3 Study Source 13 on page 17. Does this source prove that the Versailles settlement was fair to Germany? Explain your answer by using details of the source and your own knowledge. [7]