

German empire, it created tension between Germany and France which would eventually influence France's bitterness towards Germany in the Treaty of Versailles.

The Baltic States (which were previously annexed by Germany in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk) were returned to Russia. In addition, a city called Danzig (known for its rich port) was lost when Posen was ceded. France had wanted Posen to be ceded to Poland because of its Polish majority (with German and Jewish minorities). However, Lloyd George disagreed, and had to make a compromise between the different nations that wanted to annex Posen. Since "pockets of ethnicity" existed side by side, a geographical compromise was improbable and hence the declaration of a free city would pacify France, Poland, and Germany.

Value: The primary goal of the document is to ascertain the Treaty's original meaning based on its historical context and to reconstruct the historical situation by weighing the good and bad aspects of the Treaty. A basic understanding of the decisions made by the Allied powers and their short term and long term effects will provide a basis for future treaties, and will allow historians to understand the cause and effect relationships between the settlement terms and diplomatic relations between countries.

An example of a Wilsonian feature proposed by the Allied powers was the redrawing of the map of Europe. Wilson's principles of national self-determination was included in points 5, 7, 10, 12, and 13, of his Fourteen Points, which referred to colonies in general, Belgium, Eastern Europe, Turkey, and Poland, respectively. Self-determination was the idea "that every people has a right to choose the sovereignty under which they shall live...", and that international security cannot be ensured unless "[nations] accept the principle that governments derive all their just powers from the consent of the governed". Although Wilson's principle of justice was rather abstract, his statements (such as avoiding the treatment of people as "property exchanged from sovereignty to sovereignty") impacted the decisions of the Allied and Central Powers to a large degree. Through Birdsall's writing, we understand that it is not possible to acknowledge this completely and that the Allied powers must cede land that is not theirs in order to punish the losing powers (i.e. Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, and Germany). For example, self-determination would grant primarily German populated lands on the Baltic coast to Germany (which she gained from Russia in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk), but as a losing nation, she must surrender the Baltic coast (along with the majority German town of Memel to Lithuania) which was turned into the nation-states of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. The Treaty constructed a new nation-state from West Prussia (including the Polish corridor) and land in Ukraine (which Germany had gained through the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk).

- The negotiators gave many liberties to the people: the plebiscites took place in Schleswig and Upper Silesia, granting people the freedom to select their own country, clauses were enacted to ensure proper treatment of ethnic minorities, Alsace-Lorraine was fittingly returned to France.
- Since a perfect map of Europe was not possible based solely on self-determination, the Big Three decided that defeated Germany would not be allowed self-determination. This resulted in a large number of Germans living in Poland or Lithuania. In addition, the Allies decided that Germans should not be given territory or industry in order to limit its militaristic and economic growth; this was secured through the ceding of the industrial base of the Sudetenland to Czechoslovakia. Bulgarian regions were also ceded in the Treaty of Neuilly in 1919, which was executed because the Allies wanted to return the land to their rightful owners and subdue the German empire. A modern historian is able to see that reducing territorial claims and thus diplomatic and political power of Germany was not the right approach to establishing good international relations; German colonies were made mandates.

A Carthaginian feature proposed by the Allied powers was the excess of indemnities. There is a good basis for this because many observers hold that the indemnities were an indirect, but major cause in the rise of militarism,