

Candidate 1 evidence – Historical Issues

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After Germany's defeat in World War One, the country was faced with the Treaty of Versailles, an armistice treaty imposed by the allies. The treaty was largely despised by every German, due to its harsh conditions and adverse effects in relation to economic and political structure. While the treaty was universally despised, some historical debate questions just how valid this view is. While some will argue that the German hatred of Versailles was unjustified, others argue that it was misguided. It is crucial to analyse and examine this historical debate and take an in-depth look at how damaging the Treaty of Versailles was.

The German hatred of Versailles was largely justified according to many historians. After Germany was defeated in the Great War, the Treaty followed. Many Germans expected the Treaty to follow Woodrow Wilson's initial proposal of the 14 points however, to many Germans, the treaty was instead harsh and unjust. Germany were forced to sign a war guilt clause which meant that the nation had to accept full responsibility for the war, the losses and the damage. This angered many Germans. ~~as~~ They found this too difficult to accept, arguing that in many respects, their actions during the war were simply a form of self-defense, especially after they were threatened with encirclement by

Moreover
The allies in 1914. Moreover, Germany
were forced to pay huge reparations,
a figure reaching £6600, with the
addition of other payments in coal for
example. Again, hatred towards Versailles
was ripe as such reparations seemed
~~unmanageable~~ unmanageable. The same
reparations were also considered the
reason for Germany's financial
difficulty. As hyperinflation affected the
nation of Germany in 1923, Versailles
was considered the main cause for the
country's economic gravel and subsequent
levels of poverty and unemployment.
The ~~politic~~ infamous politician Adolf Hitler
noted himself in the years following Versailles,
"The imposition of the treaty that Versailles
was "the greatest villainy of the 21st
century." Indeed, Hitler's views here

mirrored much of the German public opinion. Versailles was considered humiliating and psychologically damaging. It isolated Germany from the rest of the Western powers and fuelled bitterness and resentment towards both the Allies and Germany's own government.

Germany were also ~~severely~~ left bare on a military basis as a result of the Treaty of Versailles which again fuelled hatred. Germany's army was reduced to only 100,000 men and they were also prohibited to use tanks or large guns. Furthermore, the Rhineland was also demilitarised at the request of France and soon, French troops were posted in the Rhineland at the request of Clemenceau. This fuelled hatred towards the treaty.

as Germans ultimately felt less safe and less powerful. There was a sense of vulnerability and a belief that Germany would not be able to defend themselves if they needed to. On the same token, the territorial agreements of Versailles also catalysed hatred for the same reasons. Germany lost its lands of West Prussia and lost cities such as Danzig, not to mention that they also lost Alsace-Lorraine and Silesia. As a result, Germany was valuable resources and lost a substantial amount of power. To many Germans, the allies' treatment of their nation had gone beyond reason and logic and the process seemed more out of spite as opposed to general and justified precaution. The Treaty of

Versailles was a wound on Germany's scalp as it caused a seemingly endless amount of problems in all fronts. The very notion that the Weimar Government agreed to these terms and conditions also sparked mass hatred and uproar. The Government was regarded as traitorous and so began to be ~~seen~~ stabbed in the back theory - the idea that Germany, though on the brink of victory, were forced to surrender to satisfy the needs of those in power. The hatred towards the Government of this time stemmed from the hatred towards Versailles and it could be argued that the later collapse of the Weimar Republic relates back to their agreement to accept the

Treaty of Versailles. Extremist parties like the Nazis were able to ~~propel~~^{encourage} nationalistic and rebellious attitudes and peddle the 'stab in the back' theory to their advantage. As historian Stephen Lee notes, "Versailles was a stick that both the extremists on the left and right used to beat the Weimar Republic".

However, other historians believe that the hatred towards the Treaty of Versailles was in fact misguided. Historian Dick Gray crushes the significance of Versailles, noting that if it really was as obscene and unjust as people claimed, the Weimar Republic would have collapsed in 1919, when the war defeat and the treaty were at their most immediate. There are arguments to

suggest that the Treaty of Versailles was not as damaging as people make it out to be and ~~that~~ that the hatred ^{was} it fuelled was misguided. For example, the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, a treaty imposed by Germans on the Russians, ~~was~~ was deemed much harsher. Furthermore, Germany was arguably a more favourable position in 1918 than it was in 1914. With the collapse of the Russian, Austria-Hungary ^{and} ~~and~~ Turkish empires, a power vacuum was created in both eastern and central Europe and Germany could exploit this to their advantage. Moreover, the terms of the Treaty were revised as the years past. The reparations ~~in~~ sum was decreased and Germany were allowed to pay the remainder

by means of installment, with what has been said, it could be argued that Versailles was far from as damaging as it was made out to be and that hatred towards the treaty was therefore misguided.

To conclude, ~~remember~~ the views on the German hatred of Versailles varies as some historians believe that the bitterness and resentment towards the treaty was justified but others believe that the opposite. Overall, it can be said that though on a practical level, Versailles' terms were not hugely damaging to the point where Germany was on its knees, it had a huge effect on the nation ~~on~~ ~~psych~~ ~~psych~~ psychological. The nation was in a state of turmoil and confusion and ~~crippled~~ never recovered. It ~~psychological~~

resulted in violence, internal divisions and an apparent lack of stability both on a political and economic basis. It can be therefore be said that the German hatred towards the Treaty of Versailles was understandable and not misguided.