

The impact of the treaty of versailles



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The Treaty of Versailles and Its Effects

During World War I, The main battlefields for the conflict between the Allies and the Axis Powers were the east front of France and the western front of Germany, the western front border lining the Balkan nations and Russia The two fronts were left in a state of total ruin after the war ended this being especially true for France's lands So, as a result of the destruction caused in the borderlands of France, when the four nations, the United States, France, Great Britain, and Italy, met to discuss the plans for post-war Europe, George Clemenceau of France wanted the permanent crippling of Germany to prevent the nation from ever threatening France again This conflicted with the views of Woodrow Wilson, the President of the United States, who wanted a lasting peace built on his written plan, the Fourteen Points The result of the discussions for a treaty resulted in a compromise between the two leaders The Treaty of Versailles was the end product of the compromise, with France getting its terms of crippling Germany and Woodrow Wilson getting his League of Nations set up However, Germany expected the new treaty to be set up according to Wilson's Fourteen Points, but when they received the Treaty of Versailles for signing, they were shocked and angry to see something drastically different to the idea that they were introduced to and that it put all the blame of the starting of World War I on them The Treaty of Versailles sparked extreme German nationalism due to the unfairness of the treaty as a whole, the denial of a chance to rebuild Germany's economy, and the rise of Adolf Hitler and his Nazi Party

The Treaty of Versailles was an overall unfair treaty due to the fact that Article 231, the War Guilt Clause, was the excuse for all the harsh clauses of

the Treaty The Treaty limited Germany's military power, weakening it to the point where they were even vulnerable to even the smallest of new nation-states They could have an army no larger than a hundred thousand men, they were not allowed to have a navy and that their preexisting one was to be given to Great Britain, and they could not have any submarines, and to add insult to injury, the League of Nations refused to let Germany enter its ranks This meant that Germany had no way of ever getting fair treatment from other nations, be it large or small, and that they had no way to defend what little land they owned from being taken by other nations, since they could not ask for help from the League of Nations Germany also lost a substantial amount of land due to the Treaty, including lands that were valuable to its economy, such as the Saar, Western Prussia, and Upper Silesia They also lost all of its colonies as mandates to the League of Nations, which the Germans viewed as empire-building for the British and the French In addition to these insults, treaties that were established in other countries granted them self-determination while the Treaty of Versailles divided the German nation, and dispersed some of its population into other countries, such as Poland All of this spurred resentment toward the Allies inside of Germany and gave way to a sense of nationalism buried deep within the hearts of the Germans

Shortly after the Versailles Treaty was set, reparations were demanded very soon, thus not allowing the German's time to allow their economy to rebuild after the heavy losses of the war. Instead of putting investments into their own industry to allow it to sustain itself, they had to pump out huge amounts of money to pay off the reparations when its own economy could not earn

enough money. The loss of land also impacted the economical state of the German nation. In 1922, France and Belgium invaded the Ruhr, Germany's most valuable industrial zone, and as the Germany had no army to go and defend this area, France and Belgium had no issues taking it for themselves. This resulted in Germany losing a major portion of their industry, including their iron, steel, coal, and railways. The Weimar Republic that was set up after the end of World War I was left in a state of disarray due to the massive reparations that were demanded of Germany, and of the further division of its diminishing economy, leading this unstable government to decide to print money to loan money from other nations to pay back the reparations. This decision led to the hyperinflation of the German mark, further crippling the already decimated economy of Germany. The value of the mark plummeted, as the massive amounts of paper had no gold to back it up, and " in 1922, a loaf of bread cost 163 marks. By September 1923, this figure had reached 1, 500, 000 marks and at the peak of hyperinflation, November 1923, a loaf of bread cost 200, 000, 000, 000 marks." (" Hyperinflation and Weimar Germany") Even then, when the mark was at its lowest, France did not let up on the demands of reparations, as this was right where France wanted Germany, crippled and unable to fight back against this oppression. All these demands and oppression angered the Germans, but as they had no way of opposing these injustices, they fell into silent protest, that is until the leader of the Nazi Party, Adolf Hitler, came into power.

Due to all the injustices forced upon Germany by the Versailles Treaty, many of the Germans felt rage and resentment toward the Allies, but as they had no power whatsoever to combat these oppressions, the Germans fell into

silence about these things. However, it was only a matter of time before someone would harness all the boiling rage of the German people to rise into power and fight against the world, and that man was Adolf Hitler, leader of the growing Nazi Party. The leader of the Nazi Party started out small, being a failed artist at first, then a celebrated soldier during World War I, to being a the leader of the largest political party in Germany. Once having taken a majority of the power in the government of Germany by having most of the members of the Reichstag, Hitler started his campaign of taking complete and total power in Germany. After being elected chancellor of Germany, Hitler proceeded to knock out any and all opposition as to be able to take complete and total power without anyone opposing him. His inspirational speaking skills and already popular status due to his book Mein Kampf during the struggling of the Weimar Republic was further boosted when he took hold of the anger and resentment of the German people by promising to overthrow the Treaty of Versailles, something the other political parties did not want to do, as they believed that following the limitations and rules set by the treaty would get them out of it sooner or later. People were spurred on by this message that Hitler advocated, and they gave him their full support due to all the hardships and the feelings of unfairness they endured under the Versailles Treaty. As a result, Hitler gained complete and total power of the German nation, and some of the first actions he did when he gained this power was that he went up against the term of the demilitarization of Rhineland, invading and taking over the area, thus remilitarizing the area. These actions taken by the leader of the Nazi party led to an immense increase of the German people's sense of nationalism due to that fact that their people were separated into different states and Hitler's

first actions led to the unification of such areas that had a large German population, earning him further support for his actions during World War I. These events that transpired were in part largely due to Treaty of Versailles because of all pressure and oppression that came from this treaty squashing the German people until Adolf took control of their rage and rose to power, thus causing the Treaty of Versailles to be a major factor in the igniting of World War II.

The Treaty of Versailles sparked extreme German nationalism due to the unfairness of the treaty as a whole, the denial of a chance to rebuild Germany's economy, and the rise of Adolf Hitler and his Nazi Party. All of these factors led to the second man-made global disaster known as World War II. Out of all this turmoil, nothing good came out of the Treaty of Versailles, resulting in further distraught in the world after World War II had ended. All of this could have been avoided if only the three of the four nations at the meetings, France, Great Britain, and Italy, for the discussion of Germany's future could let go of their grudges, but as history would have it, people do not forgive that easily and the three nations held onto their grudges for as long as they could. Thus a Second World War was started due to the unforgiving spirit that is the human heart.

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