The Interwar Years

The name given to the period of time from 1919-1939. It is framed by the Paris Peace Conference and the outbreak of World War II.

Challenges Facing the Victors in 1919

The victors, who approached the challenge of political reconstruction in Europe with the assumptions that they had won a clear cut victory and that it would be simple to reestablish European politics, faced many challenges in 1919. Germany felt resentment for having had the bride blame placed on them; there was no way to enforce the peace treaty, the collapse of both the Austro-Hungarian empire and the ottoman empire, the isolation of both Russia and the united states of America, the wall street crisis of 1929 and finally the fact that Britain and France did not want to be the conductors of European affairs.

Therefore, the Paris peace conference and the events surrounding it, it can be argued that the Paris peace conference created more problem than it solved. To understand this, we must examine why such a treaty emerged from Versailles.

What Shaped the Terms of the Treaty of Versailles?

The political pressures, to an extent, forced the countries to punish Germany. The people of the countries were pressuring their leaders to take action and blame someone. Therefore, the dismantling of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was the event that least shaped the Treaty of Versailles because the wanting of the territories was not so strong to have mainly shaped the Treaty of Versailles.

The Forces at Work That Determined the Format of the Versailles Treaty

The Political Pressures: The leaders of the allied powers were not in the position to make complete decisions for lasting peace. David Lloyd George (British Prime Minister) was fighting a general election while the entire country was angry at Germany. Georges Clemenceau (French President) had to deal with the country’s anger and anxiety and try to ensure lasting peace. France suffered the most in terms of moral defeat. Fance felt unsafe. Woodrow Wilson (American President) wanted to replace European diplomacy with lasting peace. He was the centre of the peace conference.

Desire to Punish Germany: The 440 clauses of the peace treaty with Germany were based around four major issues. Germany was, in a way, forced to acknowledge that they were entirely to blame for WWI; Germany did sign it, but only because they weren’t in any position to not do so. Germany had to completed disarm its forces (12 years service only) to prevent the build up of experienced reserves and the possibility of another strong army arising from Germany. The boundaries of the Germany state were adjusted to satisfy its neighbouring countries. Alsace-Lorraine