



World War I

“The War to End All Wars” Searching for Peace Part 6

“We want Wilson” the war-weary crowd roared. “Long live Dr. Wilson!” British students with American flags smiled, tossing flowers in the President’s path. Everywhere in Europe that Wilson visited—Paris, Rome, Milan—the reception was jubilant. Boosted by the cheers of the European crowds, Wilson walked into the Paris Peace Conference at the Palace of Versailles with confidence. He was sure that his plan for a just and lasting peace would win swift approval both in Europe and in America.”

After the War

- In January 1919, world leaders from 27 nations gathered in Paris France for a peace conference following WWI
- President Woodrow Wilson led the American delegation
- Europe lay in ruins its landscape devastated, its farms and towns destroyed.
- Human losses were terrible. France, Russia, Germany, Austria-Hungary each lost between one and two million men.
- American lost 50,000 men in battle and another 60,000 to disease.
- The number of soldiers killed worldwide was nine million people.
- Millions of people found themselves homeless and hungry
- Civil War raged in Russia, Poland, Czechoslovakia and other people struggled to form independent nations out of the empires of Turkey, Russia and Austria-Hungary
- These problems made the search for peace and stability difficult



Wilson’s Fourteen Points

1. No secret treaties
2. Freedom of the seas for all nations.
3. Removal of all economic barriers or tariffs.
4. Reduction of the National armaments
5. Fair adjustment of all colonial claims, with equal consideration given to the people of a region and the nation.
6. Establishment of a general association of nations, which would guarantee political independence and protection to large and small states alike the **League of Nations**.

The Peace Conference

- The Allies dominated the peace conference and did not invite either Germany or Russia
- Wilson opposed punishing defeated European nations, the European Allies sought revenge. They believed Germany should be broken up into smaller countries and demanded **reparations** or payments, for the damage Germans caused in the war
- Wilson was forced again and again to compromise on his fourteen points at the Paris meeting and give in to the demand of the allies
- On June 28, 1919, after months of negotiations the Allies and Germany signed a peace treaty at the Palace of Versailles outside of Paris.
- The treaty set up harsh punishment for the Germans who because of their defeat were forced to sign

The Treaty of Versailles: On the eleventh hour, of the eleventh day, of the eleventh month of 1918, the Armistice is signed effectively halting the War. The final Treaty of Versailles is signed on June 28, 1919.

- Under the terms of the **Treaty of Versailles** the Germans:
 - Had to accept full responsibility for the war
 - Pay billions of dollars in reparations to the Allies
 - Had to disarm completely
 - Give up their overseas colonies and the territory of Alsace-Lorraine
 - The treaty also carved up Austria-Hungary and the Russian Empires and created new nations and restored some old ones
 - The emergence of these nations fulfilled Wilson's vision of **national self-determination**
 - Many of the new borders of the new countries were disputed and led to future conflicts
 - Though many of the fourteen points were rejected, Wilson did succeed in having the **League of Nations** included in the treaty. He believed the league could correct any mistakes in the treaty in the future.

Opposition at Home

- Wilson presented the Treaty of Versailles to the U.S. Senate for ratification in July 1919.
- Many Americans did not agree with the treaty feeling it was too harsh on Germany.
- Many also worried about the U.S. participation in the League of Nations feeling it would get the U.S. involved permanently in world affairs
- Republicans controlled the Senate that needed to ratify the treaty and many looked to embarrass the popular Democratic President Wilson. Others had sincere concern about the treaty particularly the League of Nations
- Senator Henry Cabot Lodge claimed the League would grant other nations the power to control U.S. Military forces and order them to fight around the world
- In September, Wilson went on a national speaking rally to support the League of Nations
- On September 25, Wilson collapsed after suffering a stroke that left him partially paralyzed.
- Opposition grew after Wilson's collapse and the Congress rejected the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations.
- In 1921 the U.S. signed separated treaties with the Central Powers and never joined the League of Nations