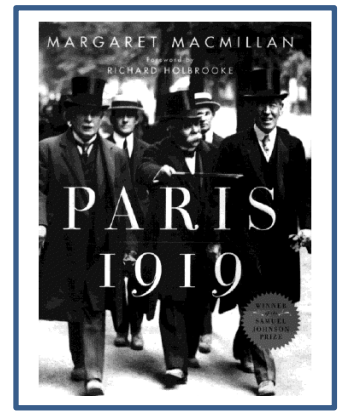


Paris 1919 – The Treaty of Versailles



When the war first ended, a peace settlement still had not been negotiated, and a dozen wars still raged in Europe.

Leaders from across Europe came to Paris to participate in the Paris Peace Conference.

The leader most people wanted to see was Woodrow Wilson, the President of the United States.

Mapmakers were busy changing the world. Empires disappeared and a dozen new countries were being created.

Wilson says 'no' to harsh punishment for Germany, and offers a League of Nations and "*peace everlasting*".

Many believed the Americans (entered the war in 1917) helped to win the war, now people believed they would win the peace.

Many Germans believed they did not lose the war. They signed an armistice, not an admission of defeat.

The bodies of 700,000 French dead were unidentifiable.

The purpose of the League of Nations was to identify and stop small conflicts before they became world wars.

For the first time, a large meeting like this was filmed on camera and politicians were speaking to the world.

The Supreme Council was made up of The United States, France, Great Britain, Italy and Japan.

Georges Clemenceau, the Prime Minister of France, is the Chairman of the conference. He believes the League of Nations is for dreamers.

British Prime Minister Lloyd George had just won an election, claiming that he could get \$300 Billion from Germany so that they could pay for "*unimaginable losses*".

Italy sat at the head table as part of the deal to convince Italy to fight for Triple Entente during the war. It wanted a new port for its warships. Italy is broke and near anarchy (a collapse of government).

Japan helped to win the war in the Pacific Ocean, and she wanted parts of territory in China.

Wilson: "How many times must we repeat history before we learn that revenge won't work".

Germany had not physically been damaged in the war. (Most of the damage was in France and Belgium). She did lose 1 700 000 men, and suffered 37 000 000 casualties (wounded or shell shock).

Small powers (including Canada) saw the League of Nations as a better chance to improve their survival. They do want to be rewarded for supporting the allies.

Some wanted a new country in the Middle East (due to the fall of the Ottoman Empire – formerly controlled by Turkey). Others wanted a Jewish homeland.

Britain knew that France lost the most men and infrastructure (buildings, etc.), but Britain's shipping was heavily damaged.

Germans struggled to survive after the war, and starvation set in. Germany was broke.

China is counting on Wilson to help protect its territory.

Countries knew this was the last chance to acquire territories before the borders were frozen.

Wilson has promised 'No more colonies'. He wants 'self-determination' for all minorities.

The small powers come bearing gifts to the Supreme Council. The Middle East has oil.

People on the streets thought the answer was obtaining German gold so they could re-start their lives.

Making peace is difficult due to simmering hate for Germany.

Ho Chi Minh (from French Indochina) requests an audience with the Supreme Council. He does not get one. His country would later become Vietnam.

Germany begins to make the case that she is not solely responsible for starting the war, yet thousands of German Officers go into hiding.

Germany is unstable. Right-wingers (Nationalists) promise to restore German pride.

According to the Treaty, Germany is to lose 10% of its land-mass, and 8 000 000 citizens due to a re-drawing of her borders.

The Supreme Council assured Wilson he would get his League of Nations, but they wanted individual protections.

The Germans go to Paris. They too believe that Wilson will give them justice.

The Supreme Council (not including Japan) has decided to meet in private from now on. These men are now more powerful than any men in history.

Germany does not want to accept all the blame. They claim they felt threatened. France wants them to give up all colonies and dismantle their naval and merchant shipping fleets. They also do not want Germany to participate in world markets (therefore crippling their economy), and do not want Germany to be allowed into the League of Nations.

France accuses Germany of: using poisonous gas first, bombing towns just to scare citizens and allowing terrible treatment of prisoners. Germany says it will not pay reparations because everyone was at war.

Lloyd Georges believes that if Germany feels targeted by reparations, they will seek revenge in the future.

The German delegation (representatives) felt like they were being spied on in their rooms. They were right.

The French media (under orders from France's government) began to criticize Wilson for being too lenient on Germany. Wilson threatened to leave.

Much of the world is broke and out of work. Anger from the war is boiling over and worker strikes occur all over.

The four members of the Supreme Council have different visions for peace. The British want to rule the seas. Italy wants money. France wants future protection against Germany. The USA wants to clear the world's conscience.

Germany is presented the treaty. It was harsher than they imagined and would cripple the German people for generations. The Germans react with anger.