

Attempts to Make and Keep Peace - The Paris Peace Conference and The League of Nations

World War 1

Why did World War 1 Occur?

- Alliances
- Arms and naval race
- Clash over **Austro-Hungarian annexation of Bosnia in 1908**
- Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary

Impacts of the War

| Country | Impact of the Country | Mindset of People |
|-----------------|---|--|
| Germany | The Kaiser's government lost control of the country. The Kaiser was overthrown in a revolution. | Did not believe their army lost the war |
| Austria-Hungary | Austria-Hungary collapsed and broke up into many different countries. | People in their new countries developed a new sense of nationalism |
| Britain | WW1 had been costly in terms of lives and money | Wanted to focus on rebuilding its economy and strengthening its empire. |
| France | Most was affected by the war. Lost many lives. Large parts of its industrial regions were devastated. | Wanted revenge on Germany. Ensure Germany could not threaten France again. |

| Country | Impact of the Country | Mindset of People |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| Russia | Tsar was overthrown in March 1917 and replaced by a Provincial Government. In November 1917, Provincial Government was overthrown by the Communist, Bolshevik Party, as led by Vladimir Lenin. Civil war breaks out between the Bolsheviks and its opposition, collectively known as the Whites. In 1922, the USSR wins the Civil War. | Sought increased equality, hence the revolutions. Tired of war. Desire to spread communism. |
| United States of America | Became the world's greatest power due to the sale of weapons during the war. Lost many lives. | Did not believe the lost American lives were worth it. Developed isolationist mindset. |
| Japan | Did not take part in the major fighting. Did not suffer damage from the war and was able to focus on allowing it to increase its wealth and power | Increasing power made them feel that Japan was the equal of the European powers. Felt Japan deserved an empire just like the European powers. |

Paris Peace Conference

Context for the Paris Peace Conference

- Public Sentiment of Allies in 1919
- The Treaty of **Brest-Litovsk**

Aims of the Big Three

Woodrow Wilson

- 14 Points
- Germany
- Self-Determination

Lloyd George

- Protect Britain
- Rebuild the British economy
- Maintain the British Empire

Clemenceau

- Ensure Germany could not wage war against France again
 - Wanted to break up Germany

Compromises

- No German breakup, reparations instead
- Self-determination

Key Terms of the Treaty of Versailles

- War Guilt Clause
- Reparations
- Territory Changes
- Limit on armed forces/Disarmament
- Formation of League of Nations

Germany's Reaction

- Saw it as a diktat
- Sources of resentment
 - War Guilt Clause
 - Reparations
 - Territory Changes
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Impact of the Treaty of Versailles

Short Term

- Fostered the *Dolchstoß*"stabbed in the back" theory
- Bitterness against the new democratic system

Medium Term

- Political crisis
- Economic Crisis
 - Hyperinflation in the early 1920s

Long Term

- Became a lingering source of resentment

Impact of other treaties

- Four other treaties were signed at the Paris Peace Conference
 - The Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye reinforced the Treaty of Versailles prohibition on *Anschluss*

Judgments on the Paris Peace Conference

and the Treaty of Versailles

Was the Treaty of Versailles Too Harsh on Germany?

Yes

- Disarmament
 - Left it unable to protect itself
- Territorial
 - Brest-Litvosk was harsher to Russia than the TOV was on Germany → The Big 3 was kinder to Germany than it was to Russia
- War Guilt Clause
 - Unfair because Germany was only responding to Russian mobilisation when it did so at the start of WW1
- Reparations
 - Leads to hyperinflation in 1920s
 - Leads to greater suffering during the Great Depression
- Built resentment towards the Big 3
 - Rise of Hitler

No

- Leadership
 - Leadership was not removed/executed/tried → Experience (especially of military leaders) was retained
- Territorial
 - It is relatively characteristic of treaties of that time
 - But times had changed thanks to ideas like the 14 points and nationalism
 - Germans believed that it was too harsh
 - Germany was not split apart

League of Nations

Aims of the League

Collective Security

- "An attack against one is an attack against all"
- To achieve world peace through **international cooperation**
- League members would bind themselves to the League's Covenant and would...
 - Disarm
 - Bring disputes to the League and accept its decisions
- If a member broke the Covenant
 - Economic sanctions
 - Military action

Disarmament

- Aim: to **reduce the ability of countries to wage war**
- To be achieved through international agreements
- E.g. TOV required Germany and her allies to disarm; Allied Powers also required to disarm.

Other Aims

- Promote open, fair and honourable relations between nations (prevent alliance systems / secret treaties)
- Lay out system of international law
- Maintain, modify treaties between nations

Structure of the League

- General Assembly
 - Parliament
 - Met once annually
- The Council
 - 4 Permanent Members (Britain, France, Italy and Japan)
 - 4 (later 9) temporary members elected by GA
- Agencies and Commissions
 - Means through which the League tackled medical, economic and humanitarian issues.
- The Secretariat
 - Handled day-to-day operations
 - Prepared agendas and published meeting minutes
- Permanent Court of Justice
 - 15 Judges in the Hague, Netherlands
 - Settled international disputes