In January 1919 the statesmen of the victorious powers were confronted with a Europe in turmoil. The sudden and complete defeat of the Central Powers had made Europe vulnerable to the spread of communism from Russia. Germany for much of the winter of 1918–19 seemed poised on the brink of revolution. With the disintegration of the Austrian, Turkish and Russian empires there was no stable government anywhere east of the Rhine. In March, when the communists temporarily seized power in Hungary, it seemed to the Allied leaders that the door to the heart of Europe was now open to communism. The fear of revolution was intensified by the influenza pandemic which by the spring of 1919 had caused the deaths of millions of people, and by the near famine conditions in central and eastern Europe. The problems facing the statesmen in Paris were thus not only the negotiation of peace and the drawing up of new frontiers, but also the pressing need to avert economic chaos and famine. As one Allied official observed, ‘There was a veritable race between peace and anarchy.’ The task of rebuilding a peaceful and prosperous Europe was made more difficult by the continued strength of nationalist feeling among the populations of the victorious powers. Public opinion in Britain, the USA, France and Italy viewed the peace conference as the final phase of the war in which their leaders must ruthlessly consolidate the gains made on the battlefields and mash the enemy forever. The greatest blow to the prospects for real peace in Europe were delivered when the Congressional elections in the USA in November 1918 gave the Republicans, who opposed the Democratic President Woodrow Wilson, a majority. The Republicans were determined to campaign for a hard peace with Germany and simultaneously insist that the USA should become involved neither in guaranteeing it nor in financing any expensive schemes for European reconstruction.

Summary diagram: Problems faced by the peacemakers

- Revolutionary condition of Europe
- Russian civil war
- Diverging Allied aims
- Competing nationalisms
- Desire for revenge
- Hunger, disease, economic chaos

Key question
Why did the economic, political and social conditions of the time make it so much more difficult to negotiate a just and balanced peace settlement?

Pandemic
An epidemic on a global scale.

Congressional elections
The elections to the US Senate and House of Representatives took place on 5 November 1918. The Republicans secured an overall majority of two seats in the Senate and 50 in the House.
2 | Aims and Principles of the Victorious Great Powers

The peace negotiations in Paris are often interpreted as a struggle between the proponents of reconciliation, led by Wilson and Lloyd George, and the ruthless advocates of a peace of revenge, represented by Clemenceau, the French Prime Minister. The reality, however, was much more complicated.

The USA: Wilson's efforts to implement the Fourteen Points

Although President Wilson strongly believed that Germany needed to be punished for its part in starting the war and that it should be put on 'probation' before joining the League, he was determined to ensure that the Fourteen Points (see page 76) served as a basis for the coming peace negotiations and to anchor the **Covenant** of the League of Nations in the text of the peace treaties. He was convinced that this was the key to creating a just and lasting peace.

This was, however, an optimistic assessment. There was general agreement among the victors to set up independent **nation-states** in eastern Europe and the Balkans and confine Turkey to its ethnic frontiers, all of which was anticipated by points 10–13. Points 7 and 8, covering the liberation of Belgium and the return of Alsace-Lorraine to France, had already been fulfilled at the start of the Armistice.

On other issues, Wilson was ready to compromise. Britain, for instance, was assured that point 2, which demanded the 'freedom of the seas', did not mean the immediate lifting of the blockade against Germany. The French and Belgians were promised US support for German reparations, despite the absence of any such clause in the Fourteen Points, and Italy was promised the award of former Austrian territory up to the Brenner frontier, even though this would include over 200,000 Germans. Wilson was also ready to compromise with Britain over the former German colonies and the Middle Eastern possessions of Turkey. These territories would be the ultimate responsibility of the new League of Nations but would be handed over as 'mandates' to the appropriate powers to administer.

These concessions did not go far enough to turn the Fourteen Points into a practicable **inter-Allied consensus** for the coming peace negotiations. They failed to overcome imperialist rivalries between Britain and France in the Middle East or between the USA, Japan and Britain in the Far East. Nor did they provide a solution to the rival claims in 1919–20 of Italy and the new 'kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes' (which later became Yugoslavia) to Dalmatia (see page 98).
France's priorities

More importantly, the Fourteen Points failed to impress the French Premier, Clemenceau, who was convinced that only an effective balance of power in Europe could contain Germany. He was painfully aware that France, with its reduced birth rate and a total number of casualties of 1.3 million dead and another 2.8 million wounded, faced a Germany which, as a consequence of the collapse of Austria-Hungary and Tsarist Russia, was potentially stronger than in 1914.

Clemenceau was anxious to enforce maximum disarmament and reparation payments on the Germans, to set up strong independent Polish, Czechoslovak and Yugoslav states, and in addition an independent Rhineland state. He also wanted an alliance with Britain and the USA and to continue inter-Allied financial and economic co-operation into the post-war years. He was ready to make considerable concessions to achieve his aims. For instance, in the Middle East, he offered to cede Palestine and the Mosul oilfields to the British in the hope of gaining their support in Europe.

Great Britain: a satisfied power?

In contrast to France, Britain, even before the Great Powers met in Paris, had already achieved many of its aims: the German fleet had surrendered, German trade rivalry was no longer a threat and Germany’s colonial empire was liquidated, while the German

Profile: Georges Clemenceau 1841–1929

1841 – Born in the Vendée, France
1876–1903 – A member of the Radical Party in the French parliament
1906–9 – Prime Minister of France
1917–20 – Became Prime Minister again and rallied France
1919 – Presided over the Paris Peace Conference
1920 – Retired
1929 – Died

Clemenceau came from a Republican and atheistic background. He was mayor of Montmartre in Paris during the Prussian siege of 1870–1, and in 1876–1893 a radical Liberal deputy whose outspokenness won him the title of 'the tiger'. He championed captain Dreyfus who was falsely accused of spying for the Germans, and in October 1906 became Prime Minister. During the first three years of the war he was a fierce critic of the government, and in November 1917 became a charismatic war leader, who inspired France to rise to the challenges of 1918. He presided over the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, but lost power in 1920. He foresaw the re-emergence of Germany as a great power and even predicted war in 1940.
Reparations
Compensation paid by a defeated power to make good the damage it caused in a war.

War guilt
Carrying the blame for starting the war.

Dominions
The British Dominions of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa were self-governing, but part of the British Empire and Commonwealth, of which to this day they are still members.

armies in western Europe had been driven back into the Reich. Britain's territorial ambitions lay in the Middle East, not Europe.

Lloyd George realised that a peaceful, united Germany would act as a barrier against the spread of Bolshevism from Russia. Above all, he wanted to avoid long-term British commitments on the continent of Europe and prevent the annexation of German minorities by the Poles or the French creating fresh areas of bitterness, which would sow the seeds of a new war. Inevitably, then, these objectives were fundamentally opposed to the French policy of securing definite guarantees against a German military revival either by negotiating a long-term Anglo-American military alliance or by a partial dismemberment of Germany.

The logic of British policy pointed in the direction of a peace of reconciliation rather than revenge, but in two key areas, reparations and the question of German war guilt, Britain adopted a much harder line. Lloyd George and Clemenceau agreed in December 1918 that the Kaiser should be tried by an international tribunal for war crimes. Under pressure from the Dominions, who also wanted a share of reparations, the British delegation at Paris was authorised 'to secure from Germany the greatest possible indemnity she can pay consistently with the well-being of the British Empire and the peace of the world without involving an army of occupation in Germany for its collection'.

Italy and Japan
Italy
The Italian Prime Minister, Orlando (see opposite page), was anxious to convince the voters that Italy had done well out of the war, and concentrated initially on attempting to hold the Entente to their promises made in the Treaty of London (see page 62), as well as demanding the port of Fiume in the Adriatic.

Profile: David Lloyd George 1863–1945
1890 – Elected to parliament as a Liberal
1908–15 – Chancellor of the Exchequer
1916–22 – Prime Minister and brilliant war leader
1923–45 – Never again held any office of state
1945 – Died

Lloyd George was brought up in north Wales, and in 1890 was elected MP for Carnarvon for the Liberals. He was bitterly critical of the Boer War. In 1905 he joined the cabinet of the Liberal government and successfully recommended a series of major social reforms. During the First World War he made his reputation as a brilliant Minister of Munitions. In December 1916 he combined with the Conservatives to overthrow Asquith, the Liberal leader and Prime Minister. He was an inspirational war leader and remained in power until 1922. After his fall he never returned to power and died in 1945.
Japan wanted recognition of the territorial gains made in the war (see page 61). The Japanese also pushed hard, but ultimately unsuccessfully, to have a racial equality clause included in the covenant of the League of Nations. Japan hoped that this would protect Japanese immigrants in the USA.

### Summary diagram: Aims and principles of the victorious Great Powers

#### The aims of the Allied and Associated Powers at the Peace Conference, 1919

**Great Britain**
- Destruction of German navy and Colonial Empire
- Extension of influence in the Middle East
- Preservation of a united Germany as a barrier against Bolshevism
- Acceptance of the Covenant of the League of Nations
- Independent Poland
- Determination to prove German war guilt

**France**
- Recovery of Alsace-Lorraine
- Independent Rhineland
- Strengthen influence in Middle East
- Strong independent Poland
- Reparations
- Disarmed Germany
- Alliance with Britain and USA
- Acceptance of Covenant of League of Nations
- Determination to prove German war guilt

**Italy**
- Implementation of Treaty of London
- Annexation of Trentino and S. Tyrol and much of Istria
- Colonial gains in Africa and Middle East
- Acceptance of Covenant of League of Nations
- Determination to prove German war guilt

**USA**
- Implementation of the 14 Points:
  - (a) Independence for subject nations
  - (b) International rule of law through the League of Nations
  - (c) Disarmament
  - (d) Creation of League of Nations

**Japan**
- Recognition of territorial gains made in the war
- Inclusion of a racial equality clause in Covenant of the League of Nations

### 3 | The Organisation of the Paris Peace Conference

Compared to the Vienna Congress of 1814–15, the Paris Conference was a showpiece of sophisticated organisation. The British delegation, for instance, which was composed of 207 officials, as compared to a mere 17 in 1814, had its own printing press, telephone lines to London and the capitals of the British Empire, and a direct daily air link to Croydon airfield.

Yet despite this impressive evidence of outward efficiency, the conference got off to a slow start and for the first two months little progress was made towards a German settlement. The
reasons for this were partly organisational and partly that the Allied statesmen formed what Lloyd George called a ‘Cabinet of Nations’, which could not ignore the pressing problems of immediate post-war Europe. They had to consider the emergency consignments of food to central and eastern Europe, set up the Supreme Economic Council to deal with the financial and economic problems affecting both occupied and unoccupied Germany, and negotiate the easing of the food blockade of Germany in exchange for the surrender of the German merchant fleet. Above all, they ceaselessly monitored the progress of the civil war in Russia and weighed up the pros and cons of Allied military intervention.

The Council of Ten

When the Peace Conference opened on 18 January 1919 the delegates of 27 states attended, but in reality power lay with the ‘big five’: Britain, France, Italy, Japan and the USA. Each, with the exception of Japan, which to a great extent relied on its professional diplomats, was at first represented by its wartime leaders in the Council of Ten (two representatives per country). Neither Russia nor the defeated enemy powers attended. Russia was torn by a civil war between the Bolsheviks and the White Russians. At first, the Allies attempted to secure Russian representation at Paris, but their efforts to negotiate a truce between the factions in the civil war failed.

Right up to April the Allies were not sure whether to follow the pattern of previous peace conferences and plan for a preliminary peace with Germany and the other Central Powers, which would only contain the disarmament terms and the outlines of the territorial settlement. Then, at a later date, when passions had cooled, an international congress would be called to which the ex-enemy states would be invited.

Thus, unsure in their own minds whether they were working on a preliminary or final treaty, the members of the Council of Ten grappled with the intricate problems of peace-making. Fifty-eight committees were set up to draft the clauses of not only the German treaty but also the treaties with Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary and Turkey. Their work was handicapped by the absence of any central co-ordinating body, and consequently the different committees worked in isolation from each other, sometimes coming up with contradictory solutions.

The emergence of the Council of Four

It was not until 24 March that the organisation of the conference was streamlined as a result of Lloyd George’s controversial Fontainbleau memorandum. Inspired by the fear that the Allies might drive Germany into the arms of the Bolsheviks, this urged major concessions to Berlin, and so raised important issues which could only be resolved by secret discussions among Clemenceau, Lloyd George, Orlando and Wilson. This ‘Council of Four’ proved so effective that it became the key decision-making committee of the conference. It briefly became the Council of Three when
Orlando left it in protest against its refusal to agree to Italian claims in Fiume and Dalmatia (see page 98).

As most of the territorial committees had finished their reports by March, it was also decided to drop the idea of a preliminary peace and to proceed quickly to a final settlement with Germany. Inevitably, this decision had serious repercussions on the drafting of the treaty and possibly for the future peace of Europe. Harold Nicolson, a member of the British delegation in Paris, argued in 1933 that:

Many paragraphs of the treaty, and especially in the economic section, were in fact inserted as 'maximum statements' such as would provide some area of concession to Germany at the eventual congress. This congress never materialised: the last weeks flew past us in a hysterical nightmare; and these 'maximum statements' remained unmodified and were eventually imposed by ultimatum.

On the other hand, it is arguable that such were the problems the Allied statesmen faced in 1919 that, as the historian Max Beloff has observed, it is surprising 'not that the treaties were imperfect but that they were concluded at all'.

Summary diagram: The organisation of the Paris Peace Conference

- Representatives of 27 states attended
- Power lay with the Council of Ten, attended by two representatives each from Britain, France, Italy, Japan and the USA
- 58 Committees set up to draft clauses of the treaties of peace
- March, Council of Ten became Council of Four to streamline decisions. Attended by Clemenceau, Lloyd George, Orlando and Wilson
- Decision taken to drop idea of signing a preliminary peace with the Central Powers, and instead proceed quickly to a final settlement

41 The Settlement with Germany

All the peace settlements were to a greater or lesser extent the result of compromises between the Allied powers. Versailles was no exception. Its key clauses were the result of fiercely negotiated agreements, which were often only reached when the conference appeared to be on the brink of collapse. The first 26 articles...
Key question
Why were Anglo-French demands for reparations so high?

The Peace Settlements 1919–23 | 89

(which appeared in all the other treaties as well) contained the covenant of the League of Nations (see pages 119–20) and were agreed unanimously.

**German war guilt**

Despite some US and Italian reservations, which were eventually overcome by Lloyd George and Clemenceau, about the legality of demanding the surrender of the Kaiser and other German leaders for trial for committing acts against ’international morality’, there was universal agreement amongst the victorious powers that Germany was guilty of having started the war. It was this principle of war guilt which was to provide the moral justification for the reparations clauses of the treaty, as was stressed in Article 231:

> The Allied and associated governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her allies for causing all the loss and damage to which the Allied and associated governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies.

**Reparations**

Although there was general agreement that Germany should pay compensation to the victors, there was considerable debate about the amount to be paid, the nature of the damage deserving compensation and how Germany could raise such large sums of money without rebuilding an export trade which might then harm the Allied industries. Essentially, the major issue behind the Allied demands was the compelling need to cover the costs of financing the war. Britain had covered one-third of its war expenditure through taxation; France just one-sixth. At a time of severe social unrest, no Allied country could easily face the prospect of financing debt repayments by huge tax increases and savage cuts in expenditure. Initially it was hoped that the USA could be persuaded to continue wartime inter-Allied economic co-operation and, above all, cancel the repayment of Allied war debts, but by the end of 1918 it was obvious that this was not going to happen, as Wilson dissolved all the agencies for inter-Allied co-operation in Washington. Without US participation the British Treasury was reluctant to continue its wartime co-operation with the French Finance Ministry and in March 1919 all further financial assistance from Britain to France was stopped. France had no option therefore but to seek financial reparation from Germany.

**French demands for reparations**

The French Finance Minister, Louis Klotz, backed by the press and the Chamber of Deputies, urged a policy of maximum claims, and coined the slogan that ‘Germany will pay’ (for everything). Behind the scenes, however, Loucheur, the Minister for Reconstruction, pursued a more subtle policy and informed
the Germans that such was the need of the French economy for an immediate injection of cash, that his government would settle for a more moderate sum which the Germans would be able to raise quickly through the sale of bonds on the world’s financial markets. The German government, however, suspected that these overtures were merely a means of dividing Germany from the USA, which was seen in Berlin as the country potentially most sympathetic to the German cause. The USA’s reparation policy was certainly more moderate than either Britain’s or France’s as it recommended that a modest fixed sum should be written into the treaty.

British reparation demands
The British delegation consistently maximised their country’s reparation claims on Germany. Some historians explain this in terms of the pressure exerted on the government by the electorate. On the other hand, Lloyd George himself claimed that ‘the imposition of a high indemnity … would prevent the Germans spending money on an army’. It was arguable that a high indemnity would also ensure that there would be money left over for Britain and the Dominions after France and Belgium had claimed their share. To safeguard Britain’s percentage of reparations, the Imperial War Cabinet urged that the cost of war pensions should be included in the reparation bill. By threatening to walk out of the conference, Lloyd George then forced the council of Four to support his arguments.

Setting up the Reparation Commission
The British pension claims made it even more difficult for the Allied financial experts to agree on an overall figure for reparations. Consequently, at the end of April, it was agreed that the Reparation Commission should be set up to assess in detail by 1 May 1921 what the German economy could afford. In the meantime, the Germans would make an interim payment of 20 milliard (or billion) gold marks and raise a further 60 milliard through the sale of bonds. It was not until December 1919 that Britain and France agreed on the ratio 25:55 as the percentage of the total reparations which each power should eventually receive. Belgium was the only power to be awarded full compensation for its losses and priority in payment of the first sums due from Germany, largely because it too had threatened to withdraw from the conference in May at a time when Italy had already walked out and the Japanese were also threatening to do so (see page 93).

German disarmament
With reparations, the Allied and associated nations agreed on the necessity for German disarmament, but there were differences in emphasis. The British and Americans wished to destroy in Germany the tradition of conscription, which they regarded as ‘the taproot of militarism’. Instead they wanted a small professional army created along the lines of the British or US
Inter-Allied commissions
Allied committees set up to deal with particular tasks.

Plebiscite
A referendum, or vote by the electorate on a single issue.

Key question
What was the territorial settlement with Germany?

Key question
Why did Wilson and Clemenceau disagree on the Saarland?

Key question
Were French in the Rhineland?

Peacetime armies. General Foch, more wisely as it turned out, feared that a professional German army would merely become a tightly organised nucleus of trained men which would be capable of quick expansion when the opportunity arose.

Foch was overruled and the Council of Ten accepted in March proposals for the creation of inter-Allied commissions to monitor the pace of German disarmament, the abolition of the general staff, the creation of a regular army with a maximum strength of 100,000 men, the dissolution of the air force and the reduction of the navy to a handful of ships.

The territorial settlement
It was accepted, even by many Germans, that the predominantly Danish northern Schleswig, annexed by Bismarck in 1866, should be returned to Denmark. There was therefore general agreement that a plebiscite should be held to determine the size of the area to be handed back. The former German territories of Eupen and Malmedy, together with Moresnet, which before 1914 had been administered jointly by Germany and Belgium, were ceded to Belgium, and the neutrality of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg was confirmed.

The Saarland
The French proposals for the future of the Saarland proved more controversial. Clemenceau insisted on the restoration to France of that part of the Saar which was given to Prussia in 1814. He also aimed to detach the mineral and industrial basin to the north, which had never been French, and place it under an independent non-German administration. Finally he demanded full French ownership of the Saar coalmines to compensate for the destruction of the pits in northern France by the Germans.

Wilson immediately perceived that here was a clash between the national interests of France and the principle of self-determination as enshrined in the Fourteen Points. While he was ready to agree to French access to the coalmines until the production of their own mines had been restored, he vetoed outright other demands. To save the conference from breaking down, Lloyd George persuaded Wilson and Clemenceau to accept a compromise whereby the mines would become French for 15 years, while the actual government of the Saar would be entrusted to the League. After 15 years the people would have the right to decide in a plebiscite whether they wished to return to German rule. (In 1935 the plebiscite was duly held and the territory reverted to German control.)

The Rhineland
Over the future of the Rhineland there was an equally bitter clash between Britain and France. The British had no ambitions on the Rhine, but to the French, the occupation of the Rhine was a unique opportunity to weaken Germany permanently by making the whole region independent of Berlin. This would deprive Germany of the natural defensive line of the Rhine. The British
feared that this would not only create a new area of tension between France and Germany but also tilt the balance of power in Europe decisively towards France.

Only after heated and often bitter arguments was a compromise at last reached. Clemenceau agreed to limit the Allied occupation of the Rhineland to a 15-year period in return for an Anglo-American treaty guaranteeing France against a new German attack. The Rhineland would be divided into three zones, which would be evacuated after five, 10 and 15 years. Thereafter the Rhineland would be permanently demilitarised. Lloyd George was unwilling to accept even this length of occupation, and right up to the signature of the treaty he sought to evade the commitment.

**Germany’s eastern frontiers**

Anglo-French disagreements again dominated negotiations on Germany’s eastern frontiers. The Commission on Polish Affairs recommended on 12 March that Danzig, Marienwerder and

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**Demilitarised**

Having all military defences removed.

**Key question**

What was Lloyd George’s solution to the Danzig problem?
Upper Silesia should all be included in the new Polish state, so as
to give it access to the sea and make it economically viable. Only
the future of Allenstein would be decided by plebiscite. Lloyd
George vigorously opposed the inclusion of Danzig and
Marienwerder as he feared the long-term resentment of the local,
and predominantly German-speaking, population and dreaded
that an embittered Berlin might turn to Bolshevik Russia for
help. By threatening to withdraw from the Anglo-American
guarantee pact, he forced Clemenceau to agree to the holding of
a plebiscite in Marienwerder and the establishment of a free and
autonomous city of Danzig. The city was to be presided over by a
High Commissioner appointed by the League of Nations and to
form a customs union with Poland. It was also to be linked with
Poland through a narrow corridor of territory – the Danzig, or
Polish, corridor.

Germany's colonies
President Wilson insisted that the League should also have
ultimate control over the former German colonies. This was
accepted only reluctantly by the British Dominions of New
Zealand, Australia and South Africa, each arguing that the
outright annexation by themselves of the South Pacific islands,
Samoa and South West Africa, respectively, was vital for their
security. In May, agreement was reached on the division of the
German colonies. Britain, France and South Africa were allocated
most of the former German colonial empire in Africa, while
Australia, New Zealand and Japan secured the mandates for the
scattered German possessions in the Pacific. Italy was awarded
control of the Juba valley in East Africa, and a few minor
territorial adjustments were made to its Libyan frontier with
Algeria. Essentially Britain, the Dominions and France had
secured what they wanted, despite paying lip service to the
League by agreeing to mandated status for the former German
colonies.

Japan and former German territory in Shantung
A more serious clash arose between Japan and the USA. The
Japanese were determined to hold on to the ex-German leasehold
territory of Kiaochow (see page 61) in Shantung in China. The
Chinese government, however, on the strength of its declaration
of war against Germany in 1917, argued that all former German
rights should automatically revert to the Chinese state, despite
the fact that in 1915 it had agreed to recognise Japanese rights in
Shantung. Wilson was anxious to block the growth of Japanese
influence in the Pacific and supported China, but Lloyd George
and Clemenceau, wanting to protect their own rights in China,
backed Japan. Wilson, already locked in conflict with the Italians
over their claims to Fiume (see page 98) and facing Japanese
threats to boycott the conference and sign a separate peace with
Germany, had no option but to concede. It is arguable that this
humiliating defeat did much to turn the US Senate against the
Treaty of Versailles.
The German reaction
While the Allies were working on the treaty, the German government could only prepare for the time when it would be summoned to Paris to receive the draft terms. Optimistically in what one German intellectual, Ernst Troeltsch, called 'the dreamland of the armistice period', Berlin hoped that it would be able to protect Germany from excessive reparation claims and so keep the way open for a rapid economic recovery. Germany had become a republic in November 1918 and in elections held in January voted for a democratic coalition government in which the moderate socialist SPD was the largest party.

On 7 May the draft peace terms were at last presented to the Germans, who were given a mere 15 days to draw up their reply. The German government bitterly criticised the treaty on the basis that it did not conform to the Fourteen Points and demanded significant concessions:

- immediate membership of the League of Nations
- a guarantee that Austria and the ethnic Germans in the Sudetenland, which was a part of the new Czechoslovak state, should have the chance to decide whether they wished to join Germany (see the map on page 92)
- and the setting up of a neutral commission to examine the war guilt question.

Allied and US concessions to the Germans
These demands, which if met, would have strengthened Germany's position in central Europe, were rejected outright by the Allied and associated powers, but nevertheless some ground was conceded. Lloyd George, fearful that the Germans might reject the treaty, persuaded the French to agree to a plebiscite in Upper Silesia. He failed to limit the Rhineland occupation to five years, but did manage to secure the vague assurance, which later became Article 431 of the treaty, 'that once Germany had given concrete evidence of her willingness to fulfil her obligations', the Allied and associated powers would consider 'an earlier termination of the period of occupation'.

The signature of the Treaty of Versailles
On 16 June the Germans were handed the final version of the treaty incorporating these concessions. Not surprisingly, given the depth of opposition to it among the German people, it triggered a political crisis splitting the cabinet and leading to the resignation of the Chancellor. Yet in view of its own military weakness and the continuing Allied blockade, the Berlin government had little option but to accept the treaty, although it made very clear that it was acting under duress:

Surrendering to superior force but without retracting its opinion regarding the unheard of injustice of the peace conditions, the government of the German Republic therefore declares its readiness to accept and sign the peace conditions imposed by the Allied and associated governments.

Key question
How justified was German criticism of the Treaty of Versailles?

SPD
Social Democratic Party of Germany. Its leaders were hostile to Bolshevism and believed in parliamentary government.

Key question
What concessions were made to Germany?

Key question
Why did the Germans sign the Treaty?

Key dates
Treaty of Versailles signed with Germany: 28 June 1919
Treaty of Versailles and League of Nations came into force: 10 January 1920
In the Hall of Mirrors in Versailles, French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau adds his signature to the Treaty of Versailles on 28 June 1919.

On 28 June 1919 the treaty was signed in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, where in 1871 the German Empire had been proclaimed (see page 13).

**Key question**
Why did the Americans not ratify the treaty?

**Ratified**
Having received formal approval from parliament.

**Isolationists**
US politicians who were opposed to any US commitments or entanglements in Europe or elsewhere.

**Henry Cabot Lodge (1850–1924)**
A US statesman, a Republican politician and a historian. He was chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

**The American refusal to ratify the treaty**
By January 1920 the treaty had been ratified by all the signatory powers with the important exception of the USA. In Washington, crucial amendments had been put forward by a coalition of isolationists, led by Senator Lodge, rejecting the Shantung settlement and seriously modifying the covenant of the League. In essence the isolationists feared that if the USA joined the League, it could be committed to defend the independence of other League members from aggression, even if this meant going to war. They therefore proposed that Congress should be empowered to veto US participation in any League initiative that clashed with the USA's traditional policy of isolationism and independence. Wilson felt that these amendments would paralyse the League and so refused to accept them. He failed twice to secure the necessary two-thirds majority in the Senate.

This was a major defeat for Wilson, and the consequences for Europe were serious. Without US ratification, the Anglo-American military guarantee of France lapsed and the burden of carrying out the Treaty of Versailles fell on Britain and France (see pages 102–5).
After the ceremony at Versailles the Allied leaders returned home, leaving their officials to draft the treaties with Germany’s former allies. The outlines of a settlement in eastern Europe and the Balkans were already clear: Austria-Hungary and the Tsarist Russian empire had collapsed, the Poles and Czechs had declared their independence and the South Slavs had decided to federate with Serbia to form what was later to be called Yugoslavia. The bewildering diversity of races in the Balkans, who were in no way concentrated in easily definable areas, would ensure that however the Great Powers drew the frontiers, the final settlement would be full of contradictions. The three defeated powers, Austria and Hungary (both treated as the heirs to the former Austro-Hungarian Empire) and Bulgaria, all had to pay reparations, disarm and submit to the humiliation of a war guilt clause. The basis of the settlement in south-central Europe and the Balkans was the creation of the new Czecho-Slovak state and Serbo-Croat-Slovene state, or Yugoslavia.

The Treaty of St Germain, 10 September 1919
The Treaty of St Germain split up the diverse territories which before the war had been part of the Austrian Empire. Rump Austria was now reduced to a small German-speaking state of some six million people:

- Italy was awarded South Tyrol, despite the existence there of some 230,000 ethnic Germans.
- Bohemia and Moravia were ceded to Czechoslovakia. Any second thoughts the British or Americans had about handing over to the Czechs the three million Germans who made up nearly one-third of the population of these provinces were
quickly stifled by French opposition. The French wanted a potential ally against Germany to be strengthened by a defensible frontier and the possession of the Skoda munitions works in Pilsen, both of which entailed the forcible integration of large German minorities into Czechoslovakia.

- Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Dalmatia were handed over to Yugoslavia.
- Galicia and Bukovina were ceded to Poland and Romania, respectively.
- Only in Carinthia, where the population consisted of German-speaking Slovenes who did not want to join Yugoslavia, did the Great Powers consent to a plebiscite. This resulted in 1920 in the area remaining Austrian.

To avoid the dangers of an Anschluss with Germany, Article 88 (which was identical to Article 80 in the Treaty of Versailles) stated that only the Council of the League of Nations was empowered to sanction a change in Austria's status as an independent state. Effectively this meant that France, as a permanent member of the Council, could veto any proposed change (see the map on page 92).

**The Treaty of Trianon, 4 June 1920**

Of all the defeated powers in 1919 it is arguable that Hungary suffered the most severely. By the Treaty of Trianon Hungary lost over two-thirds of its territory and 41.6 per cent of its population. It was particularly vulnerable to partition, as essentially only the heartlands of Hungary, the great Central Plain, were Magyar. Its fate was sealed, when, in November 1918, Serb, Czech and Romanian troops all occupied the regions they claimed. The completion of the treaty was delayed by the communist coup in March 1919 (see page 82), but was resumed after its defeat. The Treaty of Trianon was signed in June 1920:

- Most of the German-speaking area in the west of the former Hungarian state was ceded to Austria.
- The Slovakian and Ruthenian regions in the north went to Czechoslovakia.
- The east went to Romania.
- The south went to Yugoslavia (see the map on page 92).

The Treaty of Trianon was justified by the Allies according to the principle of national self-determination, but in the context of Hungary this was a principle almost impossible to realise.

C.A. Macartney, an expert on Hungary and the successor states, observed in 1937:

... the ethical line was practically nowhere clear cut ... long centuries of interpenetration, assimilation, migration and internal colonisation had left in many places a belt of mixed and often indeterminate population where each national group merged into the next, while there were innumerable islands of one nationality set in seas of another, ranging in size from the half-million of Magyar-speaking Szekeley in Transylvania through many inter-determinate groups of fifty or a hundred thousand down to communities of a
single village or less ... No frontier could be drawn which did not leave national minorities on at least one side of it.

Wherever there was a clash of interests between Hungary and the successor states or Romania, the Allies ensured that the decision went against Hungary.

The Treaty of Neuilly, 27 November 1919
The same principle operated in the negotiations leading up to the Treaty of Neuilly with Bulgaria, which was signed on November 1919. Essentially Britain and France regarded Bulgaria as the 'Balkan Prussia' which needed to be restrained. They were determined, despite reservations from Italy and America, to reward their allies, Romania, Greece and Serbia (now part of Yugoslavia) at its expense. Thus southern Dobruja, with a mere 7000 Romanians out of a total population of 250,000, was ceded to Romania and western Thrace was given to Greece (see the map on page 92).

Fiume, Istria and Dalmatia
These post-war settlements were accompanied by bitter quarrels between the Allied and associated powers. The most serious clash of opinions took place between Italy and the USA over Italian claims to Fiume, Istria and Dalmatia (see the map on page 92). Orlando was desperate to prove to the Italian electorate that Italy was not a 'proletarian nation' which could be dictated to by the Great Powers, and insisted on its right to annex both Albania and the port of Fiume in which, it could be argued, there was a bare majority of ethnic Italians, if the Croat suburb of Susak was conveniently left out of the picture. The Italian annexation of Fiume would have the added bonus of denying Yugoslavia its only effective port in the Adriatic, thereby strengthening Italy's economic grip on the region. Agreement could have been achieved, especially as Orlando was ready in April 1919 to accept Fiume as a compromise for giving up Italian claims on Dalmatia; but Wilson made the major political mistake of vetoing this option publicly in a statement in the French press. After compromising over the Saar and Shantung, Wilson was stubbornly determined to make a stand on the Fourteen Points in the Adriatic. Orlando and Sonnino, his Foreign Secretary, walked out of the Peace Conference in protest and did not return until 9 May 1919.

Orlando's resignation and his replacement by Nitti in June opened the way up for secret negotiations in Paris, but the lynching of nine French troops in Fiume by an Italian mob in July and then the seizure of the city in September by the Italian nationalist poet d'Annunzio merely prolonged the crisis. It was not until November 1920 that Yugoslavia and Italy agreed on a compromise and signed the Treaty of Rapallo. Istria was partitioned between the two powers, Fiume was to become a self-governing free city, while the rest of Dalmatia went to Yugoslavia. In December Italian troops cleared d'Annunzio out of Fiume, although in late 1923 Mussolini ordered its reoccupation.

Successor states
States that were created after the collapse of Austria-Hungary.

Key question
What were the main terms of the Treaty of Neuilly?

'Balkan Prussia'
Bulgaria was compared to Prussia, which in the eyes of the Allies had an aggressive and militarist reputation.

Proletarian nation
A nation that lacked an empire and raw materials. Like the proletariat (workers) it was poor.

Key figure
Gabriele D'Annunzio (1863–1938)
Italian nationalist poet, writer and leader of the coup in Fiume.
Summary diagram: The settlements with Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria

Austria
- St Germain
  - Czechoslovakia set up
  - Slovenia, Bosnia, Dalmatia to Yugoslavia
  - Istria, Trieste and S. Tyrol to Italy
  - Galicia to Poland
  - Austria not to integrate with Germany

Hungary
- Trianon
  - Hungary loses 2/3 of her pre-war territory to Austria, Czechoslovakia and Romania

Bulgaria
- Neuilly
  - Bulgaria loses territory to Greece, Romania and Yugoslavia

Key question
To what extent was the Treaty of Sèvres so harsh that it was bound to provoke a backlash?

Treaty of Sèvres
signed with Turkey: 10 August 1920

6 | The Settlement with Turkey 1919–23

The Treaty of Sèvres was another Anglo-French compromise. Lloyd George hoped drastically to weaken Turkey, not only by depriving it of Constantinople and of the control of the Straits, but also by forcing it to surrender all territories where there was no ethnic Turkish majority. He now envisaged Greece, which entered the war on the Allied side in 1917, rather than Italy, as filling the vacuum left by the collapse of Turkish power and, in effect, becoming the agent of the British Empire in the eastern Mediterranean. The French, on the other hand, concerned to protect their pre-war investments in Turkey, wished to preserve a viable Turkish state. Above all, they wanted the Turkish government to remain in Constantinople where it would be more vulnerable to French pressure.

The end product of this Anglo-French compromise was a harsh and humiliating treaty. Constantinople remained Turkish, but Thrace and most of the European coastline of the Sea of Marmara and the Dardanelles were to go to Greece. In the Smyrna region the Greeks were also given responsibility for internal administration and defence, while an Armenian state was to be set up with access across Turkish territory to the Black Sea. The Straits were to be controlled by an international commission, and an Allied financial committee was to have the right to inspect Turkey’s finances. By a separate agreement zones were also awarded to France and Italy in southern Turkey (see the map on page 100).

Key question
Why was Britain able to revise the Sykes–Picot Agreement to suit its own interests?

The division of Turkey’s Arabian territories
The Sykes–Picot Agreement
In May 1916 Britain and France signed the Sykes–Picot Agreement. By this they committed themselves to dividing up Mesopotamia, Syria and the Lebanon into Anglo-French spheres
of interest once the war against Turkey had been won. Britain, however, was the only power with a large army in the Middle East, and consequently was able to revise the Sykes–Picot Agreement unilaterally. In 1917 Britain insisted on claiming the whole of Palestine, which was quite contrary to the agreement. By announcing support for the Zionists' ambition to establish a national home for the Jews in Palestine through the Balfour Declaration, Britain cleverly managed to secure the USA's backing for its aims.

The Middle East mandates
In February 1919, in deference to Wilson and the Fourteen Points, Britain and France agreed that they could only exercise power over these territories in the name of the League of Nations. It took several more months of bitter argument before the British agreed to a French mandate in Syria and also French access to the oil wells in Mosul in Iraq. The frontiers between the British mandates of Palestine and Iraq and the French mandate of Syria were then finalised in December (see the map above).

Mustapha Kemal and the revision of the treaty
Of all the treaties negotiated in 1919–20, Sèvres, signed on 10 August 1920, was the most obvious failure as it was never put into effect by the Turkish government. When the Allies imposed they took little account of the profound changes in Turkey brought about by the rise of Mustapha Kemal, the leader of the new nationalist movement. Kemal had set up a rebel government which controlled virtually the whole of the Turkish interior, and

Zionists
Supporters of Zionism, a movement for re-establishing the Jewish state.

Balfour Declaration
A communication to the Zionists by A.J. Balfour, the British Foreign Secretary, declaring British support for establishing a national home for the Jews in Palestine.

Key question
Why was Kemal able to force the revision of the Treaty of Sèvres?
Profile: Mustapha Kemal 1880–1938
1880 – Born in Salonika
1908 – As an army officer he originally supported attempts to modernise Turkey by the Young Turks
1915 – Commander of Turkish troops at Gallipoli
1919 – Became leader of a nationalist revolution
1922 – Ejected Greeks from Smyrna and forced Britain and France to renegotiate the Treaty of Sèvres
1922–38 – Ruled Turkey as a dictator

Mustapha Kemal created the Turkish Republic in 1923. He was a great moderniser who emancipated women, introduced a Latin alphabet and encouraged Western-style dress. He also began to industrialise Turkey and to free it from traditional Islamic loyalties.

was determined not to accept the treaty. The long delay until August 1920 ensured that growing Turkish resentment, particularly at the Greek occupation of Smyrna (see page 99), which the Allies had encouraged in May 1919, made its enforcement an impossibility.

By settling the dispute over the Russo-Turkish frontier in the Caucasus, Kemal was able to concentrate his forces against the Greeks without fear of Russian intervention from the north. By August 1922 he was poised to enter Constantinople and the Straits zone, which were still occupied by Allied troops. Both the Italians and French rapidly withdrew leaving the British isolated.

Kemal, however, avoided direct confrontation with the British forces and negotiated an armistice, which gave him virtually all he wanted: the Greeks withdrew from eastern Thrace and Adrianople, and the British recognised Turkish control over Constantinople and the Straits (see the map on page 100).

In 1923 an international conference met at Lausanne to revise the Treaty of Sèvres. Kemal, anxious not to be dependent on Russia, agreed to the creation of small demilitarised zones on both sides of the Straits and the freedom of navigation through them for Britain, France, Italy and Japan. He also insisted on the abolition of foreign control over Turkish finances. This was a serious blow to the French hopes of re-establishing their pre-war influence over Turkish finances, and arguably they, apart from the Greeks, lost more than any other power as a consequence of the new Treaty of Lausanne. The Chanak crisis did not affect the fate of Turkey's former Arab provinces, which remained under the control of Britain and France.
Summary diagram: The settlement with Turkey 1919–23

The peace settlement with Turkey

Sèvres
Turks cede Middle East empire; Greeks gain
Thrace; Straits controlled by Allies
Revised at Lausanne, 1923: Greeks expelled,
Constantinople back to Turkey

7 Enforcing the Treaty of Versailles 1920–3

The organisation for carrying out the treaties
Once the Treaty of Versailles had been ratified the victorious
powers set up a series of inter-Allied commissions to organise the
plebiscites, monitor German disarmament and examine
Germany's financial position with a view to payment of its
reparations. These reported to the Conference of Ambassadors
in Paris, which represented the Allied powers, but the real
decisions were taken by the Allied prime ministers, who between
January 1920 and January 1924 met 24 times to review progress
made in carrying out the Treaty of Versailles.

Anglo-French differences
Both Britain and France had conflicting ideas of how best to
ensure that Germany carried out the Treaty of Versailles.
Essentially Britain, as the centre of a worldwide empire, wanted to
see a balance of power in Europe that would prevent either
French or German domination and leave it free to deal with the
growing challenges to its power from nationalist movements in
India, Egypt and Ireland. Britain was also convinced that only a
prosperous and peaceful Germany could pay reparations and play
its part in Europe as one of the main engines of the European
economy.

For France, the German problem was an overriding priority.
French policy swung uneasily between occasionally exploring the
possibilities of economic co-operation with Germany, and more
usually of applying forceful measures designed permanently to
weaken Germany and to force it to fulfil the treaty.

Drawing up Poland’s borders
The eastern frontier with Russia
The Poles exploited the chaos caused by the Russian civil war to
extend their eastern frontier deep in the Ukraine and Belorussia.
In December 1919 they rejected the proposed eastern frontier
based on recommendations put forward by Lord Curzon, the
British Foreign Minister, and in early 1920 embarked on a full-
scale invasion of the Ukraine.
Key question
Why did the British and French disagree about the Upper Silesian frontier?

By August, Bolshevik forces had pushed the Poles back to Warsaw. However, with the help of French equipment and military advisers, the Poles rallied and managed to inflict a decisive defeat on the Red Army just outside Warsaw. Soviet troops were pushed back, and in March 1921 Poland’s eastern frontiers were at last fixed by the Treaty of Riga. Poland annexed a considerable area of Belorussia and the western Ukraine (see the map on page 92), all of which lay well to the east of the proposed Curzon line.

Upper Silesia
By the end of 1920 the Marienwerder and Allenstein plebiscites had been held, in both of which the population voted to stay in Germany, and Danzig had become a free city under the administration of the League of Nations in November 1920.

Fixing the Upper Silesian frontiers, however, proved to be a much greater problem. Upper Silesia had a population of some 2,280,000 Germans and Poles, who were bitterly divided along ethnic lines, and a concentration of coal mines and industries that were second only in size to the Ruhr.

The plebiscite on 17 March 1921 produced an ambiguous result which did not solve the Anglo-French disagreements over Poland. The British argued that its result justified keeping the key industrial regions of the province German, while the French insisted that they should be awarded to Poland. Fearing that once again British wishes would prevail, the Poles seized control of the industrial area, and an uprising broke out in May 1921. Order was eventually restored by British and French troops in July 1921 and the whole question was handed over to the League of Nations in August. In 1922 the League, bowing to French pressure, decided to hand over most of the industrial areas to Poland.

Reparations
By far the most difficult problem facing the British and French governments was the reparation problem. Both the British and French hoped to solve the problem by fixing a global total as soon as possible on the assumption that once Germany knew the full sum of its debts it would be able to raise money in the USA from the sale of government bonds and begin payments.

At the end of April 1921 the Reparation Commission at last fixed a global total for reparations of 132 billion gold marks to be paid over a period of 42 years. When this was rejected by Germany, on the grounds that the sum was too high, an ultimatum was dispatched to Berlin giving the Germans only a week to accept the new payment schedule, after which the Ruhr would be occupied.

To carry out the London ultimatum a new government was formed by Joseph Wirth (1879–1956) on 10 May. Assisted by Walther Rathenau, his Minister for Reconstruction, he was determined to pursue a policy of negotiation rather than confrontation. The first instalment was paid, and Rathenau made some progress in persuading the French to accept the payment of a proportion of reparations in the form of the delivery of industrial...
goods and coal. However, by the end of the year the German government dropped a bombshell by announcing that, as a consequence of escalating inflation, it could not raise sufficient hard currency to meet the next instalment of reparation payments.

The Geneva Conference, April 1922

This gave Lloyd George the opportunity to launch a major initiative. He was convinced that Germany needed a temporary moratorium, to put its economy in order; while in the longer term the key to the payment of reparations and a European economic revival lay in creating a European group of industrial nations, including Germany, to rebuild Russia. He hoped that this would generate an international trade boom, which would also benefit Germany, and enable it to pay reparations without damaging the commerce of the other European nations.

Raymond Poincaré (see page 45), who had just become French Prime Minister again, grudgingly consented to holding an international conference at Geneva, to which both the USSR and Germany would be invited to discuss these plans, but he vetoed any concession on reparations. The Soviets agreed to attend, but were highly suspicious of Lloyd George's plans for opening up their economy to foreign capital.

During the conference they pulled off a major diplomatic triumph by secretly negotiating the Rapallo Agreement with Germany, whereby both countries agreed to write off any financial claims on each other dating from the war. Germany also pledged to consult with Moscow before participating in any international plans for exploiting the Soviet economy.

Rapallo effectively killed Lloyd George's plan. It is hard not to see Rapallo as a miscalculation by the Germans. While it helped Germany to escape from isolation, it did so at the cost of intensifying French suspicions of its motives. In many ways these were justified, as a secret annex signed in July allowed Germany to train its soldiers in Soviet territory, thereby violating the terms of the Treaty of Versailles.

The Ruhr occupation

In July 1922 a major confrontation between France and Germany seemed inevitable when the German government requested a three-year moratorium. At the same time Britain announced that, as the USA was demanding the repayment of British wartime debts, it must in turn insist on the repayment of money loaned to former allies, particularly France. To the French, Britain's demand for these repayments contrasted painfully with the concessions Lloyd George was ready to offer the Germans.

On 27 November the Poincaré cabinet decided finally that the occupation of the Ruhr was the only means of forcing Germany to pay reparations, and on 11 January French and Belgian troops moved into the Ruhr. Significantly, Britain did not join in but adopted a policy of 'benevolent neutrality' towards France.

For nine months the French occupation of the Ruhr was met by passive resistance and strikes which were financed by the
German government. This increased the cost of the occupation, but it also triggered hyperinflation in Germany. In September, Germany was on the brink of collapse and the new Chancellor, Gustav Stresemann, called off passive resistance.

France, too, had exhausted itself and seriously weakened the franc in the prolonged Ruhr crisis. France’s attempts to back Rhineland separatism and to create an independent Rhineland currency were unsuccessful. Separatist leaders were assassinated by German nationalist agents from unoccupied Germany or lynched by angry crowds. Poincaré had thus little option but to co-operate with an Anglo-American initiative for setting up a commission chaired by the US financier Charles G. Dawes. Its two committee experts, one to study Germany’s capacity for payment, and the other to advise on how it could best balance the budget and restore its currency, began work in early 1924.

As one French official accurately observed, the time was now past for dealing with Germany as ‘victor to vanquished’. The Ruhr crisis marked the end of the attempts to carry out the Treaty of Versailles by force and the beginning of the gradual revision of the treaty itself.

8 | The Key Debate

To what extent did the peace settlements of 1919–20 contain the seeds of their own destruction?

The peace treaties of 1919–20 were seen by some contemporaries as a triumph of democracy, the rule of law, self-determination and collective security against militarism, and yet by others as a hypocritical act of vengeance and economic ignorance. The treaties contained a unique combination of idealism and morality with old-fashioned power politics.

Increasingly, as a result of the devastating criticisms in The Economic Consequences of the Peace, which was a brilliant analysis of
the Versailles Treaty written in 1919 by Keynes, an economist who had been a member of the British delegation in Paris, public opinion in Britain and the USA began to turn against the peace. Keynes summarised his arguments as follows:

1) ... the treaty ignores the economic solidarity of Europe and by aiming at the destruction of the economic life of Germany it threatens the health and prosperity of the Allies themselves.

2) ... the German economic system as it existed before depended on ... i) Overseas commerce as represented by her Mercantile marine [most of which had to be handed over to the Allies], her colonies, her foreign investments, her exports ... ii) The exploitation of her coal and iron and the industries built upon them ... The Treaty aims at the systematic destruction of [this system].

To the Germans, Keynes' arguments seemed to provide the final proof that the Allies were out to destroy their country. Yet viewed from the perspective of 1945 the Treaty of Versailles does not appear as harsh as it did in 1919. Germany was still potentially a Great Power.

Unlike the Vienna settlement of 1815, the peace treaties failed to create a new balance of power in Europe. The Austrian Empire was replaced by several smaller unstable states. Italy felt cheated by the peace and was to remain a revisionist power in the Mediterranean and the Adriatic. Even Britain and France, who gained most from Versailles, in fact secured only short-term advantages as they were too divided by mutual suspicions effectively to implement the treaties in the crucial post-war years.

A major weakness of the settlements of 1919–20 was that the USA, which had played such a part in negotiating them, was prevented by the vote in the Senate from helping to implement them. One US historian, Paul Birdsall, argued that:

the defection of the United States destroyed the Anglo-American preponderance which above all could have stabilised Europe. It impaired the authority and prestige of the League at its birth and it precipitated an Anglo–French duel which reduced Europe to the chaos from which Hitler emerged to produce new chaos ...

While it is debatable whether the US Senate can be held responsible for the rise of Hitler and the Second World War, there is no doubt that the USA's active presence in the Supreme Council of the Allies between 1920 and 1923 and its participation in a military guarantee of France's frontiers would have had a decisive influence on European stabilisation in the immediate post-war years.

Some key books in the debate: