

Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points and the Treaty of Versailles

Results of World War I

Effects of WWI

After WWI the countries in Europe were weakened and the United States was emerging as a world super power. The Middle East was fragmented and nationalism was spreading. Millions of people lost their lives or were injured in the war. Under the stress of the war the governments in Russia and Germany were also overthrown. The Austrian Hungarian Empire was gone and new political boundaries were drawn in Eastern Europe.

Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points

At the end of World War I President Woodrow Wilson had been discussing a peace settlement. Wilson put together a document which he called **the Fourteen Points**. In this document Wilson called for open peace agreements rather than secret diplomacy. The Fourteen Points became the basis for a peace program and it was on the back of the Fourteen Points that Germany and her allies agreed to an armistice in November 1918. He also introduced the idea of a League of Nations, an international body of nations working together to avoid future wars. After World War I the League of Nations was created to keep peace among the nations. In 1919 Wilson and 26 representatives met to discuss the arrangements for peace and the Fourteen Points. Wilson argued that territorial/boundary changes should be made based on the "self-determination" of the group living in the territory, not by anyone else. The ideas that were presented in Wilson's Fourteen Points influence future relationships between different countries. Some of these ideas were; freedom of the seas, free trade, decolonization, and arms reduction. In order to get European powers to accept the League of Nations, President Wilson had to give up on some of his Fourteen Points. In an ironic twist President Wilson was unable to get enough of Congress's support for the treaty and therefore the United States was unable to join the League of Nations.

Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points

1. No more secret agreements ("Open covenants openly arrived at").
2. Free navigation of all seas.
3. An end to all economic barriers between countries.
4. Countries to reduce weapon numbers.
5. All decisions regarding the colonies should be impartial
6. The German Army is to be removed from Russia. Russia should be left to develop her own political set-up.
7. Belgium should be independent like before the war.
8. France should be fully liberated and allowed to recover Alsace-Lorraine
9. All Italians are to be allowed to live in Italy. Italy's borders are to "along clearly recognizable lines of nationality."
10. Self-determination should be allowed for all those living in Austria-Hungary.

11. Self-determination and guarantees of independence should be allowed for the Balkan states.
12. The Turkish people should be governed by the Turkish government. Non-Turks in the old Turkish Empire should govern themselves.
13. An independent Poland should be created which should have access to the sea.
14. A League of Nations be set up to guarantee the political and territorial independence of all states

The Treaty of Versailles

Germany surrendered on November 11, 1918 and peace negotiations began in late 1918 into 1919 with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles. The final peace terms stated in the Treaty of Versailles that the European powers came to ended up being very harsh on Germany. Germany was forced to accept blame for the war by signing the war-guilt clause and was forced to pay huge reparations (payments for damages that occurred during the war) to the Allied forces.

Germany also lost its navy and its army was reduced to the size of a small police force. There were also some economic changes that took place because of WWI. Britain and France were upset with Germany over the war and made it their mission to cripple Germany. They did so by forcing Germany to pay for the damages during the war. Germany was embarrassed and this was a mistake that came back to haunt Europe.

After the war the map of Europe changed quite a bit. The Austro-Hungarian Empire was divided into several new national states, Austria and Hungary became two separate nations. Germany lost several of its territories which became the nations of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. This change in territories was done under Wilson's idea that people in these territories should be able to rule themselves

Europe before WWI



Europe after WWI



Women after World War I

The role of women during and after World War I changed dramatically. The social status of women changed because of the new job opportunities open to women while millions of working men went to war. The women's movement for equal rights intensified!