

# Why the versailles treaty failed to bring peace and stability



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Why the Versailles Treaty failed to bring peace and stability On June 28th 1919, the “ Big Three”, Georges Clemenceau, Woodrow Wilson, and David Lloyd George, on behalf of Great Britain, the United States, and France, had formulated a peace treaty called Versailles Treaty to end the four-year-long First World War, establishing the famous “ Versailles System”. The purpose of the system is to build a peaceful world dominated by the victor countries, such as Great Britain, the United States and France.

Therefore, the treaty harshly punished the losing countries, like Germany, Austria, and Hungary, making them decline in power. Every country participated in the Paris Conference with its own goals, and all countries, especially the three biggest victor countries, want to maximize their own interest. In this case, conflict was inevitable. Unfortunately, the treaty failed to make a perfect negotiation to solve problems, such as the placements new borders between countries, the amount of reparations the losing powers had to pay, and therefore, the treaty finally could only build a kind of illusive peaceful system, which was instability, and directly led to the Second World War. Why the Versailles treaty failed to bring peace and stability after the First World War? It's no denying a fact that only when the most of delegation countries feel satisfied about an international treaty, or there are some powerful dominant country both have the willing and ability to sustain the treaty, the treaty can really take effect in a long term. However, in my opinion, all countries involved in the system, included the losing powers, the colonial countries, and even the victor powers, felt disappointed about the Versailles Treaty more or less, and unfortunately, at that time, the world system was an unstable one.

The leading countries neither had the willing to protect the system in long term, nor had the ability to maintain it. Consequently, the collapse of the Versailles System was only a matter of time. In other words, the unwise goals that set for the Paris Conference with the unrealistic item of the treaty, was too shortsighted to establish a lasting peaceful system. In the first place, the Versailles Treaty punished the losing powers harshly from all aspects, such as economy, territory and colony and throne, making those countries abominate this unfair system. In the peace settlement Germany was forced to accept sole responsibility for causing World War which was totally justifiable demand on the part of the victorious powers. Nevertheless, the basic reason for the outbreak of the First World War was the imbalance between economic power and political status of those old and new capitalistic countries.

Hence, it was unjustified that the victorious powers insisted that Germany should accept total blame for the cause of war. The treaty imposed harsh penalties upon German and to make reparations, asking German to pay 226 billion Reichsmarks in gold (around ? 1. 3 billion) to Allies. Although In 1921, it was reduced to 132 billion Reichsmarks (? 4, 990 million) , the German people finished the war in a state of near starvation for British blockade, let alone to pay for the pricey compensation to victor powers. Additionally, Germany lost its colonial empire and heavy restrictions were placed on their army, limiting the number of troops and equipment that could be present. German people felt extremely angry about the unfair treaty, and they want to make revenge.

So once they got an opportunity, they immediately launched another world war. In the same way, other defeated countries that are ill-treated by the agreement, were all felt dissatisfied, and want to reverse the system. The serious conflict between the losing powers and victor powers was one of the main reasons contributed to the failure of Versailles Treaty. It was a rather ironic consequence. The purpose of Entente Powers was to eliminate the possibilities of the causing of war.

However, what they done only made the people of defeated countries felt more hostile to them. The world they built was a less harmonious one.

Actually, the decline in power never means the decline in conflict.

Suppression and punishment, without education, can never make a country give up the use of violent in a long time. At the same time, the pricey compensation aggravates the economic crisis during the Depression period in those defeated countries, because their economic powers were weakened by the pricey bill.

That's the partly reason why some losing countries, especially German, accepted Fascism, since their economy and industrial sector experienced economic depression in those years, and their governments were too weak to stand against the expansion of Fascism. By contraries, countries with powerful economic resources, like America, protected their democracy and government, getting rid of dictatorship and Fascism. In the second place, the Versailles Treaty was only a result of compromise for those victor countries, leaving none of them fully satisfied about the new world order set by the treaty. The bad negotiation also led to the Appeasement Policy, which indulged the military expansion of German.

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It is easily understand the losing countries felt dissatisfied about the treaty for they are unfairly punished. However, why those victor countries also didn't support the system in many parts? To answer this question, people need to have a basic knowledge about what are they want to achieve in the conference. Actually, each country had their own unique perspective of the war, and as such each desired to achieve different things through the treaty. Firstly, the United States was discontent with the Versailles Treaty because it failed to build a liberal new world accorded with the interests of America, and thus it even never ratifies it.

Since America established the conditions for the armistices and played a key role to in the First World War, Wilson felt it was his right to be a prominent figure at the peace negotiations. Also, as America had already proved that it dominated economic and military world, it want to replace Europe, which was badly damaged by the war, to become the central of the world politics. Therefore, Wilson attended the conference with his " Fourteen Points", expected to build a more liberal and diplomatic world where democracy and sovereignty would be respected. However, unlike America, France and Britain still aspired to be dominant colonial powers. Wilson's attempts to ensure that his Fourteen Points would lead to change ultimately failed, after France and Britain refused to adopt its core principles of liberty and self-determination, in part because of the control they wielded over their colonies around the world. As an ironic result, the United States never ratify the Treaty of Versailles nor join the League of Nations created by the treaty.

Secondly, to some degree, France and Britain also felt disappointed about the result of the conference. Because of the varied degrees to which each

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country felt Germany should be punished, a compromise was reached; leaving neither of the two completely happy with the terms. On the one hand, France was very bitter towards their defeated enemy, and vowed to extract reparations. The fighting in the First World War mainly occurred in France, and it caused huge damage to French properties. The French government wanted to be repaid for these damages as much as they wanted to make revenge.

Also, they want to remain the largest power on the continent. So they expected to punish German as harsh as possible, for fear that German would rise again one day. On the other hand, even though England also wanted to punish Germany in order to pay for the cost of war, they didn't want to destroy German. Britain wanted to preserve a strong and productive economy in Germany as a way to maintain a balance of power on the continent, because such kind of balance could effectively ensure its leading position.

Thus it can be seen, the Versailles Treaty failed to totally fulfill those three major victor powers, and even worse, it worsened the relationship of Triple Entente. The conflicts made those countries lose the cooperation to remain the system. The result of compromise only led to the inefficient way to supervise the military rising of German, and was a part of the reason of the Appeasement Policy. Also, out of the interest of America and Britain, to some degree, the punishment for German was not harsh enough to prevent German from rising again.

The politic system in German was not destroyed. Also, German was not separated into several areas which controlled by Allies. In this case, German remained the basic power to launch another war after twenty years.

Therefore, the Treaty of Versailles itself was the first step towards the Second World War. In the third place, the Versailles Treaty badly assaulted the interests of colonial countries, throwing them into the career of anticolonial uprising.

Taking China as an example, China was a weak country with a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society. Even though China was a victor country in the First World War, it had no right to share the trophies. Chinese interests were simply ignored, and the request for reoccupying the Germany settlements in China was rejected. Instead, the Germany settlements directly delivered to Japan. Once the news about the body blow of Chinese delegation in Paris Conference was spread out, Chinese were furious about the incapacity of Chinese government and the bully western colonist. On May 4th 1919, over 3000 students of Peking University and other schools gathered together in front of Tiananmen and held a demonstration, shouting out such slogans as “ Struggle for the sovereignty externally, get rid of the national traitors at home”, “ Don’t sign the Versailles Treaty”.

The famous May 4th Movement of 1919 broke out, uprising a new wave of anticolonial movement in China. The unfair treatment of China shows that the Versailles Treaty led the colonial countries in a more miserable situation. The interests of colonial people were scarified and assaulted by the victor powers, and the people in colony felt extremely disappointed about the new order, making them fought actively against the system. On the fourth place, <https://assignbuster.com/why-the-versailles-treaty-failed-to-bring-peace-and-stability/>

in the post-WWI era, the international situation was not a stable one, therefore, there was no super power could maintain the international system. On the one hand, Europe suffered huge damage in the wartime, beginning to experience the relative decline, losing its power to dominate world. On the other hand, though America earned a lot and became more and more powerful in the First World War, it was still not strong enough to control the world policy.

Its failure in the Paris Conference well proved this point. As a result, once the world system was challenged, no real superpower could come out boldly, and helped the world getting rid of flames of war. From what have been discussed above, we can safely draw a conclusion that the collapse of Versailles System is because no country felt satisfied about the new order set up by the Versailles Treaty, and the lack of superpower to maintain world situation. The conflicts among the losing power, the victor power and the colony ware furious and strong enough to reverse the new system, involving the whole world in a more bloody and cruel war—the Second World War.

Only twenty years later, all sides had to face the more terrible horrors, suffered massive losses of life, and bankrupted themselves by participating in the conflict. It was a quiet sad consequence and the declaration after the First World War “ Never Again” sound rather ironic. We should bear this lesson in mind: the agreement based on selfishness and self-opinion can never bring peace and stability, and the wrong analysis of the causing of war can only aggravate conflicts which lead to the breakout of a new war. List of References 1.



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