

The Treaty of Versailles included 440 articles.

The principal items were:

- Germany has to cede territory to France, Belgium, Italy, and Poland
- Germany has to give up all of its colonies
- All German properties in foreign countries are confiscated
- Germany has to cede all war material to the allies
- German can no longer have a draft into military service
- Germany is not allowed to have military weapons
- The total size of the Germany army is not to exceed 100,000 men.
- The German navy has a maximum of 15,000 men.
- Germany is not to take part in the League of Nations.
- Turkey has to cede all foreign possessions. England gets Iraq, Palestine and Trans-Jordan, France gets Syria and Lebanon.
- Germany has to cede to the allies all large seagoing ships Furthermore 1/4 of the fishing fleet and 2/5 of the inland navigation fleet has to be ceded.
- Germany has to cede large amounts of machinery and building materials, trains and trucks.
- Germany has to deliver certain amounts of coal, chemicals, dye and fuel for many years.
- All German sub-ocean telegraph cables are confiscated.
- The payment of retributions. Germany was ordered to accept responsibility for the damages it, and its allies, caused in the war. It had to pay reparations to the tune of \$33 billion. This was an astounding sum for that time.

The Results of the Treaty of Versailles (1919)

On January 8, 1918, U.S. President Wilson made an address to Congress titled the Fourteen Points. In it he outlined his ideas for the reconstruction of post-war Europe. While some of his points were used in the Treaty of Versailles, some were not. Perhaps the most significant idea taken from Wilson's plan was the creation of a world court. This court was to mediate conflicts between nations in order to avoid anything like WWI happening again.

The result was the League of Nations, a predecessor to today's United Nations. With the breakdown of the old empires and the creation of new, independent nation-states (another of Wilson's Fourteen Points) the League of Nations was to oversee all. The League of Nations was a grouping of many of these new countries in a world tribunal that would stop conflicts before they started. While its intentions were noble, the League of Nations had a few fundamental faults, leading to its demise at the onset of WWII. Some of these faults included:

1. The United States, Russia and Germany were not made members of the League of Nations. The U.S. stayed out by choice, Russia was barred from joining due to the other nations' refusal to recognize its Communist government, and Germany was left in the cold as a punitive clause of the Treaty of Versailles.
2. The League of Nations had no army. Should a conflict have risen, each member-state was expected to supply its own army, much to the dismay of Britain and France (since they had the strongest military of all the member countries). With no military support, the League resorted to economic sanctions as a means of containing conflict. The sanctions however, could easily be avoided by petitioning non-member nations for the goods and supplies that were being cut off.
3. The faulty distribution of power. While each member-state sent representatives to the Assembly, the bulk of the real power was centered in the hands of the Council. The Council was made up of Britain, France, Italy and Japan. Each Council member had veto power, meaning that Assembly nations could be heard but any resolution could be overturned with a single vote

Many theories exist about the faults within the League of Nations. The weaknesses of the League, combined with the fury of the German people from having to surrender to such a humiliating agreement as the Treaty of Versailles, created an unstable political climate in Germany. This climate allowed Adolf Hitler and his National Socialist (Nazi) Party to rise to power in the decades that followed WWI. The theory further states that the failure of the League of Nations to stop Hitler's quest for more power in the 1930's laid the groundwork for the factors that sparked World War II.

Adapted from Treaty of Versailles. The Heritage of the Great War. 6 Oct. 2009

<<http://www.greatwar.nl/versailles/versail-summary.html>>; Treaty of Versailles. Encyclomedia.com. 6 Oct. 2009

<http://www.encyclomedia.com/treaty_versailles.html>.