

The World After First World War

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Introduction (What Brought About The Event)

Towards the end of the First World War, the countries involved in the violent act were looking for peace. It was argued, at that time, that a just and lasting peace might revive prosperity, right the wrongs, and repair the damage in a broken world. The dream of a New Jerusalem in world politics, under the call of Woodrow Wilson for a new and democratic democracy, was not merely Armistice euphoria. The aristocratic rulers of Europe had convened to a fashion of peace, repudiating the democratic and nationalist principles of the French Revolution. The immense destruction done to the prewar world's political and economic framework made the process of peacemaking daunting due to the lack of a united vision among the victors. In the wake of the Ottoman, Russian, Habsburg, and German collapses, Central and Eastern Europe were in turmoil.

Civil war sputtered in Russia, and revolution in Berlin and elsewhere. Trench warfare had left Poland, Belgium and France in ruin. In the colonial world, nationalist movements were given a strong impetus by the imperial powers. India and the French empire both collectively provided more than fifteen thousand soldiers to the British war effort; it gave way to the European culture and anti-imperialistic ideas to enter the home. The European powers, along with the United States and Japan, were weakened by the War. Thus, trade and manufacturers were disrupted, and the prewar monetary stability was lost. Returning to the 1914 normalcy became a dream. Stephen Pichon, the French foreign minister, observed that ending the War meant beginning an era of difficulties.

Body 1 (Who Was Involved)

Ultimately, five treaties were produced by the Paris Peace Conference. The most commonly known and observed peace agreement made following the events of the First World War was the Treaty of Versailles. It was signed by Germany and the Allies after they had been fighting the war for four years. The Allies gathered to discuss the provisions of the peace treaty. However, Austria-Hungary and Germany were not invited. On the large, they were only allowed to make a response to the treaty, a response that was never embraced.

Overall, the Big Three played a primary role in drawing up the terms. The Big Three included British Prime Minister Lloyd George, French Prime Minister Frances Clemenceau, and US President Woodrow Wilson. Each of them had different desires with regard to the process of peacemaking on the face of the planet at that time. (Allied and Associated Powers & Germany, 1919) Woodrow Wilson had written a plan; he wanted a fair and lasting peace. His plan was named Fourteen Points, and it was aimed at bringing the best solution to the political and economic situation of the region.

The Treaty was aimed at establishing a global peacekeeping organization, i.e., the League of Nations, and this notion was supported by Woodrow Wilson because he desired the armed forces of all countries taking part in the War to be reduced, and he was purposefully working towards not letting this reduction be limited to the losers only but to the winning side too. Therefore, only a few points of his plan could be incorporated into the Treaty. Lloyd George agreed with Woodrow Wilson. However, his opinions were influenced by public opinion, which supported Frances Clemenceau, who wanted heavy reparations for Germany as he desired the country to pay for the war; it included stripping Germany of the armed forces, industry and land.

Body 2 (What Was Solved)

The Treaty of Versailles was made to determine the fate of Germany after the War. Therefore, Germany was to take all responsibility for creating and causing the War as part of the many conditions of the Treaty. As per the agreement, Germany was also obliged to take responsibility for all the damage caused during the war. Apart from this, the Treaty was aimed at establishing a global peacekeeping organization, i.e., the League of Nations. However, much of the work of creating the Treaty was delegated to the uncoordinated sub-committees. Rather than drafting the final word, they thought they were working on a starting point. Therefore, removing the German threat while mollifying votes but without humiliating the nation and breeding a generation intent on revenge; stating territorial demands while allowing self-determination and dealing with growing nationalism; and restoring the pan-European economy and paying off debts and loans with German goods and cash became an impossible task.

Body 3 (The Lasting Impact Of It)

Therefore, in the broad scenario, it is argued that the treaty remained flawed despite being successful at restoring peace in this particular region. For instance, Japan always complained about being treated unfairly in the process of peacemaking. Most importantly, the treaty that Woodrow Wilson worked hard to negotiate was never ratified by the United States. Germany was not included in the negotiations. Therefore, a large number of the German population firmly believed that they had been betrayed by the government as the nation was forced to sign the Treaty under the threat of invasion by the Allies. Moreover, the subsequent treaties modified the timescale for payment of reparations, which ranged from moderate to ridiculous and, thus, the Allied occupation of Germany. Versailles took over the territories, i.e., overseas colonies and any assets there, due to the German government's inability to keep up with the payments of reparations.

Therefore, the concept of reparations under the Treaty of Versailles emerged as a problem instead of a solution in the long run. (MacMillan, 2001) The reparations were flawed; the evidence lies in the fact that other negotiations had to occur. An example of failed reparation includes the invasion of Ruhr by the French troops in 1923 when the German government stopped making payments. Furthermore,

the question of armaments was left unanswered. Some thought that limiting the German army to ten thousand troops, drastically cutting the navy, and forbidding from having an air force were adequate measures, but it did not happen. This aspect of the Treaty can also be seen as problematic, especially when Germany successfully crossed the limit of army troops by having some of them trained in the Soviet Union.

Conclusion

The immense destruction done to the prewar world's political and economic framework made the process of peacemaking daunting due to the lack of a united vision among the victors. The Treaty of Versailles was signed between Germany and the Allies in 1913 with the purpose of peacemaking in the region, i.e., it was aimed at bringing the best solution to the then political and economic situation of the region. However, the Allies made a compact against Germany, which was not included in the negotiations. Germany was also obliged to take responsibility for all the damage caused during the War. Also, public opinion supported Frances Clemenceau, who wanted heavy reparations for Germany as he desired the country to pay for the war; it included stripping Germany of the armed forces, industry and land. Therefore, a large number of the German population firmly believed that they had been betrayed by the government as the nation was forced to sign the Treaty under the threat of invasion by the Allies. A practical example includes the invasion of Ruhr by the French troops in 1923 when the German government stopped making payments.

References

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