

1918: THE BIG 3/PEACEMAKERS

Georges Clemenceau



Prime Minister of France

World War One was mostly fought in France and Belgium. The north-east of France was badly affected with mines, railways, factories, bridges and farmland destroyed. The French also suffered the most number of deaths. Before the war, there had been long-standing enmity between the French and the Germans, and this only fuelled the French's hatred for the Germans even more. As a result of this, the vast majority of French citizens wanted to **punish** Germany – they wanted **revenge**.

Georges Clemenceau was in agreement with the general public. He wanted to **cripple Germany's economy**, to ensure that she would never become powerful enough to attack France again. He wanted to dramatically reduce the German armed forces and push back Germany's border to east of the River Rhine. This would make Germany defenceless and put France in a much more secure position.

Clemenceau also needed money to re-build his war-torn country. He believed that Germany should pay **compensation** for the physical damage that had occurred as a result of heavy trench warfare.

He was willing to compromise with the other world leaders; however, he was also known as '**The Tiger**' – a sign that he would fight for what his people wanted.

	Fatalities (Deaths), incl civilians
France	1.6 – 1.7 million
Britain	800,000 - 1 million
USA	117,000

David Lloyd George



Prime Minister of Britain

Lloyd George had made an election promise in 1918 that he would 'Make Germany Pay' as he knew this would rally the population of Britain to vote for him. This is because many young British men had been sent over to France and had lost their lives or had been severely injured in the war.

However, he did not have the same personal desire for revenge as Georges Clemenceau and so took a more cautious approach. He was worried that if Germany was made to suffer too much, this would cause long-term economic and political instability. He even predicted that German citizens would seek revenge in the future.

Lloyd George was also very keen to protect Britain's interests abroad, since he was Prime Minister at a time when Britain's empire was at its most powerful, but the war had caused problems in various colonies. He wanted to ensure that Britain continued to have **naval supremacy**, and saw the peace talks as an opportunity to reduce Germany's navy and possibly take control of some of their overseas colonies.

Woodrow Wilson



President of USA

America did not join WW1 until 1917 and before then had made money by selling weapons and ammunition to the Allies. They also suffered the least number of casualties from the war and so the American people were not thirsty for revenge.

Wilson himself was an **idealist** and peacemaker - he wanted to establish a '**League of Nations**' – a peacemaking council, a bit like the UN, which would use diplomacy and trade deals to resolve or diffuse tensions between nations. He also believed in **self-determination**, the notion that countries should be allowed to govern themselves rather than being part of an empire. He also believed in 'freedom of the seas' – meaning that trade ships should have access to wherever they liked, to make trade between nations easier. He put these ideas together into his 'Fourteen Points' plan.

However, the American **senate** had other ideas. They wanted America to follow an 'Isolationist' policy – where they kept out of European affairs. They opposed many of Wilson's ideas.

1918: THE PEACEMAKING CONFERENCE

Wilson's Fourteen Points



Wilson published his Fourteen Points as an ideology that he believed would cause lasting world peace. These included: no secret treaties between nations; collective disarmament (all countries reducing number of weapons); self-determination for countries that had been part of now collapsed empires; an independent Poland, which had access to a sea port; and most importantly, the establishment of the League of Nations.

The Treaty of Versailles



Use the mnemonic 'LAMB' to remember the categories of the Terms of the Treaty of Versailles.

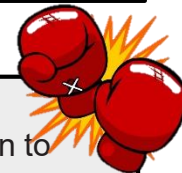
LAND: Germany had to lose all its overseas colonies; they were given over to the League of Nations, meaning they were effectively controlled by Britain and France. They also lost important industrial land, such as the Saar and Danzig. The rich area known as Prussia was split in two with the 'Polish Corridor' (an area of land belonging to Poland). Alsace-Lorraine was also given back to France. Germany was also banned from uniting with Austria in what is known as 'Anschluss'.

ARMY: The German army was reduced to 100,000 men and they were not allowed any tanks. The navy was reduced down to 6 battleships and no submarines. They were not allowed an airforce. The Rhineland area that bordered France had to be demilitarised, meaning they were not allowed to station armed forces there.

MONEY: Germany had to pay £6,600 million in reparations to the Allies; this mainly went to Belgium and France to repair the damage caused to their land and cities. It would be estimated to take until 1988 for Germany to pay this amount of debt.

BLAME: Under Clause 231, Germany and her allies had to take full responsibility for starting the war, even though the truth of the matter was more complex than this. This was the clause that Germans hated the most.

Conflict between Big 3



The aims and ideals of the Big 3 sometimes conflicted. For example:

1. Wilson wanted there to be 'freedom of the seas' whilst Lloyd George wanted Britain to continue to have naval supremacy and therefore dominance over the seas.
2. Clemenceau wanted to significantly reduce Germany's armed forces to weaken them, but Lloyd George wanted Germany to continue having a strong army to act as a 'buffer' against Communist Russia
3. Clemenceau was hungry for revenge, whilst Wilson was an idealist who wanted to establish a lasting peace between European nations
4. Wilson believed in 'self-determination' – in other words, countries ruling themselves – whilst Britain wanted Germany's former colonies to become part of the British empire.

How did Europe change?

As a result of WWI, two major empires in Europe collapsed, since they had both supported Germany in the war. These were the **Austro-Hungarian Empire** (which covered most of central Europe) and the **Ottoman Empire** (which covered the south and east of Europe). These two empires broke down into smaller countries. For example, from the Austro-Hungarian empire, new nations such as Czechoslovakia emerged, and from the Ottoman Empire, such as Turkey. This led to many border disputes between new, small nations, which would need to be managed by the new League of Nations.

Furthermore, in 1917, Russia had undergone a Revolution and became the first Communist country led by the Bolshevik Party. This meant an end to the Romanov tsarist dynasty. The Bolsheviks believed that wealth should be distributed equally across society, though this did not always work in practice. Britain and France were worried this new ideology would spread across Europe.

Other Agreements



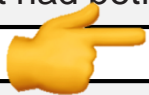
As part of the alliance system, the Big Three countries had made promises to others. For example, Italy had been promised land from the Austro-Hungarian empire and Japan had been told that the Allies would support their claims in China. Both of these additional agreements would cause problems for the Allies in the 1930s.

Versailles: How did Germany react?



Shocking Defeat

Throughout the war, the German government used propaganda to persuade the people that they were winning the war. Therefore, the defeat came as a huge blow. This was made worse by how their Kaiser was forced to abdicate and the new democratic government – later known as the Weimar Government – signed the armistice in November 1918. This later resulted in them being blamed for Germany's defeat and given the title 'November Criminals' and this helped to perpetuate the 'Stab in the Back' theory that this new form of government had betrayed the German people.

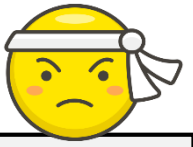


Diktat!

The German people hated the Treaty of Versailles. They called it a 'Diktat' – this means forced treaty. This is because Germany was not allowed representation at the Paris Peace Conference and were forced to accept the harsh terms, or risk invasion by the Allied powers.

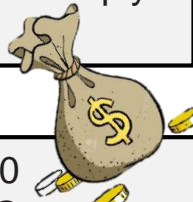
The section of the Treaty most depised by the German people was Article 231 – 'the Guilt Clause' – which meant that Germany had to fully accept the blame for the start of the war. The causes of WWI were far more complex than this. Furthermore, the Guilt clause led to Germany having to take responsibility and so 'repay' the Allied powers. The reparations bill came at a tough time for Germany, whose civilians had faced starvation during WWI due to the Allies using naval blockades to prevent supply access. The German government claimed that 763,000 civilians had died of starvation and so the country could not afford to suffer more!

Political Consequences



The new Weimar Government signed the treaty. However, this significantly weakened their position and made it difficult for them to consolidate their power in Germany. They faced opposition from extreme left and right wing groups, which resulted in uprisings, such as the Spartacist Uprising (left-wing/Communist) of Jan 1919, Kapp Putsch (right-wing/freikorps) of March 1920 and the Munich Putsch of November 1923 (right-wing/Nazi). There were many other smaller revolts across Germany, especially by separatist groups who wanted their region of Germany to become independent, and there were also over 300 political assassinations. In fact, it took until 1924 for the Weimar Government under Gustav Stresemann to stabilise; before then, it was simply 'fire-fighting'.

Economic Consequences



In April 1921, the Allied powers set the reparation payments at £6,600 million. This would be paid in instalments (smaller chunks) because Germany could not afford to pay it straight away. It would also be paid through resources such as coal, as the Germany currency was suffering from inflation after the war. However, Germany had less natural resources too as they had lost control of the Saar, which accounted for 16% of their coal and 48% of their steel supplies. Germany also lost 13% of their land, reducing their grain production, and forcing 6 million Germans to live in a foreign country. Unfortunately, Germany failed to make their first reparation payment. Therefore, French and Belgian troops invaded the industrial area of the Ruhr and seized coal. The Weimar Government called for the workers to go on strike (known as passive resistance) in opposition, while the government continued to print money to pay them. However, this caused 'hyperinflation' where the German currency became worthless and millions of people suffered hardship.

THE BIG 3: HOW SATISFIED WITH VERSAILLES?

David Lloyd George



Georges Clemenceau



Prime Minister of France

- Clemenceau wanted to enact **revenge** on Germany for the damages of the war. He achieved this aim by making Germany take the **blame** for the start of the war and by forcing them to pay a high reparations bill.
- However, many French people wanted Germany to be not just weakened but completely destroyed. They felt Clemenceau was not harsh enough and so voted him out at the next election!
- Clemenceau to significantly reduce Germany's armed forces in order to protect France's border. He achieved this with the **military terms**, especially with the demilitarisation of the Rhineland.
- However, Clemenceau had argued that Germany should not be allowed any army at all and that the Rhineland should be an independent nation.
- In 1921, the Allies set the reparations bill at £6,600 million, much of which would be used to repair war-torn areas of north-east France. The French also gained possession of the coalfield area of the Saar for fifteen years.
- However, the war cost France more than what they would receive in reparations – and the loss of a generation of young men in the trenches was not something money could replace. Many also felt they should have been given the Saar for good.



Prime Minister of Britain

- The British people wanted revenge for the number of young men who lost their lives during the war. The war guilt clause achieved this. Furthermore, some of the reparation payments were given to Britain to help recover their post-war economy, even though none of the fighting had taken place on British soil.
- Whilst this satisfied many members of the British public, Lloyd George feared the terms were too harsh and Germany would eventually seek revenge.
- Britain wanted to keep its **naval supremacy**. This was achieved due to the drastic reduction in Germany's navy.
- Lloyd George wanted to maintain trade relations with Germany to act as a 'buffer' against Communist Russia. However, the reparation bill crippled the German economy. Expert economist, John Keynes, accurately predicted that the damage to Germany's economy would also cause other European economies to suffer.
- Britain wanted to enlarge her empire, which she successfully achieved. In fact, the British Empire was at its largest at the end of WW1, having gained some of Germany's colonies
- Lloyd George wanted to reduce the likelihood of a second war; in the long term, the treaty made another war more likely!



Woodrow Wilson

President of USA

- Wilson wanted European countries to achieve 'self-determination'. This was achieved for many smaller countries that had once been part of the Austro-Hungarian empire.
- However, parts of the German Empire were given over to the League of Nations to 'mandate' (govern). In reality, this meant they were controlled by France and Britain!
- As part of Wilson's vision, he wanted to establish a peacemaking body. This was achieved in the League of Nations, established in 1920.
- However, the US Senate voted for America to not become a member of the League and instead to pursue a policy of isolationism. This meant Wilson could do very little to ensure the League's success.
- In addition, Germany was not allowed to join the League of Nations. Wilson felt that excluding Germany, especially after imposing such a harsh treaty, would result in Germany eventually seeking revenge.

1919-1923: THE OTHER TREATIES

The Treaty of St Germain



Austria – Signed September 1919

- Lost land to Italy and Romania
- Land was taken to create Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Poland
- Told they would need to pay reparations but did not fix an amount
- 30,000 men in the army and no navy
- Austria was not able to unite with Germany (Anschluss)

Impact:

- Italy 'switched sides' to 1915 on the understanding that, if victorious, they would gain land from the former Austro-Hungarian empire. However, they did not feel they gained enough land
- The industrial areas of Austria were given over to the new Czechoslovakia. This resulted in their economy collapsing in 1921.
- Eastern Europe was now broken into many small independent countries rather than one united empire. This caused tension and border disputes.

The Treaty of Neuilly



Bulgaria – Signed November 1919

- Lost to Yugoslavia, Greece and Romania, but did gain some land from Turkey
- The military was limited to 20,000 men, no air force, only four battleships
- Given a reparations bill of £100 million



The Treaty of Trianon



Hungary – Signed June 1920

- Lost to Romania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia
- The military was restricted to 30,000 men and 3 patrol boats only
- The reparations were never fixed, but Hungary was told to pay damages.

The Treaty of Sevres



Turkey – Signed August 1920

- The Ottoman Empire was split up and Turkey lost its European land, some of which went to Greece.
- The military was restricted to 50,000 men and the navy was restricted.

Impact:

The Turkish people revolted and overthrew the new government; as a result the new government threatened the Allies over the treaty. The Allies drew up a new treaty called the Treaty of Lausanne

The Treaty of Lausanne



Turkey – Signed July 1923

- Turkey regained some of the land Greece had been taken
- They regained control of the Dardanelles and Bosphorus straits- these are two small 'strips' of water that divide Turkey in 'Asia Minor' to Europe. This would help Turkey to trade with Europe much easier.
- Reparations payments were cancelled
- Allied troops withdrew from Turkey

The Impact of Sevres/Lausanne

The Turkish people revolted against the new government who signed the Treaty of Sevres. As a result, the Allies backed down. This showed the treaties could not be easily enforced. The Allies did not want to engage in another war so they were very reluctant to use force to enforce the terms. When Britain agreed to re-drafting the terms of the treaty with Turkey, it felt like an admission that the original terms of Sevres were too harsh, and this undermined other treaties. This would have a long term impact in the 1930s, when Mussolini and Hitler looked to overthrow other treaties.