**The End of World War I**

Assignment: Looking at Evidence – Treaty of Versailles

**INSTRUCTIONS: Use Documents 1 to 8 to answer the following questions. You should make careful note of not only what the document says but also who said it and when.**

**Document 1**

We have no jealousy of German greatness, and there is nothing in this program that

impairs it. We grudge her no achievement or distinction of learning or of pacific

enterprise such as have made her record very bright and very enviable. We do not

wish to injure her or block in any way her legitimate influence or power. We do not

wish to fight her either with arms or with hostile arrangements of trade if she is

willing to associate herself with us and the other peace-loving nations of the world in

covenants of justice and law and fair dealing. We wish her only to accept a place of

equality among the peoples of the world...instead of a place of mastery.

Neither do we presume to suggest to her any alteration or modification of her

institutions.

Woodrow Wilson, “The Fourteen Points Address”, to the United States House of

Congress, 8 January 1918.

**Document 2**

The Allied and Associated Powers believe that they will be false to those who have

given their all to save the freedom of the world if they consent to treat this war on

any other basis than as a crime against humanity.

...

Justice is what the German Delegation asks for and says that Germany has been

promised. Justice is what Germany shall have. But it must be justice for all.

...

That is why the Allied and Associated Powers have insisted as a cardinal feature of

the Treaty that Germany must undertake to make reparation to the very uttermost of

her power; for reparation for wrongs inflicted is of the essence of justice.

...

That, too, is why Germany must submit for a few years to certain special disabilities

and arrangements.... It is only justice that restitution should be made and that these

wronged peoples should be safeguarded for a time from the competition of a nation

whose industries are intact and have even been fortified by machinery stolen from

occupied territories.

Georges Clemenceau, Speech at the *Paris Peace Conference*, 16 June 1919.

**Document 3**

The Allied and Associated Governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility

of Germany and her allies for causing all the loss and damage to which the Allied and

Associated Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of

the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies.

Article 231, “The Treaty of Versailles”, 28 June 1919.

**Document 4**

The terms are in many respects terrible terms to impose upon a country. Terrible

were the deeds which it requites.... Germany not merely provoked, but planned the

most devastating war the earth has ever seen.... She deliberately embarked upon it,

not to defend herself against assailants, but to aggrandise herself at the expense of

her neighbours. I cannot think of a worse crime.

[The aim of the Treaty is] to compel Germany, in so far as it is in her power, to

restore, to repair and to redress. Yes, and to take every possible precaution of every

kind that is in our power against the recurrence of another such crime – to make such

an example as will discourage ambitious peoples from ever attempting to repeat the

infamy.

David Lloyd George, Speech to Parliament, 3 July 1919.

**Document 5**

Do not think of this treaty of peace as merely a settlement with Germany. It is that. It is

a very severe settlement... but there is not anything that she did not earn. Indeed, she

earned more than she can ever be able to pay for, and the punishment exacted of her

is not a punishment greater than she can bear, and it is absolutely necessary in order

that no other nation may ever plot such a thing against humanity and civilization.

Woodrow Wilson, Speech at the League of Nations, 25 September 1919.

**Document 6**

The policy of reducing Germany to servitude for a generation, of degrading the lives of

millions of human beings, and of depriving a whole nation of happiness, should be

abhorrent and detestable.... Nations are not authorised, by religion or by natural

morals, to visit on the children of their enemies the misdoings of parents or of rulers....

The Treaty includes no provisions for the economic rehabilitation of Europe – nothing

to make the defeated Central Empires into good neighbours.... The Council of Four

paid no attention to [this] issue, being preoccupied with others – Clemenceau to crush

the economic life of his enemy, Lloyd George to bring home something that would

pass muster for a week, the President to do nothing that was not just and right....

J. M. Keynes (Economist and high ranking official in the British delegation of the Paris Peace

Conferences), *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, New York: Harcourt, Brace and

Jovanovich, 1920.

**Document 7**

One of the few safe comments to make about the Treaty of Versailles is that *nobody*

ever loved it. The Germans denounced it as a fraud and a cheat which barely had a

nodding acquaintance with the 14 Points. The French cursed the treaty because they

had been led to exchange solid advantages – particularly German territory – for the

British and US security guarantees – guarantees which then fell through when the US

did not ratify the treaty. By the 1920s most Britons deplored the Treaty as well, both

for being unfair to Germany and for being so harsh economically that it kept the

economy of Europe from fully recovering from the War.

The US, of course, rejected the Treaty massively. US citizens saw it as a document

which – particularly through the League of Nations, whose Charter was written into the

Treaty – tried to embroil them in the corrupt politics and quarrels of old Europe – which

the USA had supposedly been designed as an escape from!

Donald G. Wileman, PhD, “The Peace of Paris – 1919”, Lecture found at:

<http://www.yorku.ca/dwileman/1010Par.htm>

**Document 8**

Adapted from John Simkin, “Casualties: First World War”, Spartacus Educational,

www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/FWWdeaths.htm

Country Total Casualties Casualties % of Mobilized

United States 364,800 8.2

Italy 2, 197, 000 39.1

British Empire 3, 190, 235 35.8

France 6, 160, 800 76.3

Germany 7, 142, 558 64.9

1. Is Document 6 a primary or secondary source? Explain your answer.

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2. Assess the reliability of Document 1 as a source of historical evidence for the

principles which eventually guided the delegates in creating the final version of the

Treaty of Versailles.

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3. How is Keynes’ opinion of the Treaty of Versailles in Document 6 corroborated by

Clemenceau’s plans for the Treaty in Document 2?

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4. Explain how Wilson’s approach to the treatment of Germany differs in Document 1

from that in Document 5.

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5. Explain how Lloyd George’s aims for the Treaty in Document 4 are contradicted by

the subsequent opinion of “most Britons” as presented in Document 7.

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6. How does Document 8 corroborate Clemenceau’s demand for “reparation to the very

uttermost of [German] power” in Document 2?

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7. Briefly discuss how the data provided in Document 8 would have impacted the

different countries’ attitudes about a peace settlement.

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8. Using the documents provided and any other historical evidence, explain how

Clemenceau’s and Wilson’s differing views of justice for Germany are reflected in the

Treaty of Versailles.

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