

3

Making peace 1919–23

3.1 Prospects for peace



The key thing to grasp is that the end of the war did not end the hatred. Try to remember at least two major problems that concerned people at the end of the war.

Key words

armistice; ceasefire; democratic; humiliated; Kaiser; League of Nations; President

Factfile

The cost of the Great War

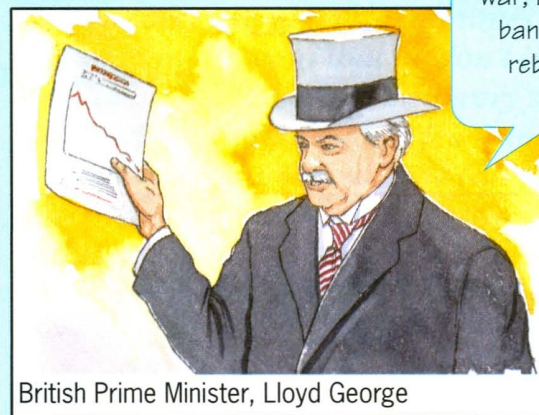
- ★ Troops killed: 8 million.
- ★ Troops wounded: 21 million.
- ★ Casualties for selected countries: Germany – 2 million; Russia – 1.75 million; British empire – 3.2 million.
- ★ France lost 250,000 buildings and 8000 square miles of agricultural land. Around 60 per cent of France's young men were either killed or wounded.
- ★ Britain spent around £9 billion on the war.
- ★ Germany, Russia and the Austrian empire all collapsed in revolution.
- ★ To make matters worse, a flu epidemic spread through Europe in the winter of 1918–19. It killed around 20 million people.

It's time for the USA to make the world a better place. I want to end rivalry between nations. I want small nations to rule themselves. I want a LEAGUE OF NATIONS to help to keep peace.



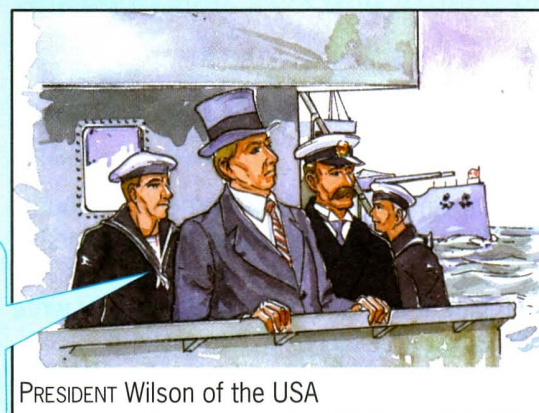
British civilians

This war was Germany's fault. They must be punished.



British Prime Minister, Lloyd George

We may have won the war, but we are nearly bankrupt. We must rebuild trade and prosperity.



PRESIDENT Wilson of the USA

Germany must be crippled or we will never feel safe again.



French civilians

Fighting ended on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month in 1918, with an **ARMISTICE** or **CEASEFIRE**.

The Great War was the bloodiest, costliest war that the world had ever known. The Factfile on page 55 gives you some of the raw details. What do you think people around Europe would be thinking after such an awful war?

Activity

You are one of President Wilson's political advisers. Write him a short memo beginning:

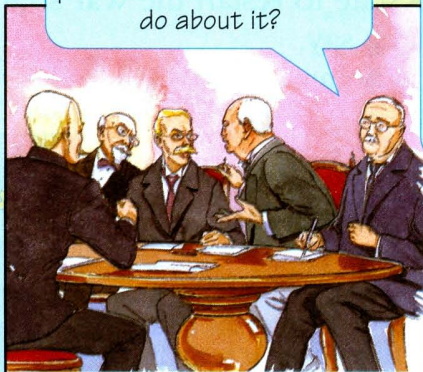
Dear Mr President
 You have said you intend to make the world a better place. This may be more difficult than you think. You need to know what people in Europe are thinking at the moment. For example...

Parts of our country are a wasteland. The Germans must pay for what they have done.



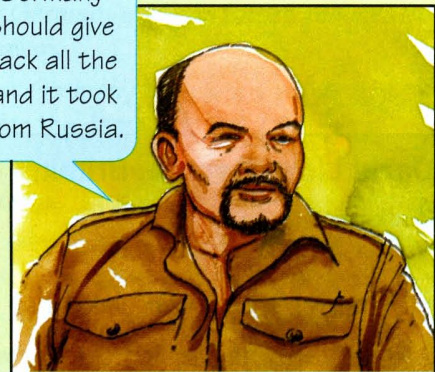
Belgian civilians

The KAISER has left Germany. We run the country now, but it's in ruins. People are starving. They feel HUMILIATED by defeat. They are already blaming us for their problems, but what can we do about it?



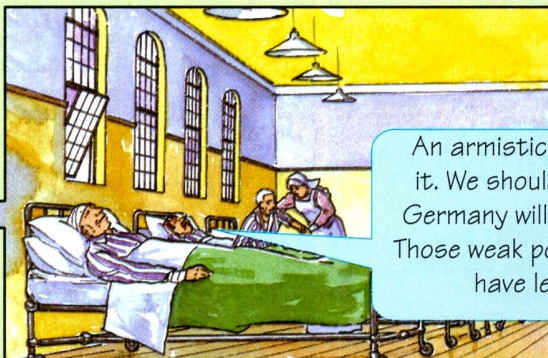
German DEMOCRATIC leaders

Germany should give back all the land it took from Russia.



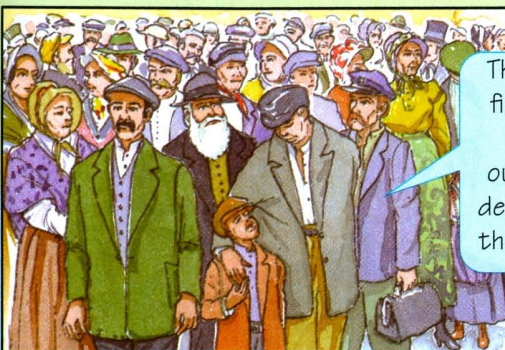
The Russian leader, Lenin

An armistice? I don't believe it. We should be fighting on! Germany will never be beaten. Those weak politicians at home have let us down.



A young corporal from the German army

The old Austrian empire is finished. Now we can build new nations, and rule ourselves. But how can we decide where the borders of these new countries will be?



Peoples of Eastern Europe (Serbs, Croats, Czechs)

3.2 What did the Big Three want?



Your most important aim should be to name each of the Big Three and at least one priority for each of them at the peace talks. Added bonus: list two issues that they disagreed about.

Key words compensation; conference; ideal; justice; long term; reparations; security; self-determination; treaty

Welcome to Paris. Actually, you are just outside Paris, at the Palace of Versailles. The leaders of the winning countries in the Great War are here. They are discussing how to put the world back together again.

The Germans are here, but they will have no say in any of the talks. They will be told to sign a peace TREATY once the Big Three have worked out the details. Germany is in no state to restart the war so it has to accept what the Big Three say.

Who are the Big Three? Have a look!

David Lloyd George, Britain

Background:

- Poor Welsh boy made good.
- Brilliant lawyer and clever talker.
- Known for being sneaky at times.

Relationship with people back home:

- People back home are saying things like: 'Squeeze Germany like a lemon.' They will only be happy with a treaty that punishes Germany.

Relationship with other two:

- He is annoyed with Wilson for saying that Britain should give freedom to its colonies.
- Clemenceau has already tried to hit him!

Priorities:

- Peace and trade: he wants peace in Europe that will last. This will allow Britain to rebuild its trade.
- The British empire: he will take some of Germany's colonies if he gets the chance.
- But he has to keep people at home happy, too.



Woodrow Wilson, the USA

Background:

- Brilliant scholar from highly respectable American family.

Relationship with people back home:

- He wants the USA to get involved in world politics as a force for good. But casualties in the war have horrified Americans. They want to be free of Europe's problems.
- His political enemies back home will take any chance to get him.

Relationship with other two:

- He thinks Lloyd George and Clemenceau are too selfish. They are just trying to get a good deal for their own countries.
- He, on the other hand, is trying to make the world a safer place.

Priorities:

- A peace treaty that will be fair. He thinks Germany should be punished but not humiliated.
- He set out his aims in January 1918 in his 'Fourteen Points', a mixture of IDEALS and practical measures. These included:
 - SELF-DETERMINATION – peoples in Austro-Hungarian empire to rule themselves in their own countries; people in colonies to have a say in their own government.
 - League of Nations – a sort of international police force to help countries to sort out disputes without going to war.



Focus task

Who wanted what at the Paris Peace CONFERENCE?

- 1 On the right is a list of statements that might have been made by one of the Big Three. Read them carefully. Then read about the Big Three below.
- 2 Decide which of the Big Three could have said which statements. You may think that some statements could have been said by more than one leader.
- 3 Finally, decide:
 - which statements the leader would have made in open discussions (and in front of journalists)
 - which statements would have been private thoughts, or voiced only at secret meetings behind the scenes.

Georges Clemenceau, France

Background:

- Journalist and politician since the 1870s.

Relationship with people back home:

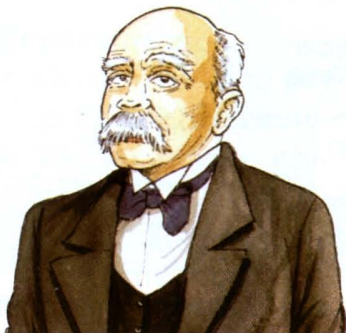
- Under a lot of pressure to make France safe from German attacks in the future. For most French people, this means crippling Germany.

Relationship with other two:

- He thinks Wilson is too idealistic. He does not trust Lloyd George.
- He thinks neither of them really cares about France.

Priorities:

- Future SECURITY for France from any German attack.
- COMPENSATION from Germany (REPARATIONS) for the damage caused by the war.



Statements

- A** Germany was our number two trading partner before the war. Rebuilding Germany means jobs for our workers.
- B** How can I talk to a man who thinks he is the first person for 2000 years who knows anything about peace?
- C** I demand JUSTICE for the harm done to us. Germany must pay very large reparations.
- D** I want a fair peace. I do not wish to crush Germany or expand our empire.
- E** I want no German armed forces on my border.
- F** I want to see Germany broken up into smaller states.
- G** I want to see Germany's armed forces reduced to the very minimum.
- H** It is right that Germany should pay some reparations for the damage it has done.
- I** Lloyd George is more interested in trade than France's security.
- J** The French have only one thought. If we are too harsh, Germany will want revenge one day.
- K** The Germans will never be able to pay the reparations we are asking. But I have to demand reparations because people at home expect me to.
- L** We are all using words like 'right' and 'justice'. Do we really mean what we say?
- M** We cannot compete with Germany in the LONG TERM, but we can weaken it for many years.
- N** We must have a peace without winners and losers. Otherwise, the losers will want revenge one day.
- O** We should all reduce our armies and navies.
- P** We should be as harsh on Germany as it was on Russia last year – it took 40 per cent of Russia's best land.

3.3 The Treaty of Versailles: winners and losers



The more you know about the Treaty of Versailles, the more it will help you. Aim to remember at least three key terms of the treaty.

Key words mark; Polish corridor; union

Germany signs the treaty

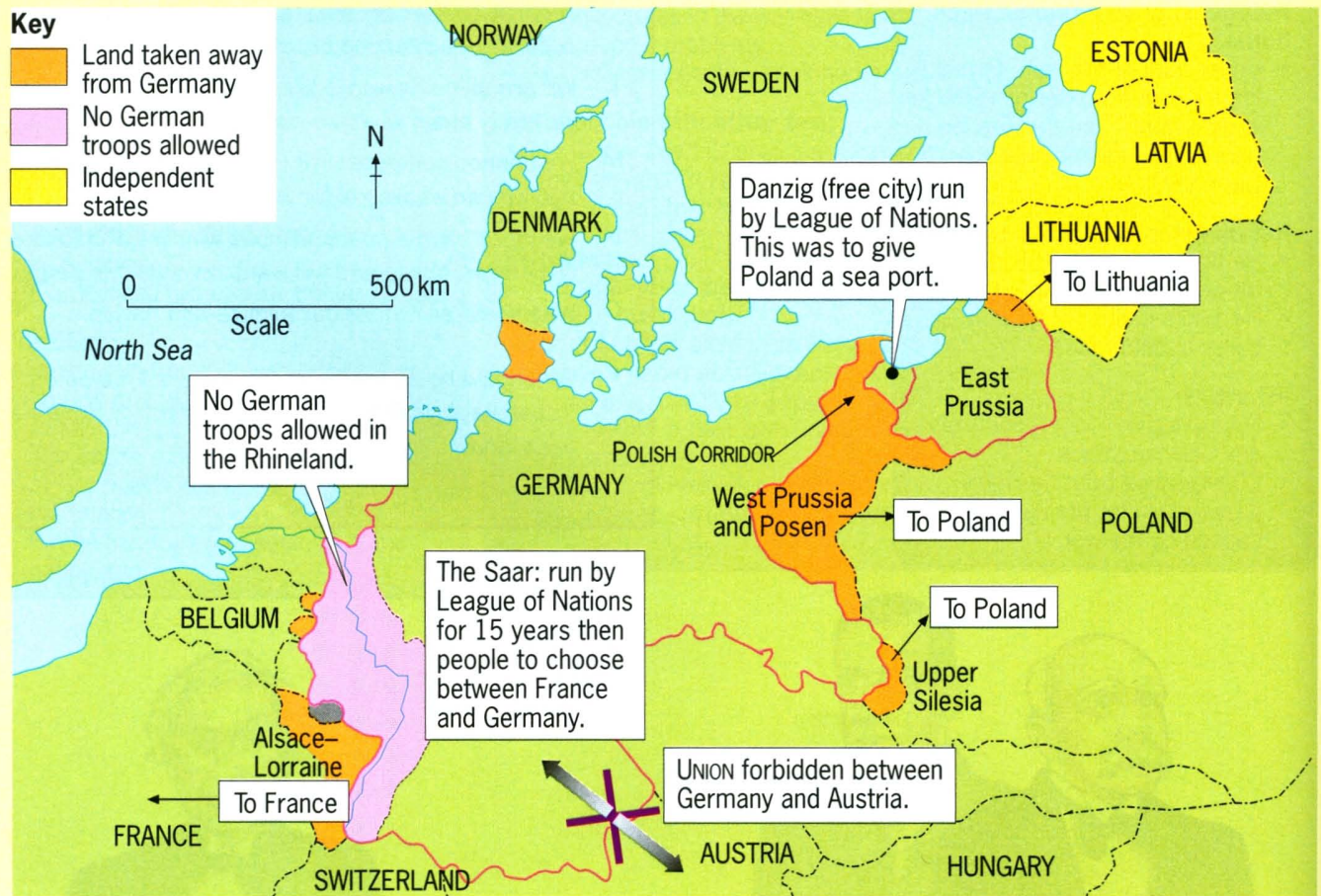
After months of disputes, a treaty was finalised. On 28 June 1919, the Germans signed the Treaty of Versailles.

SOURCE 1

The excitement was tense in the extreme, as, with trembling hand, the German minister . . . took the pen and placed his signature to paper. Everyone felt the tremendous significance [importance] of the moment. Not a word was spoken, and the fall of a pin could be heard in the famous gallery. There was just the rustle of shutters of the cameras of the press photographers.

From the British newspaper, the People, 29 June 1919.

SOURCE 2



How the Treaty of Versailles changed German territory.

Why did the Big Three not get the treaty they wanted?

The Big Three had conflicting aims so they could not all get what they wanted. But, in fact, none of them was pleased with the treaty.

- Clemenceau wanted the treaty to be much harsher. For example, he wanted Germany broken up into smaller states. Wilson stopped this from happening.
- Wilson thought that the treaty was far too harsh and that one day Germany would seek revenge. He said that if he were a German he would not have signed it.
- Lloyd George had most reason to be pleased. He came home to a hero's welcome, but he later said that the treaty was a great pity and he predicted that it would cause another war.

Focus task

Read the terms of the Treaty of Versailles and make a table to record the main points.

- In column 1, show some of the aims of the Big Three.
- In column 2, write examples from the treaty that seem designed to achieve this aim.
- In column 3, note down which of the Big Three would approve of this aim. It might be more than one of them.

TERMS OF THE TREATY

1 Guilt for war

- Germany had to accept blame for starting the war.

2 Germany's armed forces

- The army was limited to 100,000 men.
- Conscription was banned – all servicemen had to be volunteers.
- No armoured vehicles, submarines or military aircraft were allowed.

3 Reparations

- Germany had to pay reparations to France, Belgium and Britain.
- The final figure was not agreed until 1921 – it was 6 billion MARKS (£6.6 million) – two per cent of Germany's total annual production.



To remember the terms, think **GARGL**e:

Guilt
Arms
Reparations
German territory
League of Nations

4 German territories

- Germany lost all its overseas colonies (mostly to Britain and France).
- Alsace-Lorraine and the Saar were lost.
- Union between Germany and Austria's 6.5 million Germans was forbidden.
- West Prussia and Upper Silesia went to Poland.
- Danzig became a Free City controlled by the new League of Nations.

5 League of Nations

- A League of Nations was set up as an international police force. Germany was not allowed to join until it proved it was a peaceful country.



From these two pages, work out which term upset the Germans the most.

SOURCE 3**PARIS GOES WILD WITH JOY**

Paris went wild with joy last night when news of the Germans' unconditional climb-down arrived, and expressed its feelings in the traditional way – flags, processions, gun firing, illuminations [lights], cheering.

From the British newspaper, the *Star*, 24 June 1919.

SOURCE 4**THE PEACE THAT IS NO PEACE**

From the British newspaper, the *Daily Herald*, 8 May 1919.

Reactions to the treaty

Let's do a quick tour of Europe to see the reactions to the treaty. Remember that the war was not technically over until the treaty was signed.

France

The treaty was greeted with enthusiasm and there were celebrations on the streets of Paris. The war was now definitely over. France had won. It looked as though the threat from Germany had ended.

Britain

Most people in Britain supported the treaty. They felt that Germany had got what it deserved. They saw Lloyd George as a hero. The King went to meet him at the train station when he returned from Paris!

However, some British people were worried. They asked whether this treaty would bring peace, and they worried about Germany's reaction to it. But most people thought the Germans were just complaining. They would soon get over it, wouldn't they?

SOURCE 5**PEACE WITH VIGILANCE**

... though we have paralysed Germany on land, at sea and in the air, we have not destroyed totally her power for evil. Germany is still a menace.

From the British newspaper, the *Daily Mail*, 30 June 1919.

SOURCE 6**LONDON'S JOY**

There were great scenes outside Buckingham Palace, where all day Londoners flocked in their thousands to cheer the King and Queen ... The West-End was naturally the objective of all who felt the need of releasing pent-up feelings of enthusiasm, and there were carnival scenes everywhere, but no rowdiness, only boisterous merriment and noise.

From the British newspaper, the *Daily Chronicle*, 30 June 1919.

Germany

You will not be surprised to learn that the Germans were not happy about the treaty. They lost:

- 10 per cent of their land
- 12.5 per cent of their population.

Other things upset them as well.

- War guilt: they did not feel that they had started the war on their own.
- The limits on the army were humiliating.
- They had no say in the treaty. They were just told to sign it.
- Millions of Germans were now ruled by foreigners.
- East Prussia was cut off from the rest of Germany by the 'Polish corridor'.
- The German government that had to sign the treaty was not the same government that took Germany into the war. The treaty punished the wrong people.

SOURCE 7



A cartoon in the German magazine *Simplicissimus*, 1919.

SOURCE 8

THE TREATY IS ONLY A SCRAP OF PAPER!

We will seek vengeance for the shame of 1919.

From the German newspaper, *Deutsche Zeitung* (German News), 30 June 1919.

Focus task

Why did Germans object so bitterly to the Treaty of Versailles?



- 1 Draw up your own version of this diagram.
- 2 From pages 62–65 note any features of the treaty that you think would upset the Germans. Write each one in one of the empty 'clouds'.
- 3 In small groups, discuss why each feature would upset them and then add the reason to your diagram.
- 4 As a group, discuss which term you think would upset them the most. There are no right answers to this question!
- 5 Now choose two German complaints. Make up a rhyme or word that will help you remember them (like GARGLe on page 63). Try more than two complaints if you can.

3.4 Was the treaty to blame for Germany's problems?



Your aim here is to remember:

- at least one problem Germany faced in the period 1919-23
- why Germans blamed the Treaty of Versailles for that problem.

Key words Communist; crisis; hyperinflation; instalment; Nazi

The Germans hated the Treaty of Versailles. During the years 1919-23, the country faced one crisis after another. Germans blamed the treaty for these crises. The story strip on these pages shows how Germans felt during these troubled years.

Focus task

Germans blamed all their post-war problems on the Treaty of Versailles, but there were other factors as well. As you read through the story strip, whenever you reach a



ask yourself three questions.

- What is Germany's big problem at this point?
- What has this got to do with the Treaty of Versailles?
- What other factor(s) are causing the problem?

Record your answers in a table. Once you have completed your table, write a paragraph to explain whether you think the Germans were right to blame the Treaty of Versailles for all their problems.

Problem point 2

The government stopped paying Helga's war pension. They blamed the Treaty.*

* But the main reason it had no money is because it had spent it all on the war.

Problem point 4

They think they can do whatever they want because of that treaty.

French troops bullied German civilians

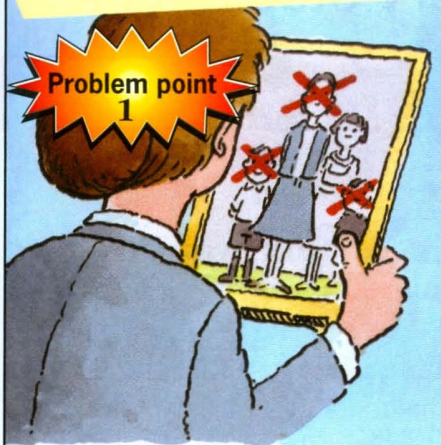
The government told the factory workers to strike so that there was nothing for the French to take.*

* But that also meant that the rest of Germany suffered.

Germany paid the first **INSTALMENT**, then refused to pay any more. So French soldiers marched into part of Germany to take what was owed to France.*

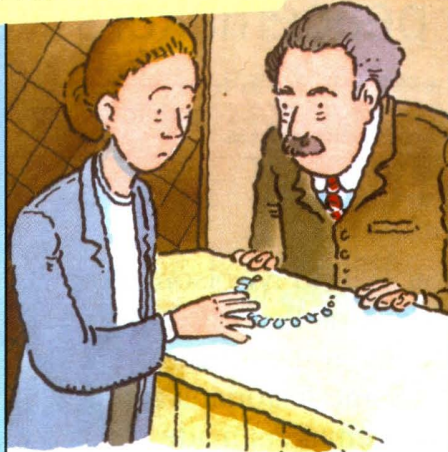
* And the Germans could not fight back because the treaty had got rid of their army and given the French permission to do this.

THE HELGA EITLING STORY



Problem point 1

Helga's brothers died in the war, and her mother died in the flu epidemic of 1919.



After the war, food was so expensive that Helga had to sell her mother's precious jewellery just to eat.



What has become of our great country?

Germany was in chaos. There was street fighting between ex-soldiers and COMMUNISTS.



I can live off my savings for now. Things will be sorted out in a few years. I can earn a little extra by sewing.



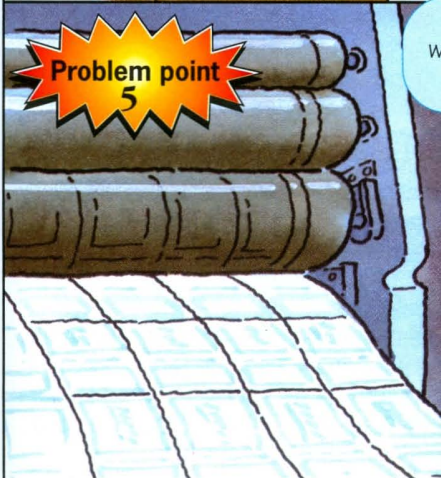
Ex-soldiers blamed the new government for signing the treaty. They tried to take over the government in 1920.



It's absurd. How can we ever pay that?

Problem point 3

In 1921, Germany was told how much reparations it had to pay – £6.6 million (6 billion marks!). It sounded a lot, but a much bigger problem was still debts left over from the war.



Problem point 5

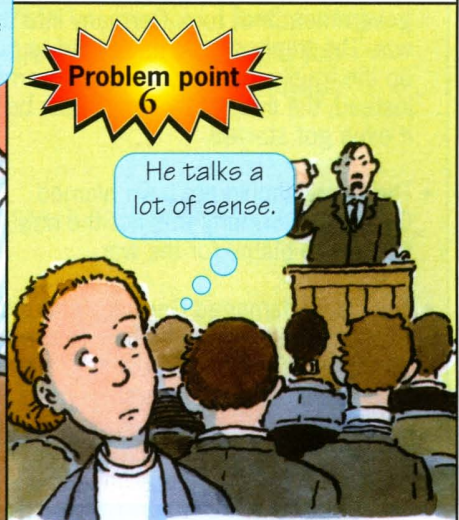
Soon everyone was running out of money. Instead of trying to talk to the French, the government printed more money.



This money is worthless. I might as well burn it.

One loaf of bread. That will be 20 billion marks.

That caused HYPERINFLATION. Prices went out of control.*
*And Helga Eitling's savings of a few thousand marks were worthless.



Problem point 6

He talks a lot of sense.

Helga blamed France and the treaty for Germany's problems. So did a young Nazi called Adolf Hitler.*
* You'll find out more about him later.

3.5 Were the peacemakers ‘very stupid men’?



The key point here is that people disagreed about the treaty in 1919 and they still do! Aim to remember:

- three points arguing that the treaty was unfair
- three points arguing that the treaty was fair.

SOURCE 1

The historian, with every justification, will come to the conclusion that we were very stupid men. We arrived determined to get a peace of justice and wisdom. We left feeling that the terms we imposed on our enemies were neither just nor wise.

Sir Harold Nicolson, writing in his diary, 1919.

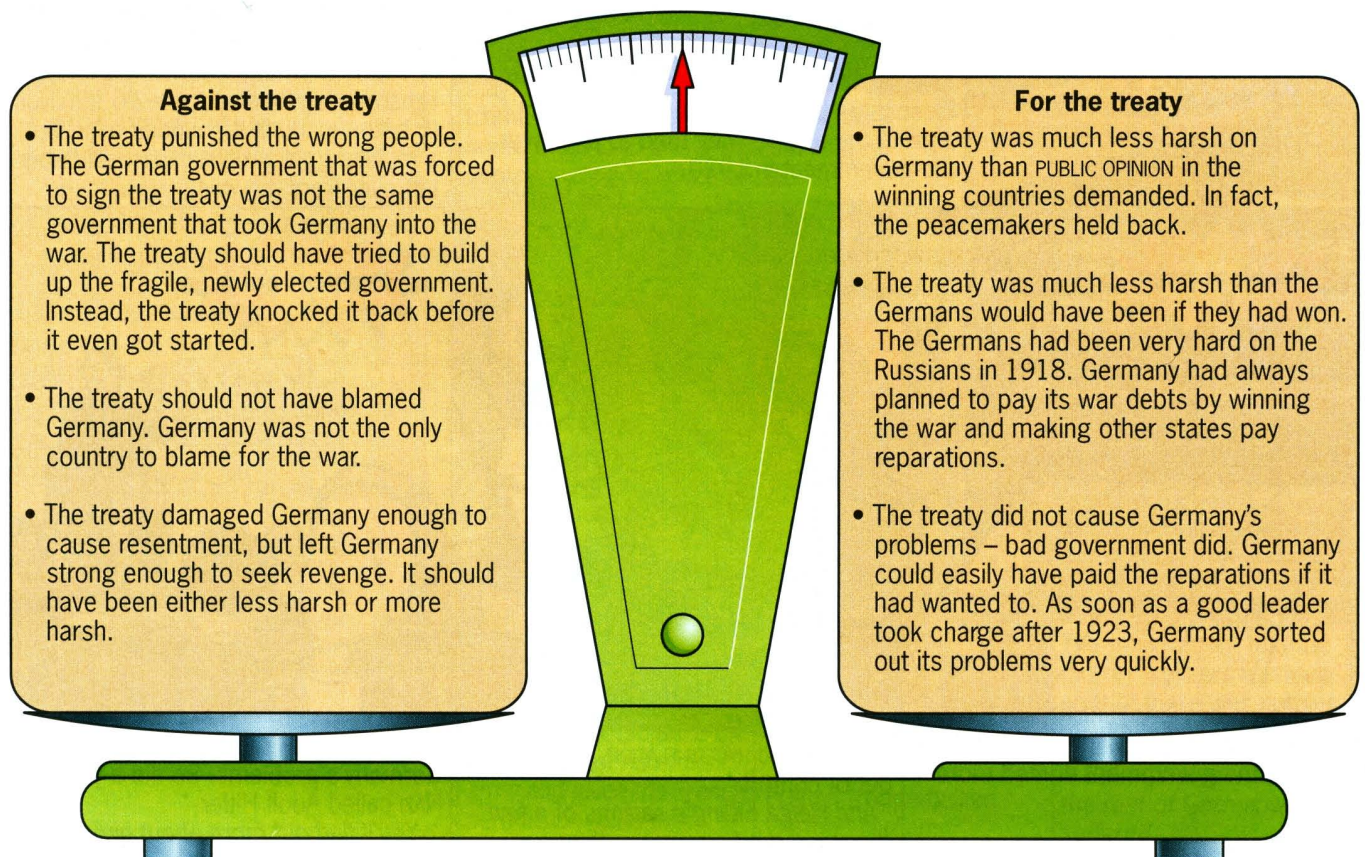
Key words public opinion

Sir Harold Nicolson, a top British diplomat, was at most of the Paris Peace Conference. Source 1 gives his view of the treaty at the time.

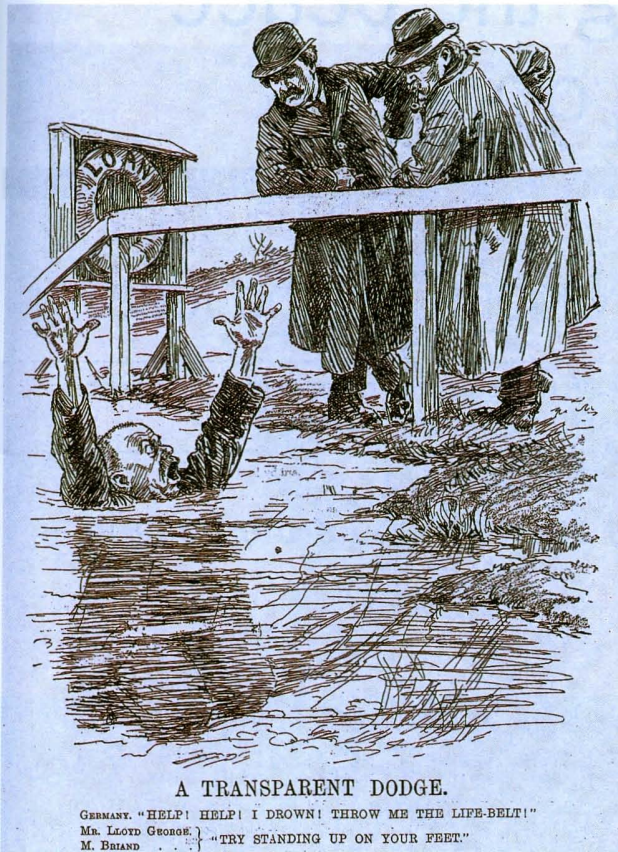
Some historians agree with him. They say that the peacemakers made some big mistakes. The treaty was not just (fair) or wise. It stored up big problems for the future. Other historians disagree. They say that the treaty was the fairest that could have been made at the time and that the peacemakers had an impossible job. The chart below shows some of the arguments each side uses.

Historians will never agree about this. Our view of the treaty is affected by hindsight – by what we know happened next. We know that the treaty helped Hitler become leader of Germany and that, in turn, helped to lead to the Second World War.

However, try to forget that for a while. Just by looking at the period up to 1923 – from that evidence alone – is it right to call the makers of the treaty ‘very stupid men’?



SOURCE 2



A British cartoon from 1920.

SOURCE 3



A British cartoon from 1920. The '1940 class', in the form of a weeping child, represents the children born in the 1920s who might die in a future war. 'The Tiger' was the nickname for Clemenceau.

Review task

Part 1: the case against the Treaty of Versailles

1 Look back at all your work in this chapter. Collect all the evidence that supports the view that the treaty was **not** just or wise.

Point/piece of evidence	Supports the view that the treaty was not just because . . .	Supports the view that the treaty was not wise because . . .

You could look at:

- the terms of the treaty (page 63)
- the reactions to the treaty (pages 64–65)
- the problems Germany faced because of the treaty, 1919–23 (pages 66–67).

Remember you are only looking for evidence **against** the treaty just now.

2 Choose four key points from your evidence and write them into a table like the one above. Some points could provide evidence for both columns 2 and 3.

Part 2: the case for the Treaty of Versailles

3 Now look at the arguments **for** the treaty on the scales on page 68. Look for evidence in this chapter to support each point. Write it in a table like this.

Point/piece of evidence	Supports the view that the treaty was fair because . . .	Supports the view that the peacemakers had a very hard job because . . .

4 Now write a paragraph saying which view of the treaty you hold.

Revision task

It is now time to prepare your class quiz, based on the yellow notes at the beginning of each section. Your teacher can give you a sheet to help you.