

Treaty of versailles paper



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The Treaty of Versailles satisfied no-one completely and was quite unfair towards Germany. The treaty was both unfair and vindictive although there is also evidence to the contrary. France was the most pleased with the treaty as since they suffered the greatest casualties and damage they sought revenge and received in the vindictiveness of the treaty.

Britain was moderately pleased with the treaty as they wished for Germany to be justly punished but not too harshly, their requirements were partly fulfilled. The USA on the other hand was not very pleased as Wilson's fourteen points which were meant to be the basis for the construction of a fair and non harsh treaty were not followed. The treaty was unfair due to Germany's losses, the breaking of promises and the injustice of the eastern front. Germany lost valuable raw materials, including 75% of its iron ore and 26% of its coal and potash.

Germany agreed to a peace treaty and was treated as if they had lost the war and the allies violated the agreement of Wilson's fourteen points.

Germany was forced to return the land that they had won on the eastern front to Russia, even though Russia had surrendered. The treaty was fair due to the comparative moderation of the treaty, Germany's not so helpless situation and the aim to contain rather than crush. The treaty was not actually unfair because compared to the treaties that Germany had imposed on the defeated Russia and Romania, the Treaty of Versailles was quite moderate.

Germany was not actually as helpless as they seemed, it was the French who were truly impoverished. The allies were not aiming to crush Germany or to

break up their empire, but rather to contain its military power. The treaty was vindictive because of exploitation, harshness and the crippling impact. The allies exploited their victory by inflicting territorial losses, military restrictions and the confiscation of economic and industrial resources. The treaty imposed harsh terms on an ultimately helpless German nation. The treaty would reduce Germany to servitude for a generation.

The treaty was not vindictive because Germany only had to pay 2. % of their national income for reparations and had a surplus of 2%. The allies and the USA paid Germany subsidies throughout their payments of reparations and war debts. The president of the USA was Woodrow Wilson who was an idealist and wanted a just and lasting peace. He set forward a list of fourteen points on which Germany was promised the treaty would be set.

Some of these points included: self determination; no colonies and empires; total disarmament; the League of Nations; worldwide democracy; free trade; and free access to the sea. However many people thought that that these points seemed impractical and that Wilson didn't actually know what he was talking about or understand the consequences that these actions might have. Many of these points were selfish such as Free trade, free access to the sea and no colonies and empires and would only serve to weaken other nations and strengthen the USA's global position. American people believed in isolationism and even after the League of Nations had been established congress voted against joining. This was due to many German immigrants who didn't want to press charges against Germany; the USA was appalled at WW1 and didn't want to send their troops, regardless of the cost to solve

Europe's disputes; and the USA believed in freedom and didn't want to save their empires.

The USA was not satisfied with the war guilt clause and German colonies as these went against the fourteen points and they were also not satisfied with the treaty as a whole and thought it to be vindictive, unfair, unwise and a disgrace. The French prime minister was Georges Clemenceau was known as the tiger and he along with the whole of France wanted Germany to pay for the Great War and 1870. France suffered enormous damage to their land, industry and people. France felt threatened by their increasingly powerful neighbour, Germany. German land and industry was not as badly damaged as France's, and France's population was declining compared to Germany's.

France saw this victory as an opportunity to cripple Germany so it couldn't attack again. President Poincare wanted Germany to be broken up into a collection of smaller states. USA and Great Britain disagreed with this, thus however Clemenceau demanded to weaken Germany as much as possible in revenge. France felt that both the USA and Britain were being far too generous towards Germany and didn't understand France's position.

France was pleased with the war guilt clause and the German colonies as this rested the blame for the war on Germany, and thus led to further reparations and also allowed France to benefit from Germany's colonies. France was also quite happy with the agreements over Germany's armed forces and territories which weakened Germany and the League of Nations which would restore peace. However they thought that the reparations payments were not harsh enough. The prime minister of Great Britain was

Lloyd George and was known as the Welsh Wizard and took the middle ground. He wanted Germany to be punished but not too harshly.

Many of Britain's wishes were quite selfish and were in their own interest. They wanted Germany to lose its navy and colonies because Britain thought that they threatened the British Empire. Like Wilson Lloyd George didn't want Germany to be treated too harshly and eventually seek revenge and possibly start another war. Britain also wanted to keep trading with Germany and so didn't want to cripple its economy too much as that might affect their own. Britain was completely satisfied with the treatment of the German colonies as they benefited from their confiscation. They were also quite pleased with Germany's armed forces and the League of Nations as these controlled and contained Germany's power.

However Britain didn't like what happened to German territories as they felt that these were too harsh. The Treaty of Versailles was unfair because of the harshness of the treaty terms although the media has distorted the fact that Germany is not as badly off as it seems. All nations disagreed over many points of the treaty and had to make many concessions in order to appease other nations. For example Wilson gave way to France concerning the Rhineland and the Saar coalfields, therefore Britain and France gave USA what they wanted, self determination in Eastern Europe. Therefore not all nations could ever be completely satisfied.