

**Consequences of War:** During WWI, there was much devastation done to Germany and other countries. People's hopes and dreams were shattered. Almost 10,000,000 soldiers around the world died as a result of this war. The Allies wanted Germany to pay for this, so they wrote a treaty which held Germany responsible for WWI. It was called the Treaty of Versailles. The treaty said that Germany was the only country responsible for WWI. Some people say that Germany was not responsible for WWI. After all, it started when a Serbian shot an Austrian. Some Germans believed that Germany had been made a scapegoat, forcing it to take the blame for the entire war. The treaty also said that Germany would have to pay for all of the damage done to other countries. Germany's size was reduced by 12.5%, resulting in a decrease in its population of 6,500,000. When the other countries took possession of German land, the people in it did not move. This made them "belong" to the countries that took over that land.

Many things were taken away because of the Treaty of Versailles. Germany lost 16.7% of its farmland, 12.5% of its livestock, and 10% of its factories because of the Treaty of Versailles. It reduced Germany's trading, eliminated its navy, and made its army very small.

The treaty also allowed other countries to take away Germany's colonies around the world. To see which countries took possession of which German land, please refer to the table below.

### **Which Countries Took Possession of German Land?**

France took away: Alsace, Lorraine, German coal mines in the Saarland for 15 years

Belgium took away: Small border areas and towns

Czechoslovakia took away: Small border areas near Troppau (Oprava today)

Denmark took away: Northern Schleswig (area between the North and Baltic seas)

Poland took away: Most of West Prussia and the area of Posen (Poznan)

The Allies took away: Rhineland for 15 years, occupying it

The League of Nations took away: German port city of Danzig (Gdansk)

**The League of Nations** President Wilson's main goal was to set up the League of Nations. This was a group of countries agreeing to keep the peace. The League of Nations was mainly going to be made up of the Allies of WWI. President Wilson thought that other nations would feel threatened by the League of Nations because they had already gone to war against those countries and lost. President Wilson had discussed these ideas in his Fourteen Points, which was a guide with fourteen ideas to make a peace settlement.

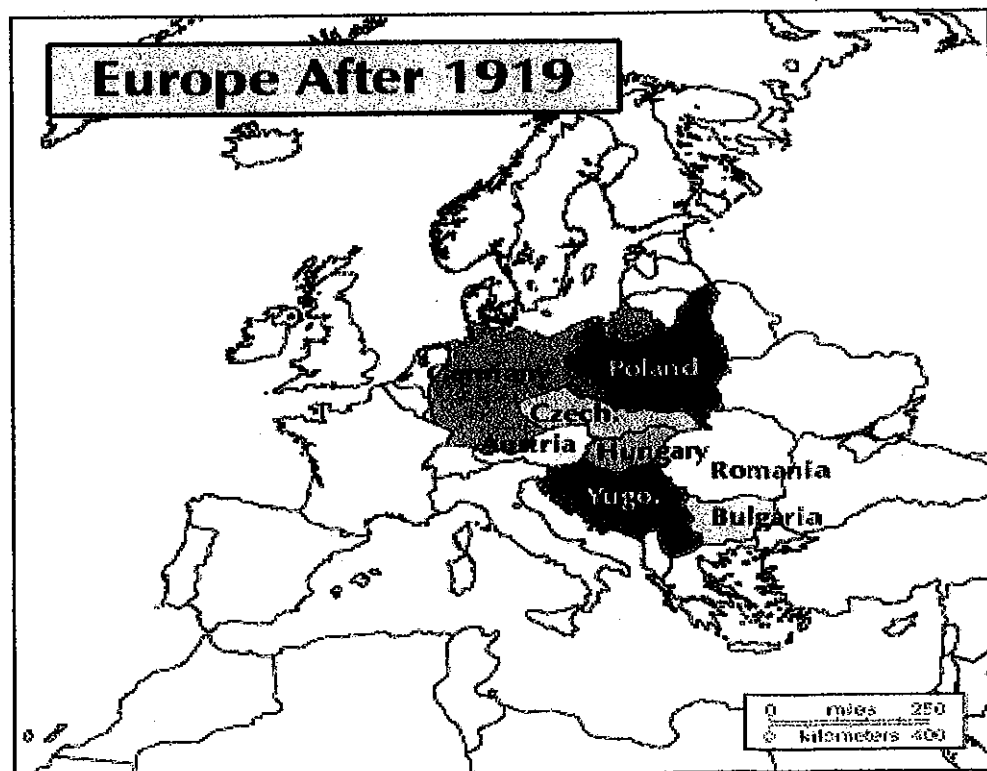
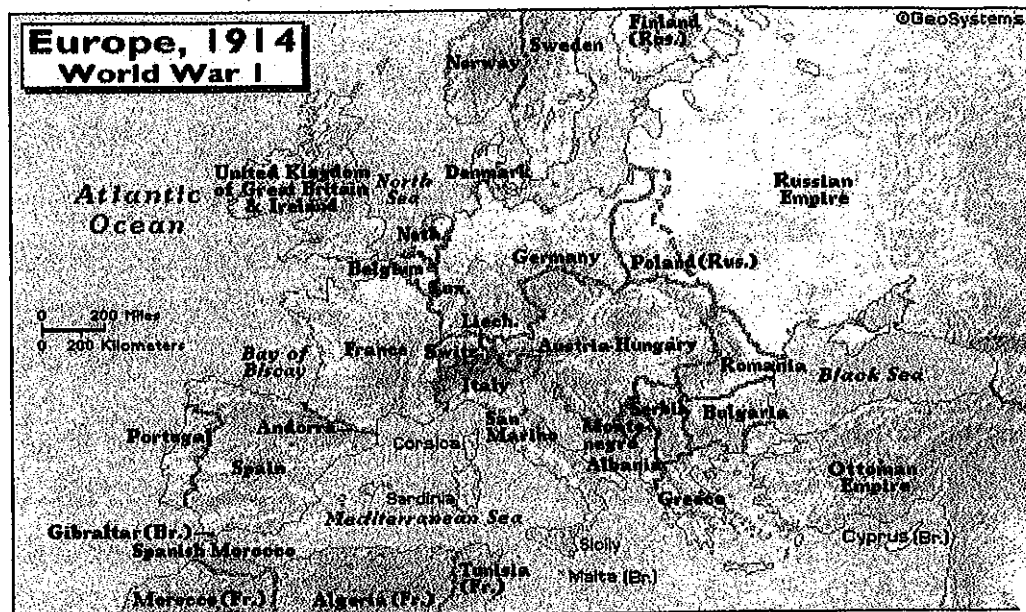
The other Allied leaders didn't completely agree with President Wilson. Georges Clemenceau of France mainly wanted to hurt Germany's economy, army, and land. David Lloyd George of the United Kingdom mainly wanted to leave Germany with enough supplies for trade, but not for war. The other Allies, especially Italy and Japan, were just interested in controlling Germany's land and taking it for themselves.

Finally, the other countries gave in. They decided that the League of Nations was a good idea. President Wilson modified many of his points in order to win support for certain changes concerning the League of Nations, and he also modified them because many people disagreed with them. Due to this decision, many of Italy & Japan's secret treaties, which President Wilson originally was against were allowed to stand, and Italy received part of Austria and Hungary. Japan received German colonies in the North Pacific Ocean and German holdings in China.

**A Land of New Boundaries** The Allies had a lot of trouble trying to redraw the boundaries of the countries bordering Germany. Finally, they thought of a way to divide up that land. They thought of everyone, except for the Germans. The Allies redrew the borders so that people who spoke the same language were part of the same country. For example, the area that had people that spoke French, became part of France. They did that with France, Switzerland, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, the Netherlands, and Belgium. After dividing up all of that land, the pieces of Germany that remained became Germany.

Before the Treaty of Versailles, a part of Europe was known as the Austro-Hungarian Empire. As a result of the Allies' decision to change boundaries based on languages spoken, this land was divided into Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary, and a part of Romania. Also, land that had been part of Russia became Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, East Prussia, and Poland, all of which Russia had once taken over and turned into territories of the Russian Empire. The Treaty of Versailles made Russia give back these lands.

Even though they won, some countries, like Japan and Italy, were upset about the treaty. Italy felt that it should have received more land than it got. Japan was given the German territories in the Pacific, but it wanted more land.



## **Reactions and Thoughts of Revenge**

In early May 1919, the Treaty of Versailles was shown to Germany. Germany was forced to agree to the treaty, or the Allies threatened to enforce the treaty by invading Germany. Many Germans were angry that the government, known as the Weimar Republic, agreed to the treaty, and they wanted revenge. German officials strongly disagreed with the treaty, but they were forced to accept it. German officials thought that the treaty would be much easier on them due to Wilson's Fourteen Points.

Germany, and all of the major Allies except China and the United States, agreed to the treaty. Citizens of the United States didn't approve of President Wilson's agreement to let Germany be treated the generous way that it was. They thought that Germany should be punished even more for causing so much devastation around the world. In March 1920, the U.S. Senate refused to accept the Treaty of Versailles. Even though President Wilson helped set it up, the United States never joined the League of Nations. However, in August 1921, Germany and the United States created a separate peace agreement called the Treaty of Berlin.

The Treaty of Versailles caused Germany to go through a depression, a time when businesses and people lost a lot of money. Due to this depression, many people lost their jobs. People who could not find jobs joined the Communist and National Socialist parties. The National Socialist Party's leader, Adolf Hitler, was gaining more and more power because the German people were upset that their government did little to help them and that the government agreed to the Treaty of Versailles. Many Germans were mad that Germany lost so much land because of the Treaty of Versailles, and it had to pay huge amounts of money to Allied countries. They were also mad because the treaty said that Germany alone caused WWI. Many Germans wanted revenge. This is when more Germans began to look up to Adolf Hitler and his National Socialist Party.

Adapted from: Lesson 12, Advanced Placement European History 2, The Center for Learning 2006; Modern Times Peace Game, Stevens and Shea 1987;  
[www.thinkquest.org/treatyofversailles](http://www.thinkquest.org/treatyofversailles); <http://fcit.usf.edu>; and assorted general public websites.