Complete 20th Century History for Cambridge IGCSE® & O Level
Second Edition

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Neil Smith
Peter Smith
History is an exciting subject, driven by a strong narrative and populated by dynamic characters. Equally important, however, is the process of analysis—looking at how and why this narrative was created. History is constructed from a series of questions which help us to explore how, why, when, and with what results, events in the past took place.

20th Century History for Cambridge IGCSE® and O Level focuses on the major international issues of the twentieth century and provides a detailed study of the regions which dominated the period. This book aims to provide an in-depth account of major events, and help students to develop the skills required to be successful at Cambridge IGCSE® (0470 and 0977 syllabuses) and Cambridge O Level (2147 syllabus).

The chapters follow the curriculum content for each of the Core and Depth Studies for the twentieth century topics offered by the Cambridge IGCSE® and O Level History courses. Each chapter contains Key Questions and Focus Points, reflecting the structure of the different options in the syllabus. Throughout each chapter you will find descriptions of key terms, mini-biographies of the major historical figures, short structured tasks, as well as exam-style questions. Starting on page v, you will find a series of syllabus matching grids indicating where each Key Question and Focus Point is covered in the book.

Cambridge IGCSE® and O Level overviews

For Cambridge IGCSE® and O Level candidates:

Paper 1: two questions on the Core Content and one question on a Depth Study

Paper 2: six questions on one prescribed topic taken from the Core Content

For Cambridge IGCSE® candidates only:

either Component 3 (coursework): a 2000-word extended piece of writing based on a Depth Study from the syllabus or a Depth Study devised by the Centre

or

Paper 4 (written paper): one question on a Depth Study

While the book provides students with a detailed coverage of each topic, it also contains a wide range of accessible and stimulating visual materials designed to provoke questions about the period and to help with the development of skills in analysing historical sources. The Cambridge IGCSE® and O Level syllabuses require students to demonstrate proficiency in the use of sources in a variety of ways, whether it be cross-referencing, testing them for utility, assessing reliability, or using them to test hypotheses. One of the strengths of 20th Century History for Cambridge IGCSE® and O Level is that it provides a solid source of factual content, while providing an array of useful tips for tackling source questions, and many opportunities to practise source skills.

The support website supplements the material in the book by including a range of revision resources, such as timelines and revision tips. Furthermore, it features even more exam-style questions for students to assess their understanding of each topic and provides suggested exemplar responses. A list of useful links is also included on the support website.

We hope that 20th Century History for Cambridge IGCSE® and O Level will be an invaluable tool for all students studying Cambridge IGCSE® and O Level History.
### Depth Studies

The seven Depth Studies are covered in Chapters 8 to 14 of this book.

**A: The First World War, 1914–18**

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<th>Focus Points</th>
<th>Book page (start)</th>
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What's on the support website?

Everything in the book and support website has been designed to help you prepare for your examination and achieve your best.
What were the motives and aims of the Big Three at Versailles?

The Paris Peace Conference was attended by 32 states representing more than two-thirds of the world’s population. Soviet Russia was not invited following the Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917 and the defeated powers were also excluded from the negotiations. The main peacemakers were the countries primarily responsible for the defeat of Germany and its allies: France, Italy, the United States, Britain, and Japan. But within this group the major players were France, the United States, and Britain. These countries were represented by Prime Minister Clemenceau, President Wilson, and Prime Minister Lloyd George respectively. The aims and motives of these three statesmen, the “Big Three”, were to determine the nature of the peace settlement.

France

* SOURCE 1

Extract from a speech by Georges Clemenceau to the Paris Peace Conference, 16 June 1919.

The conduct of Germany is almost unexampled in human history ... not less than seven million dead lie buried in Europe, while more than twenty million others carry upon them the evidence of wounds and sufferings, because Germany saw fit to gratify her lust for tyranny by resort to war. ... Justice, therefore, is the only possible basis for the settlement of the accounts of this terrible war.

French Prime Minister George Clemenceau’s primary concern at Paris was to achieve a peace that would ensure the future security of France. He thought that if Germany was sufficiently weakened it would be unable to threaten the peace of Europe again. There were a number of reasons why Clemenceau thought that his country was open to future attack across its eastern frontier.

**Fig. 1.1** San Francisco Examiner, 1918

**Fig. 1.2** Aerial view of the war damage to the French town of Albert, 1914–18

**Table 1.1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treaty</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Country affected</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Versailles</strong></td>
<td>June 1919</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Saint Germain</strong></td>
<td>September 1919</td>
<td>Austria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neuilly</strong></td>
<td>November 1919</td>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trianon</strong></td>
<td>June 1920</td>
<td>Hungary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sèvres</strong></td>
<td>August 1920</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lausanne</strong></td>
<td>June 1923</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The Versailles Settlement was the result of discussions held between the victorious countries. Every country concerned wanted a peace settlement that would last and prevent a repeat of the slaughter of the First World War. The problem was that this could be achieved in a variety of ways. This led to strong disagreement among the peacemakers on a number of key issues, such as the extent to which the defeated countries should be punished or the victorious countries rewarded. Disagreement led to compromise with the result that the Versailles Settlement, and especially the Treaty of Versailles, soon became the focus of fierce criticism and debate.
France shared a common border with Germany.

This border was not defined by a natural frontier such as a major river.

In addition to this France had made a much greater sacrifice during the course of the war than either Britain or the United States and there was a national desire for revenge against Germany. This was bolstered by the behaviour of the German army as it retreated across north-eastern France during the final stages of the war, causing deliberate damage by flooding mines and destroying bridges, railways, small towns, and villages.

As a result of his desire to increase the security of his country, Clemenceau went into the conference chamber with a series of demands designed to weaken Germany. These demands included:

- permanent disarmament involving banding most of Germany’s army, navy, and air force
- a very high level of reparations with a definite figure to be named in the treaty
- the return of Alsace-Lorraine to France
- a significant portion of Germany’s colonies to be handed over to France
- the Rhineland area to be formed into an independent state so that France no longer shared a common border with Germany
- the Saar Basin to be transferred to France.

In total, these demands represented an extremely stern form of justice, though not as extreme as recommended by the French President Poincaré. He wanted Germany to be broken up into a collection of smaller states. If Germany had been dismembered and crippled absolutely by the peace terms as many of the French insisted, then it would not have been in a position to challenge the peace of Europe 20 years later.

The United States

Thomas Woodrow Wilson (1856–1924)

Pre-political career
Lawyer, academic (political science), President of Princeton University.

Political career
Governor of New Jersey (1911–13); President of the United States (1913–21).

Character and outlook
Idealist who took America into the First World War to make the world “safe for democracy”. Devised the Fourteen Points in early 1918 which he hoped would form the basis for a peace settlement. Was the main inspiration behind the League of Nations.

Wilson’s Fourteen Points

- No more secret treaties.
- Free navigation of the seas in peacetime and wartime.
- Removal of economic trade barriers.
- Reduction of armaments for all countries.
- Impartial settlement of colonial disputes taking into account the interests of both the colonial populations and the governing countries.
- German troops to leave Russia.
- Independence for Belgium.
- Return of Alsace-Lorraine to France.
- Readjustment of Italian frontiers in line with nationality.
- Self-determination for peoples of Austria-Hungary.
- Evacuation and restoration of invaded Balkan countries.
- Self-determination for peoples in the Turkish Empire.
- Establishment of an independent Poland with access to the sea.
- Establishment of a general association of nations.

Table 1.2 First World War casualties (in millions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Military deaths</th>
<th>Civilian deaths</th>
<th>Wounded</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.3 Wilson’s Fourteen Points

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Discussion

How far does Source 1 (page 3) agree with Source 2 (page 5) about the motives behind the peace settlement?

President Woodrow Wilson’s hopes and expectations from the peace settlement were very different from the French. But America’s experience of the war was also very different.

- America had not declared war on Germany until April 1917 and was not fully involved in the war until more than a year later.
- At no point was American territory invaded and relatively few American lives were lost with civilian fatalities of less than 800.
- The war had provided profitable trading and business opportunities for American manufacturers, merchants, and financiers.

Lack of a national grievance meant that Wilson could stand back and take a more detached view of the peace proceedings. He was determined to earn his place in history as the guiding spirit behind what he hoped would be a “fair and lasting peace”. This objective could be achieved, so Wilson believed, by making his Fourteen Points the basis of the peace settlement.

The Fourteen Points had been drawn up during the later stages of the war. They resulted from Wilson trying to identify the general causes of the conflict and then devising remedies for each cause. Here are three examples.

- Wilson believed that secret treaties had led to misunderstandings and suspicion between the most important countries before the war. He therefore recommended that there should be open diplomacy and no secret treaties (see Point 1).
- He decided that one of the causes of the war had been the build-up of armaments—naval ships, aircraft, and weaponry for the army such as artillery and rifles. Wilson therefore recommended that all states should disarm, maintaining just what was needed for basic defence (see Point 4).
- Wilson hoped to promote the long-term stability of Europe by recognising the principle of self-determination. In practice this meant allowing national groups such as Slovaks, Czechs, and Poles to form independent national states (see Points 9, 10, 12, and 13).

Wilson’s approach to the peace was based on ideals and high principles and he inevitably clashed with the self-interested ambitions of Britain and France, especially with regard to acquiring Germany’s colonies. Nevertheless, several aspects of his Fourteen Points were incorporated into the peace settlement.

Discussion

To what extent were Points 1, 4, 8, and 14 of Wilson’s Fourteen Points reflected in the Treaty of Versailles?

Self-determination
Allowing an area to decide its own political future, usually by means of a vote.
Unlike the United States, Britain had suffered direct attacks on her
Lloyd George came to realise that the future economic well-being of Britain
Britain had sustained heavy casualties during the war.
Britain's economy had been severely disrupted, especially the export sectors.
Britain was concerned about the security of France's eastern frontier
because if that were to be crossed by hostile troops it would only be a
matter of time before Britain was directly threatened also. France's eastern
frontier was effectively Britain's outer defence.

Britain was as concerned as France that Germany's war-making potential
be reduced. Furthermore, the British public demanded vengeance against
Germany immediately after the war. In the general election of November
1918, Prime Minister Lloyd George knew that if he was to be re-elected then
he would have to reflect these views. Accordingly he insisted that Germany
should pay for the full cost of the war. Lloyd George also wanted a sizeable
share of Germany's colonies.

Lloyd George's views in November/December 1918
Before the Paris Peace Conference began, it looked as if Britain shared the
French desire for a harsh peace settlement to be imposed on Germany. This
was quite understandable given Britain's experience of the war.

Unlike the United States, Britain had suffered direct attacks on her
mainland both in 1914, when German naval ships bombarded a number of
Yorkshire coastal towns, and during the Zeppelin raids of 1915–18 when
London, Edinburgh, and other towns were attacked.

Britain had sustained heavy casualties during the war.

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because if that were to be crossed by hostile troops it would only be a
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Lloyd George's views from January 1919
Yet, despite every indication that Lloyd George would unite with the French
against the high principles of President Wilson, he soon changed his outlook.
By the time that he had arrived in Paris in January 1919, Lloyd George had
decided that a more moderate peace settlement was in British interests. What
had caused Lloyd George to change his mind?

Lloyd George came to realise that the future economic well-being of Britain
depended largely upon the economic revival of Europe. This, in turn,
depended upon the revival of the German economy. Germany was Britain's
most important European customer prior to 1914.

If Germany was deprived of the Rhineland, where much of its industry was
located, it would not be wealthy enough to buy British goods on the same
scale as before the war.

A very high reparations figure would also check Germany's economic
recovery since it would take away money that could otherwise be used
for investment.

A weak Germany would provide an inadequate barrier against the
spread of communism from the east. Communism was regarded by
many as a much greater threat to Europe than the revival of German
military power.

Lloyd George was also anxious that the treaty should not be regarded as
excessively harsh by the Germans as he was convinced that this would give
rise to a sense of intense grievance. This might lead to attempts to overturn
the treaty.

Lloyd George's impact on Clemenceau
Because of these factors Lloyd George managed to persuade Clemenceau
to make a number of key concessions:

• to abandon the idea of an independent Rhineland state
• to abandon the idea of naming a definite and very high figure for
reparations in the treaty
• to abandon the idea that the Saar Basin on the border shared by Germany
and France be transferred to France
• to abandon the idea that Danzig be handed over to Poland.

These concessions by the French had the added advantage for Britain that
German domination in Europe would not be replaced by French domination.
It was in Britain's interest to maintain a balance of power in Europe for this
would help preserve Britain's position as a world power.

What were the main terms of the Treaty of Versailles?
There were a number of key points in the treaty.

1. War Guilt Clause (Article 231)—Germany and her allies had to accept total
responsibility for starting the war.

2. Reparations—Germany had to accept liability for reparations, the amount
of which would be decided by a Reparations Commission.

3. Disarmament—this restricted Germany's ability to wage war in the future.

• The German army was to be restricted to 100,000 with no conscription.
• No tanks, armoured vehicles or heavy artillery were permitted.
• No military or naval air force was permitted.
• The navy was to be restricted to 6 battleships, 12 destroyers, 6 light
cruisers, 12 torpedo boats, and no submarines.
• The Rhineland was to become a demilitarised zone with no German
troops or fortifications allowed in the area. In addition there was to be
an Allied army of occupation on the west bank of the Rhine for 15 years.

Demilitarised
Without troops, armaments or
fortifications.
4. Territory—German territory was taken away.
   - Germany was to lose all her colonies in Africa and the Far East (see Table 1.5).
   - Alsace-Lorraine was to be returned to France.
   - Eupen, Malmedy, and Moresnet were to be transferred to Belgium.
   - North Schleswig was to be transferred to Denmark.
   - West Prussia, Posen, and parts of Upper Silesia were to be transferred to Poland.
   - Memel was to be transferred to Lithuania.
   - Danzig was to become a Free City administered by the League of Nations. Poland could use the port for its external trade.
   - The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was to be cancelled, with Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania taken away from Germany and set up as independent states.
   - Union between Germany and Austria was forbidden.

5. The Covenant of the League of Nations—Germany had to accept the Covenant or constitution of the League of Nations even though it was excluded from the original membership.

### Table 1.4

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leader</th>
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<th>Reason for these aims</th>
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**Plebiscite**

A vote on a single issue in the manner of a referendum. Plebiscites were held after 1918 in areas of uncertain nationality to establish which country the populations wished to be governed by.

**Why was Danzig important?**

- There were heated discussions about the status of Danzig during the peace negotiations.
- Before the war Danzig was a flourishing German sea port. With the recreation of Poland, Germany was set to lose West Prussia and Danzig to the new state.
- The population of Danzig was overwhelmingly German and transfer to Poland might have created an unstable situation. Yet Poland needed a sea port from which to trade with the outside world.
- A compromise was reached whereby Danzig was made a Free City and placed under League of Nations control.

**Plebiscite areas where the population voted to remain in Germany**

**Plebiscite areas where the population voted to leave Germany**

**Areas controlled by the League of Nations for 15 years**

**Areas controlled by the Allies for 15 years**

**Areas conceded to the League of Nations**

**Area for Allied army of occupation for 15 years**

**Demilitarised zone**

**Plebiscite**

**Territory—German territory was taken away.**

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**The Covenant of the League of Nations—Germany had to accept the Covenant or constitution of the League of Nations even though it was excluded from the original membership.**

### Tasks

Copy and complete the table below in your workbook. You will not be able to complete the final column until later in the chapter.

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France

The Versailles Treaty satisfied a number of Clemenceau’s specific demands with regard to Alsace-Lorraine and the transfer of some of Germany’s former colonies (see Table 1.5). France was also likely to become the major recipient of German reparations. Of course Clemenceau’s main concern was the defence and security of France and it was clear that the treaty also went some way towards achieving this.

- France would be secure on her eastern frontier providing Germany kept to, or was forced to keep to, the military terms of the treaty. It was also necessary that the Rhineland remained free of German troops and fortifications.
- Versailles deprived Germany of a significant proportion of her land, population, and resources (see Table 1.6) which reduced its economic power and military capacity.

The proposed Anglo-American Treaty of Guarantee for France

Clemenceau was worried, however, that this might not be enough. He feared that Germany would recover her strength and seek changes to the treaty. To prevent this, he wanted a Treaty of Guarantee with his Allied partners. This meant that despite all the positive features of the Versailles Treaty France still felt dangerously exposed on her eastern frontier. Clemenceau’s relative failure led to his defeat in the presidential elections of January 1920 and resignation from the office of Prime Minister shortly afterwards.

The United States

President Wilson had mixed feelings about the peace settlement. The positive features were as follows.

- He was pleased that he had successfully persuaded his partners to accept that the Covenant or constitution of the League of Nations should be included in all the peace treaties; this would help to make the new peacekeeping organisation become a reality.
- Wilson was also partly satisfied by the requirement in all the peace treaties that the defeated powers should disarm. This represented at least some movement towards his objective of disarmament for all countries.
- Wilson was relieved that the Rhineland was not going to be made into a separate state and was going to remain part of Germany. Not only did this reduce the potential harshness of the peace, it made it much more likely that Germany would remain a major economic power able to do business with the United States.
- For very similar reasons he was pleased that Germany was not going to be burdened with a very high reparations figure in the treaty.

America withdrew into diplomatic isolation. Britain was unwilling to provide any guarantees to France on its own.

This meant that despite all the positive features of the Versailles Treaty France still felt dangerously exposed on her eastern frontier. Clemenceau’s relative failure led to his defeat in the presidential elections of January 1920 and resignation from the office of Prime Minister shortly afterwards.
With regard to the Versailles Settlement as a whole, Wilson was delighted by the recreation of an independent Poland together with the two entirely new “successor states”, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. But overall Wilson thought that the Versailles Treaty was too harsh on Germany and there were also particular elements of the Versailles Settlement with which Wilson was less than happy.

- At the insistence of Britain the principle of free navigation of the seas was abandoned.
- There was little disguising the fact that Britain, France, and Japan had rewarded themselves with Germany’s former colonies even though, officially, these colonies were to be governed as mandated territories on behalf of the League of Nations (see Table 1.5).
- While national self-determination for the peoples of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire was broadly implemented there were some noticeable exceptions.
- Austria was not allowed to unite with Germany.
- The Sudeten Germans were not consulted about their future.

The most upsetting circumstance concerning the peace settlement for Wilson, however, came when he failed to persuade the necessary two-thirds of American Congress to approve the treaties together with the League of Nations.

**Why American Congress rejected the peace settlement**

- Wilson’s political opponents, the Republicans, had gained a small majority in the Senate in November 1918.
- Wilson’s health and persuasive powers were clearly in decline after his stroke in October 1919.
- Many Americans did not want to be further involved in European affairs. There were fears that if America signed up to the peace settlement and became a leading member of the League of Nations, then it would be in danger of being drawn into another European war.

### Britain

Extract from a speech by Lloyd George to the House of Commons, 21 July 1919.

*We have restored where restoration was just, we have organised reparations where damage and injury have been inflicted, and we have established guarantees and securities... against the repetition of these crimes and horrors from which the world is just emerging. We have disarmed; we have punished. We have demonstrated... that you cannot trample on national rights and liberties, that you cannot break solemn covenants with impunity.*

Lloyd George was probably the most satisfied of the major peacemakers. He had wanted a moderate peace which would allow the European economy to revive, and that is largely what he achieved. There were some features of the peace settlement that he did not like, such as the placing of German-speaking peoples under French or Polish rule, but on the whole he got his way. Lloyd George's main achievements at Paris were twofold.

**Successor states**

The successor states from the Versailles Peace Settlement were Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia. Poland had been eliminated from the map of Europe at the end of the eighteenth century but the peacemakers wanted to recreate the country. In contrast, Czechoslovakia was a completely new state forged out of provinces of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire such as Bohemia and Moravia. Similarly, Yugoslavia was a new state formed by merging Serbia with south-western provinces of the former empire such as Dalmatia, Croatia, and Bosnia.

**Mandated territories**

Mandates were former German or Turkish colonies handed over to the Allies to be governed by them on behalf of the League of Nations.

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**What was the impact of the peace treaty on Germany up to 1923?**

Germany had numerous criticisms of the Versailles Treaty.

### Too harsh

Germany’s general objection to the treaty was that it was too harsh. Many Germans felt that their country was being punished twice over.

- They had to pay reparations.
- They were deprived of the very resources (coal, iron ore) that were needed to pay these reparations.

Germany had, however, imposed an equally harsh treaty on Soviet Russia at Brest-Litovsk in March 1918. The Russians had been expected to pay reparations and suffer drastic losses of territory and resources. So it could be argued that Germany was now getting a taste of its own medicine.

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**DISCUSSION**

1. Study Sources 5, 6, and 7. Who was the more satisfied with the Versailles Treaty, Wilson, Clemenceau or Lloyd George? Use the sources and your own knowledge to explain your answer.
Diktat

Germany objected that the treaty was a “diktat” or a dictated peace. German statesmen and officials were excluded from the negotiations leading to the Treaty of Versailles. They were simply handed a draft copy and invited to express comments and criticisms in writing. This led to some minor changes including the holding of a plebiscite in Upper Silesia. The Germans had little choice but to sign the treaty. If they had refused then the Allied naval blockade would have continued and the Allies would have restarted the war.

War Guilt Clause

Article 231 or the War Guilt Clause was included in the treaty at the insistence of the Allied lawyers. They wanted to establish a legal basis for reparations: if you cause damage, and it is entirely your fault, then you must pay compensation. The Germans felt that this clause rubbed salt into their wounds. They were also not convinced that they, together with their allies, were totally responsible for starting the war. After all, it could be argued that the first military action in the immediate lead-up to the conflict was the Russian mobilisation of July 1914.

The political and economic impact of the Treaty of Versailles

Political impact

When on 28 June 1919 two representatives of the new German Government, the Weimar Government, signed the Treaty of Versailles this was an action made under duress. The Allies had made it clear that they would restart the war if Germany refused to sign and, in the opinion of leading German generals, this would have led to military defeat. But though the Weimar Government had little option but to sign the Treaty, it became instantly unpopular for having done so. The Treaty was the symbol of Germany’s dishonour and humiliation and the Weimar Government had agreed to it. The authority of the new republic was seriously undermined.

- Right-wing politicians and activists expressed their disapproval by supporting attempts to overthrow the government, such as the Munich Putsch of November 1923.
- Right-wing extremists carried out a number of assassinations of high-ranking government ministers, such as Walter Rathenau (foreign minister) and Matthias Erzberger (finance minister).
- Left-wing extremist groups exploited the unpopularity of the Weimar Government by promoting rebellions, such as that in the Ruhr of March 1920.
- Many members of the army, furious with the government for agreeing to the disarmament clauses of the Treaty, joined the Freikorps, an unofficial, anti-communist vigilante group. When the government tried to disband this group in March 1923 following pressure from the Allies, Freikorps units under the command of Wolfgang Kapp staged a coup in Berlin and declared a new national government. The army refused to intervene and the Weimar Government was on the point of collapse. It survived thanks to a general workers’ strike which brought public services to a standstill.

The signing of the Treaty of Versailles, therefore, meant that the new democratic Weimar Republic was operating under a major disadvantage from the very beginning of its existence and was deprived of much needed support during its early years.

Economic impact

The Germans claimed that in signing the treaty they were also signing a blank cheque since although they had to agree to the principle of paying reparations, no figure was actually stated in the treaty. When the figure of 16.6 billion was announced by the Reparations Commission in 1921, Germany claimed that this amount was more than it could afford to pay. Whether this was true or not is difficult to assess, but there is no doubt that Germany did not want to pay such an amount.

The Versailles Treaty undoubtedly caused major economic problems for Germany and the Weimar Republic. Germany lost valuable economic resources, yet had to repay war debts together with reparations. The immediate post-war period was characterised by inflation, rising unemployment and the attendant problems of poverty and homelessness. Crisis came in 1923 and was triggered by the reparations issue.

- Germany had paid its first instalment of reparations in 1921 but then claimed that it was unable to make the 1922 payment.
- The French felt that Germany was simply trying to escape from its Treaty obligations and together with Belgium decided to take direct action. In January 1923 French and Belgian troops occupied the Ruhr. Germany’s most valuable industrial area. The intention was to seize coal and other resources to the value of the missed payments.
- The German Government was not in a position to order armed resistance and so instead ordered the German population of the Ruhr to offer passive resistance or peaceful strike action.
- The French responded to this by expelling more than 100 000 Germans from the region and killing over 130.
- The German Government now faced a situation in which its expenditure had increased, due to the need to re-house and feed the displaced Ruhr population, yet its income had declined due to the ending of Ruhr taxation receipts.
- To make up for the lost revenue the German Government began to print money. This stoked up the existing high inflation into hyperinflation. The German mark became worthless and middle class savings lost their value. Bartering became increasingly popular as the best means to protect the value of a payment. Hence eggs, cigarettes or bags of sugar were used as a form of currency.

Clearly such a state of affairs had to be resolved quickly. In August 1923 Gustav Stresemann became Chancellor and the following month took the unpopular decision of ending the passive resistance in the Ruhr. In October he introduced a temporary new currency, the Rentenmark, with a strictly controlled circulation and soon after this he agreed to resume reparations payments. Germany’s finances had been stabilised. The reparations problem was partly solved by the Dawes Plan of April 1924 which introduced a more flexible repayments schedule (see page 14). Five years later the
Young Plan reduced the outstanding amount to £2 billion. The whole issue of reparations caused enormous bitterness and achieved very little since Germany received more in American loans during the 1920s than it ever paid back to the Allies.

**Disarmament**

Germany’s dislike of the disarmament clauses was partly to do with status and prestige but there were also practical objections.

- Germany claimed that 100,000 men was insufficient for border defence.
- It would also be difficult to deal with revolts and uprisings.

**Wilson’s Fourteen Points**

Germany always maintained that the armistice was signed on the understanding that the peace settlement would be based upon Wilson’s Fourteen Points. However, the Treaty of Versailles was seen by the German people as a betrayal of this promise in a number of ways.

- There is no mention in the Fourteen Points of war guilt or reparations.
- The Fourteen Points proposed disarmament for all and a general assembly of nations. In the Treaty, Germany was required to join the League of Nations, at least not for the time being.
- The Fourteen Points stressed the idea of self-determination yet in the treaty it was clear that this was not to apply to Austria, Alsace-Lorraine or, until 15 years had passed, the Saar Basin.

In fact, the Allies never made a promise to follow Wilson’s principles to the letter though they did indicate that they would use them as guiding principles for the peace settlement. The principle of self-determination was used in many areas including parts of East Prussia, Upper Silesia, and Schleswig.

**Quick Question 5**

How far was the 1923 hyperinflation caused by the Treaty of Versailles?

**What were the terms of the other peace treaties?**

The treaties affecting Germany’s allies had a number of features in common with the Treaty of Versailles.

- A war guilt clause
- An obligation to pay reparations
- Reduction in armaments
- Acceptance of the Covenant of the League of Nations

It was principally in the territorial provisions that the various treaties differed from one another.

**The Treaty of Saint Germain with Austria, 10 September 1919**

The main points of this treaty were the following.

- The new Republic of Austria had to accept the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.
- Austria had to recognise the independence of Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Poland.
- Territory from the former Empire was transferred to Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia, Italy, and Romania.
- Union between Austria and Germany was forbidden.

Instead of being at the heart of a grand empire, one of the great powers of Europe, Austria was now a small landlocked nation surrounded by hostile states. Austria particularly resented the fact that union with Germany was forbidden and that three million Sudeten Germans were placed under Czech rule. This was seen as a violation of the principle of self-determination.

**Are the peace treaties of 1919–23 fair?**

- The new Republic of Austria had to accept the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.
- Austria had to recognise the independence of Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Poland.
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Instead of being at the heart of a grand empire, one of the great powers of Europe, Austria was now a small landlocked nation surrounded by hostile states. Austria particularly resented the fact that union with Germany was forbidden and that three million Sudeten Germans were placed under Czech rule. This was seen as a violation of the principle of self-determination.
The plight of Turkey after the First World War sparked off a nationalist movement led by Mustapha Kemal. He strongly objected to the terms of Sèvres and challenged the peace treaty by force, driving the Greeks out of Smyrna. This led to a renegotiated treaty.

The Treaty of Lausanne with Turkey, 24 July 1923
The main points of this treaty were the following.
• Turkey confirmed the loss of its provinces in the Middle East.
• Turkey received back most of its European territory.
• The Dardanelles Strait was to return to Turkish sovereignty.
• Restrictions on armed forces were removed.
• Turkey was no longer to pay reparations.

DISCUSSION
1. Which of Germany’s former allies suffered most from the peace settlement?
2. How do you think each of the following would have reacted to the peace settlement?
   - An export agent living in Budapest, the capital city of Hungary
   - A Czech writer and poet living in Prague, once one of the main cities of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and now the capital city of Czechoslovakia
   - A senior civil servant living in Vienna, once the capital city of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and now the capital city of Austria
   - A Bulgarian army officer living in the port of Dedeagach in western Thrace given to Greece by the Treaty of Neuilly

The Treaty of Trianon with Hungary, 4 June 1920
The main points of this treaty were the following.
• Hungary had to accept the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.
• Hungary had to recognise the independence of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia.
• Territory from the former Empire was transferred to Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Romania.

Hungary was dismayed by these terms as more than 70 per cent of its territory and one third of its population had been lost. Since the treaty also deprived Hungary of its seaports it was now, like Austria, a landlocked nation.

The Treaty of Neuilly with Bulgaria, 27 November 1919
The main points of this treaty were the following.
• Bulgaria had to recognise the independence of Yugoslavia.
• Bulgaria lost territory to Greece, Yugoslavia, and Romania.

Bulgarians regarded the treaty as a national catastrophe. It brought to an end the 40-year struggle for the unification of the Bulgarian-populated territories. With the loss of land and the blow to its national pride Bulgaria faced an uncertain future.

The Treaty of Sèvres with Turkey, 10 August 1920
The main points of this treaty were the following.
• Turkey had to recognise the independence of the Kingdom of Hejaz (later to form part of Saudi Arabia) and Armenia.
• Turkey lost its provinces in the Middle East to Britain and France.
• Turkey lost territory to Greece and Italy.
• The Dardanelles Strait was to become an international waterway.
Could the treaties be justified at the time?

The Versailles Settlement soon became the subject of fierce debate though it was the Versailles Treaty that attracted the most attention. Opinions on the treaty can be divided three ways.

Those who thought the treaty was too harsh

Most Germans would have taken this view although it was shared by many others from other countries.

Extract from a speech made by a German member of the Reichstag in 1919.

The criminal madness of this peace will drain Germany’s national life-blood. It is a shameless blow in the face of common sense. It is inflicting the deepest wounds on us Germans as our world lies in wreckage about us.

Extract from an article written by a British journalist in 1922 quoted in International Relations by K. Shephard published in 1992.

It was a peace of revenge. It was full of injustice. It was incapable of fulfilment. It sowed a thousand seeds from which new wars might spring. The wild impossibility of extracting those vast reparations from the defeated enemy ought to have been obvious to the most ignorant schoolboy.

Those who thought that the Versailles Treaty was fair

Many French supported this view.

Comment by Marshal Foch at the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, 1919.

This is not a peace treaty, it is an armistice for twenty years.

Extract from a memorandum given by President Raymond Poincaré of France to the Paris Peace Conference, 1919.

Germany is supposedly going to undertake to have neither troops nor fortresses on the left bank and within a zone extending 50 kilometres east of the Rhine. But the Treaty does not provide for any permanent supervision of troops and armaments on the left bank any more than elsewhere in Germany. ... We can thus have no guarantee that after ... fifteen years and the evacuation of the left bank, the Germans will not filter troops by degrees into this district.

Those who thought that the Versailles Treaty was not harsh enough

Many who supported this view.

Extract from the diary of Edward M. House, an American diplomat, June 1919.

To those who are saying that the Treaty is bad ... I feel like admitting it. But I would also say in reply that empires cannot be shattered and new states raised upon their ruins without disturbance. To create new boundaries is always to create new troubles. The one follows the other. While I should have preferred a different peace, I doubt whether it could have been made.

Extract from a speech by President Wilson delivered to the League of Nations, September 1919.

Do not think of this treaty of peace as merely a settlement with Germany. It is that, it is a very severe settlement with Germany, but there is not anything in it that she did not earn. Indeed, she earned more than she can ever be able to pay for, and the punishment exacted of her is not a punishment greater than she can bear, and it is absolutely necessary in order that no other nation may ever plot such a thing against humanity and civilization.
Introduction

During the First World War a number of statesmen began discussing ways to avoid another international conflict. These statesmen included Jan Smuts of South Africa, Lloyd George of Britain, and Woodrow Wilson of the United States. A variety of possible schemes were considered. These included:

- a narrowly-focused organisation that would meet to sort out disputes and crises
- an organisation backed by an army that would exist to enforce the peace settlement
- a broad-based organisation that would address a wide range of international problems as well as meet to sort out disputes and crises.

The third option favoured by Smuts and Wilson formed the basis for the League of Nations which came into existence in January 1920.

The aims of this chapter are to:

- Examine the strengths and weaknesses of the structure and organisation of the League of Nations, as well as its successes and failures in peacekeeping during the 1920s.
- Estimate the impact of the World Depression on the work of the League after 1929.
- Consider the failures of the League in the 1930s including the Manchurian and Abyssinian crises.

According to the **Covenant of the League of Nations** its primary aim was to preserve world peace, but it also attempted to promote international cooperation over a wide range of economic and social problems including disarmament. Everyone accepts that the League of Nations failed in its main purpose as war broke out again in September 1939, but this does not mean that the League was a total failure. As will be seen, it did resolve a number of disputes and performed some very useful work in tackling a host of international problems.

Covenant of the League of Nations

The Covenant was the name chosen by President Wilson to describe the constitution or charter of the League of Nations. It comprised 26 articles which laid out the structure, rules, procedures, and functions of the League.

Review questions

1. What were the aims of each of the “Big Three” at the Paris Peace Conference?
2. To what extent were the aims of the “Big Three” achieved at the Paris Peace Conference?
3. Describe the military restrictions imposed on Germany by the Treaty of Versailles.
4. Describe Germany’s territorial losses under the Treaty of Versailles.
5. What problems did the Treaty of Versailles cause for Germany?
6. Explain why there was so much bitterness over the Treaty of Versailles in Germany.
7. Which was more important in causing Germany’s dissatisfaction with the Treaty: the imposing of reparations or the War Guilt Clause?
8. To what extent was the Treaty of Versailles justifiable at the time?