

The Peace Settlement and Germany

Britain, France and the USA did not agree about what should be included in the peace treaty with Germany. Each country had suffered in different ways during the war.

France had suffered the most because much of Northern France had been a battlefield. She had lost almost 1,250,000 men and had been invaded by Germany for the second time since 1870. Ninety percent of the French coal and iron industries had been seized by the Germans at the beginning of the war. Many of these mines had been deliberately flooded by the retreating German Army at the end of the war. Over 48,000 km of French roads and 23,000 factories had been destroyed during the fighting. In total, an area the size of Wales was completely devastated.

Britain had lost 750,000 men and spent nearly £8 Billion on the war. Britain also had to borrow 1 Billion pounds from the USA. Many of its citizens blamed Germany for starting the war and now wanted revenge. Her Prime Minister, Lloyd George realised however that if Germany was treated too harshly, she would be bitter and might one day try to start another war.

The USA had joined the war in April 1917 and had lost 113,000 men in the fighting. No battles had been fought on her soil. Her businessmen had lent vast sums to countries like Britain to help them pay for the cost of the war. She had also captured many foreign markets which countries like Britain could no longer supply. Many Americans felt they had come to the rescue of Britain and France, and beyond that, had had no reason to become involved in the war. Now they wanted to turn their backs on Europe and to start collecting the money they had lent Britain and France.

Source A:

A member of the British public, 1918.

‘The German nation should be destroyed. It is the only way to ensure that such a war never happens again.’

Source B:

A member of the British public, 1918.

‘If we weaken and punish Germany too much, it will only anger her. That way, we’ll make a war more likely, not less.’

**Reparation =
to pay for the
damage.**

Source C:

Clemenceau, French President, 1918.

‘Germany must be brought to book; We demand reparation and revenge’

Activities

1. Which country had enemy armies fighting on their soil?
2. Which country suffered damage to farmland, factories and communications?
3. In your opinion which country suffered the most in World War One? Why?
4. In your opinion which country suffered the least in World War One? Why?
5. Read Source C. Why did the French want 'reparation and revenge'?



Source D: British Poster, 1919.

6. Read Sources A and D. Why did so many people in Britain hate the Germans in 1918?
7. Read Source B. Why did some people in Britain think punishing Germany too much was a bad idea?