

# **Wilson Fights for Peace**

# Objectives

1. Summarize Wilson's Fourteen Points.
2. Describe the Treaty of Versailles and international and domestic reaction to it.
3. Explain the consequences of the war.

# The Fourteen Points

- In a speech to Congress before the war ended, President Wilson outlined a vision of a “just and lasting peace.”
- His plan was called the Fourteen Points, and among its ideas were
  - Open diplomacy, freedom of the seas, the removal of trade barriers, and the reduction of military arms
  - A fair system to resolve disputes over colonies
  - Self-determination**, or the right of people to decide their own political status and form their own nations
  - Establishing a **League of Nations**, or an organization of countries working together to settle disputes, protect democracy, and prevent future wars
- The Fourteen Points declared that foreign policy should be based on morality, not just on what’s best for the nation.

# Wilson's Fourteen Points and the Treaty of Versailles

QUICK  
FACTS

Some—but not all—of President Wilson's Fourteen Points were reflected in the Treaty of Versailles.

## THE FOURTEEN POINTS

- 1 Public diplomatic negotiations and an end to secret treaties
- 2 Freedom of navigation on the seas
- 3 Free trade among nations
- 4 Reduction of armaments to the level needed for domestic safety
- 5 Fair resolution of colonial claims that arose because of the war
- 6 Evacuation of Russia and restoration of its conquered territories
- 7 Preservation of Belgium's sovereignty
- 8 Restoration of France's territory, including Alsace-Lorraine
- 9 Redrawing Italy's borders according to nationalities
- 10 Divide up Austria-Hungary according to nationalities
- 11 Redraw the borders of the Balkan states according to nationalities
- 12 Self-determination for Turks and the other nationalities under Turkish rule
- 13 Creation of an independent Polish nation
- 14 Creation of a League of Nations

## MAJOR PROVISIONS OF THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

### Military Changes

- Limited the German army to 100,000 men, with no tanks or heavy artillery.
- Limited the German navy to 15,000 men.
- Banned Germany from having an air force.

### Territory Changes

- Required Germany to cede land to France, Denmark, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Belgium.
- Required Germany to surrender all colonies to the control of the League of Nations.
- Germany and Austria were prohibited from uniting.

### War-Guilt Provisions

- Held Germany solely responsible for all losses and damages suffered by the Allies during the war.
- Required Germany to pay reparations of 269 billion gold marks, later reduced to 132 billion.

### Establishment of the League of Nations

- Did not initially permit Germany to join the League.

# The Paris Peace Conference

- President Wilson led American negotiators attending the peace conference in Paris in January 1919.
  - His attendance of the Paris Peace Conference made him the first U.S. President to visit Europe while in office.
  - Republicans criticized Wilson for leaving the country when it was trying to restore its economy.
- The Paris Peace Conference began on January 12, 1919, with leaders representing 32 nations, or about three-quarters of the world's population.
- The leaders of the victorious Allies—President Wilson, British Prime Minister **David Lloyd George**, French premier **Georges Clemenceau**, and Italian prime minister Vittorio Orlando—became known as the **Big Four**.
- Germany and the Central Powers were not invited to attend.

# Conflicting Needs at the Peace Conference

The delegates arrived at the Peace Conference with competing needs and desires.

## Better World

- President Wilson had a vision of a better world.
- He wanted nations to deal with each other openly and trade with each other fairly.
- Wanted countries to reduce their arsenal of weapons

## Revenge

- Many Allies wanted to punish Germany for its role in the war.
- Georges Clemenceau accused Germany of tyrannical conduct, exemplified by the huge loss of life and the continued suffering of veterans.

## Independence

- Leaders of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia wanted to build new nations.
- Poland, divided between Germany and Russia, wanted one nation.
- Ho Chi Minh worked at the Paris Ritz hotel and asked France to free Vietnam.

# The Treaty of Versailles

- The Allies eventually reached an agreement and presented the **Treaty of Versailles** to Germany in May.
- The treaty was harsher than Wilson wanted, requiring Germany to
  - Disarm its military forces
  - Pay \$33 billion in **reparations**, or payments for damages and expenses caused by the war, which Germany could not afford
  - Take sole responsibility for starting the war
- The Central Powers also had to turn over their colonies to the Allies, to stay under Allied control until they could become independent.
- The treaty included some of Wilson's Fourteen Points, such as the creation of a League of Nations and self-determination for some ethnic groups in Eastern and Central Europe.
- Germany strongly protested the treaty but signed it after France threatened military action.

# Fight over the Treaty

- President Wilson returned to the U.S. and presented the treaty to the Senate, needing the support of both Republicans and Democrats to ratify it.
- Wilson had trouble getting the Republican Congress's support.
- The Senators divided into three groups:
  1. Democrats, who supported immediate ratification of the treaty
  2. Irreconcilables, who wanted outright rejection of U.S. participation in the League of Nations
  3. Reservationists, led by Senator **Henry Cabot Lodge**, who would only ratify a revised treaty
- Reservationists thought the League of Nations charter requiring members to use force for the League conflicted with Congress's constitutional right to declare war.

# Wilson Tours America

- Wilson refused to compromise with reservationists and took his case directly to the American people, traveling 8,000 miles in 22 days.
- In 32 major speeches, Wilson urged the public to pressure Republican senators into ratifying the treaty, warning of serious consequences if world nations didn't work together.
- Wilson's heavy touring schedule weakened him, and after suffering a stroke in October 1919, he cut himself off from friends and allies.
- In September 1919, Senator Lodge presented a treaty to the U.S. Senate including a list of 14 reservations, or concerns about the Treaty of Versailles.
- Wilson was unwilling to compromise, and the Senate rejected Lodge's treaty on Wilson's instructions.
- After Wilson left office in 1921, the U.S. signed separate treaties with Austria, Hungary, and Germany, but never joined the League of Nations.
- Without U.S. participation, the League's ability to keep world peace was uncertain.

# The Impact of World War I

## Political

- The war led to the overthrow of monarchies in Russia, Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Turkey.
- It contributed to the rise of the Bolsheviks to power in Russia in 1917.
- It fanned the flames of revolts against colonialism in the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

## Economic

- WWI devastated European economies, giving the U.S. the economic lead.
- The U.S. still faced problems such as inflation, which left people struggling to afford ordinary items.
- Farmers, whose goods were less in demand than during the war, were hit hard.

## Social

- The war killed 14 million people and left 7 million men disabled.
- The war drew more than a million women into the U.S. workforce, which helped them pass the Nineteenth Amendment to get the vote.
- It also encouraged African Americans to move to northern cities for factory work.

# Impact in Europe

- The effects of World War I in Europe were devastating.
  - European nations lost almost an entire generation of young men.
  - France, where most of the fighting took place, was in ruins.
  - Great Britain was deeply in debt to the U.S. and lost its place as the world's financial center.
  - The reparations forced on Germany by the Treaty of Versailles were crippling to its economy.
- World War I would not be the “war to end all wars,” as some called it.
  - Too many issues were left unresolved.
  - Too much anger and hostility remained among nations.
- Within a generation, conflict would again break out in Europe, bringing the United States and the world back into war.

# Questions

1. What was President Wilson's Fourteen Points plan for peace?
2. What was resolved at the Paris Peace Conference?
3. Why did Congress fight over the treaty?
4. What was the impact of World War I on the United States and the world?

# EUROPE AND THE MIDDLE EAST, 1915



-  Allied Powers
-  Central Powers
-  Neutral nations

0 250 500 Miles  
0 250 500 Kilometers

Lambert azimuthal  
equal-area projection

# EUROPE AND THE MIDDLE EAST, 1919

