

## Aims of the Participants and Peacemakers

### **5.1 CONDITIONS IN EUROPE IMMEDIATELY AFTER WORLD WAR I**

- Deep fear of the spread of Soviet communism
- Serious economic distress — economic blockade of the Central Powers continued till June 1919

### **5.2 THE PEACE CONFERENCE AT VERSAILLES: PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

- The Entente Powers decided not to invite the ex-enemy states to discuss the treaty
- A Council of Four consisting of the United States of America, Great Britain, France and Italy was created in March 1919
- They were the key decision makers and all decisions were taken behind close doors
- Main methods – demilitarisation or disarmament, reparations and the loss of territories

### **5.3 AMERICAN AIMS AND DEMANDS**

- The President of the United States of America, Woodrow Wilson was very popular in Europe – he was seen as a prophet of peace
- The November 1918 Congressional Elections resulted in the Republican Party controlling the United States Congress, undermining Wilson and the Democratic Party's freedom to dictate foreign policy – only Congress could approve treaties
- Wilson was wildly optimistic
- American domestic opposition for guaranteeing of peace in Europe and financing European reconstruction

#### **Wilson's 14 points**

- Open diplomatic treaties
- Removal of economic barriers
- Freedom of navigation
- Reduction of armaments
- Self-determination
- Creation of the League of Nations

### **5.4 FRENCH AIMS AND DEMANDS**

- The French population of 40 000 000 was declining
- Opposed Wilson's 14 Points as it did not protect French security – France later became one of the obstacles to peace
- Serious destruction of Northern France
- Owed a massive war debt

#### **Border issues**

- Wanted Alsace-Lorraine back
  - Concerned over the long border with Germany
  - Demilitarisation of the Rhineland
  - Could no longer rely on Russia as an ally
  - Strong supporter of Eastern European self-determination – greatly overestimated the strength of the Eastern European countries' militaries
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- Lost the alliance with Russia
  - Demanded high reparations

- This was because the United States of America and Great Britain refused to cancel France's war debts

### **5.5 BRITISH AIMS AND DEMANDS**

- Popular anger against the Germans
- *A satisfied power*
- Major threats to British security were removed
- Opposed Eastern European self-determination
- Opposed the dismemberment of Germany – power vacuum was not wanted, needed Germany as a barrier against communism

### **5.7 JAPANESE AIMS AND DEMANDS**

- Captured the German-controlled Shandong and the German colonies
- Retained the colonies as mandates
- Demanded a clause for racial equality in the League of Nations – they were rejected
- The Japanese walked out of the conference