

Fourteen Points & Wilson's Fight For Peace

- Anticipating the end of the war – Wilson presented a message to Congress on **1/8/1918** that outlined his vision for the post-war world
 - Known as the **14 Points**, Wilson suggested **ground rules for peace**
 - 5 points dealt with **eliminating the causes of the war**
 - 8 dealt with the **self-determination of nations**
 - 1 called for a **League of Nations** to keep world peace
 - A forerunner to the United Nations
 - President Wilson himself went to **Versailles** to seek an ideal peace
 - His partners at the conference, however, wanted Germany to pay
 - Allied delegates known as **the Big Four**
 - Wilson, **Georges Clemenceau** (FR), **David Lloyd George** (GB), and **Vittorio Orlando** (It)
 - France & Britain wanted revenge, Italy wanted land
 - **No delegates from Central Powers, Russia, or others**
 - In order to get agreement on the most important of his 14 points – the League of Nations – Wilson had to make concessions on other points
- **Treaty of Versailles** was signed 6/28/1919 – among the provisions:
 - **9 new nations** were created (among them Poland, Czechoslovakia)
 - Boundaries of others were shifted
 - At the expense of Germany and other Central Powers
 - Germany forced to give up all of her **colonies** to Allies
 - Become **mandates** – temporary colonies pending independence
 - Germany had to **disarm** – no more than 100K soldiers, no draft, no military in Rhineland, navy gutted, no subs, military aircraft, war industries
 - Germany had to accept **full responsibility** for starting the war (not true) and agreed to pay **reparations** (\$56 billion) for war damages
 - A **League of Nations** would be formed
- The T of V had **serious flaws**
 - Failed to create a lasting peace
 - Laid groundwork for postwar problems & WWII
 - Germans resented loss of key industrial areas
 - Germans **HATED** the war guilt clause
 - One reason for the rise of **Hitler**
 - German-speaking people in Austria-Hungary (divided up in a separate treaty) were placed in the **Sudetenland** – part of new Czechoslovakia

- One of the first areas taken by Hitler before WWII
- **Russia**, which fought for Allies & lost more soldiers than any other country, lost more land than Germany
 - Allies purposefully set up a buffer zone of new countries to halt the spread of **communism**
 - U.S. had troops in Russia during the civil war that followed the Russian Rev.
 - Supposedly ensuring the free movement of the Trans-Siberian Railway
 - Evidence suggests that U.S. was supporting **White (anti-Communist) Russians**
 - Russia (USSR in 1922) would become determined to get land back – would form a secret alliance with Germany before WWII to get land in return for support
- T of V was arguably harsh to Germany
 - Ger. not the only one at fault
 - Ger. unarmed while everyone else remained armed
 - Wounded German pride would come back to haunt Europe
- Also arguable that T of V was fair but not enforced
 - Land taken from Germany and others was divided based on nationality or (as in case of mandates) independence
 - Disarming Germany a step toward world disarmament
 - League of Nations a positive move – though it would have no teeth
 - If it had worked, Nazis may not have been able to wage war
- Wilson came back to the U.S. to get **Senate** approval of the T of V
 - Surprised at number of groups that objected to it for several reasons
 - Some objections based on ethnic grounds
 - **Main sticking point was the League of Nations**
 - What Wilson wanted more than anything in the treaty
 - **Isolationists** were suspicious of U.S. role in the L of N
 - Would U.S. have authority over its own affairs?
 - Could U.S. withdraw if it wanted?
 - Would Congress have authority to approve U.S. actions with the L of N?
 - Desperate to win passage of the treaty, Wilson went on U.S. tour
 - Explaining to people the need for passage of the treaty
 - Trip exhausted him – **suffered a stroke** during the tour
 - Unable to champion his cause with the people – Wilson could only watch the treaty lose in the Senate
- U.S. ended up signing **a separate treaty** with Germany in 1921
 - The Treaty of Versailles went into effect **without the U.S.**

- Most important – the **U.S. never joined the League of Nations**
- Would WWII have happened if the U.S. was in the L of N?
 - We will never know