

The Treaty of Versailles

Aims of the Big Three

Woodrow Wilson (President of USA)

Wanted a fair and lasting peace based on his Fourteen Points.

His Fourteen Points included:

- Self-determination
- Disarmament
- Creation of the League of Nations

Georges Clemenceau (Prime Minister of France)

He wanted revenge. He wanted:

- Reparations to rebuild France
- Return of Alsace-Lorraine
- Ruin Germany's army so they couldn't invade France again
- Rhineland to be made independent so France could have a buffer zone

David Lloyd-George (Prime Minister of Britain)

- Publicly, Lloyd-George promised to 'make Germany pay' for what they had done in World War I.
- Privately, Lloyd-George didn't want to punish Germany too harshly.
- He knew it could cause Germany to seek revenge

Terms of the Treaty



War Guilt Clause (Clause 231)

- Germany and its allies were wholly blamed for causing the war
- Once Germany admitted its guilt, the Allies could make it pay reparations

This angered Germany as they felt they didn't deserve total blame for the war. They felt the Treaty was forced on them and called it a 'diktat'.



Economic Penalties

- Reparations were to be paid to compensate the Allies, especially France, for damage Germany caused during WWI.
- £6.6 billion to be paid in gold, as well as goods such as merchant ships, industrial output and animal stock

This angered Germany as it burdened Germany with huge debts. It made the country poor and prevented any chance of economic recovery.

Military Penalties

- Army reduced to 100,000 soldiers
- No conscription
- No tanks, aircraft or submarines
- Allowed 6 battleships, 6 cruisers and 12 destroyers
- Rhineland demilitarised

This angered Germany as they felt that Germany wouldn't be able to defend herself or maintain law and order.

Territorial Penalties (see map)

The following territories were taken from Germany and given to the League of Nations or to different Allied countries:

- Saar Coalfield (profits given to France)
- Colonies in Africa (Namibia) and Asia (Qingdao)
- Rhineland demilitarised
- Alsace-Lorraine (given to France)
- Polish Corridor (given to Poland)



This angered Germany as it stripped Germany of resources for industrial production. Without these resources, how could Germany pay reparations? It also went against the principles of self-determination that Wilson had preached.