

The great assistance of the versailles treaty in causing wwii

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War is always a tragedy, win or lose. WWI was a big tragedy. It started in 1914 and ended in 1918. WWI was fought all throughout Europe with over 17 million people left dead. The Treaty of Versailles, although it was created to end the “ war to end all wars”, and did end WWI, was also a major factor in creating WWII less than 20 years later with many more deaths. Germany was not consulted on the terms of the treaty until May 1919. Although Germany complained to no end, the Allies did not listen and proceeded with the treaty. The terms of the treaty forced Germany to take accountability for WWI, took important territories and colonies which provided important resources, placed limitations on the military size, and had to pay their allies 33 billion dollars in reparations. These terms left the Germans angry, resentful and vulnerable.

One of the ways the Treaty of Versailles contributed to WWII was the loss of territories and colonies. Germany was forced to give up all of their remaining colonies as well as 10% of the territories that they had. Those territories were important territories, and contained valuable resources that also helped the German economy. Germany lost many of its coalfields and a very large portion of their iron and steel industry. Coal was used to make fuel which was needed for steam engines. This put Germany in a great depression. The citizens that were living in the territories that were lost were resentful to their new country and continued to follow Germany.

Another way the treaty helped lead to WWII was the limitations of the size of the German military. After WWI, the French made sure that the terms of the treaty called for the German military to be limited. Art. 160 allowed for only

100, 000 men, including officers and the armies were to be devoted to maintenance of order. This left Germany feeling very vulnerable and weak. Hitler was able to capitalize on their weakness. He gave Germany jobs, schools and economic stability which helped Hitler rise to power.

A third factor that the Treaty of Versailles led to the start of WWII was the financial position it put Germany with the Allies. Due to war reparations, as a part of the terms of the treaty, it called for Germany to pay damages to each of the Allies. The damages included civilian damages done during WWI. The Germans were indebted 132 million marks, which is equal to 33 billion American dollars, to be paid over 30 years. This helped to crash the German economy. Hitler's promise of stability during this time helped to regain the job force and economy.

The Germans felt national humiliation with Article 231, known as the War Guilt Clause. This was the opening section of Treaty of Versailles. The Germans were to accept full responsibility for WWI. No acknowledgement of the Serbian assination of Austro-Hungarian Archduke was mentioned. This enraged German politicians. They sought to get international sympathy. This, along with the depression caused by the reparations made many, many Germans want revenge.

The Treaty of Versailles may have been a necessary tool to help stop WWI but the terms of the treaty were not conveyed to Germany until the draft was written. And, although Germany protested the terms of the treaty, the Allies did not take Germany seriously. Someone was to blame for the 17

million deaths and Germany was it. Loss of land and resources, frustration, humiliation, economic crash and military cutbacks caused Germany to align with Hitler and his promises of stability and a change for the country. The Treaty of Versailles was not the only cause of WWII but it was a major factor in how it started.