

Document Based Question

Essay

The Aftermath of World War I

Historical Context

The causes of World War I trace back to tensions in Europe that existed long before the first shots rang out in 1914. When the international conflict exploded, new advances in technology and modern weapons led to savage combat and countless deaths. Much of the fighting resulted in a stalemate, but after four years of warfare the Allied Powers gained the advantage and the Central Powers asked for an armistice. The victorious nations then met to craft the future peace. Although many of them had differing views, the Allies did agree upon key terms and produced the Treaty of Versailles. This treaty was supposed to bring closure to the bitter hostilities of the past four years and ensure that the world had just experienced “The War to End All Wars.”

Task

Write an essay in which you evaluate the aftermath of World War I and the Treaty of Versailles.

Consider the following questions:

- Was the Treaty of Versailles a flawed document or was future war inevitable?
- Were reasonable measures taken to ensure a lasting peace?
- What, if anything, could have been done to prevent future conflict?
- What signs pointed to harmony and what signs pointed to discord?

You must incorporate information from at least four documents into your essay. You also must include outside information.

Thesis Statement

Your thesis is your central argument. By definition, your thesis is an opinion that you intend to prove in your essay. A strong thesis is well written, clear, and a single sentence in length. Also, all thesis statements are D.O.A. *[See box below for more on D.O.A.]*

For this assignment, you must develop your own thesis statement. A good starting point is to develop a tentative thesis. Perhaps you have an idea of what you would like to write, but want to investigate the documents first. A tentative thesis may help you focus your search for information.

Tentative Thesis: _____

All effective thesis statements are D.O.A.

D

O

A

Document 1

The following is an excerpt from the novel *All Quiet on the Western Front* written by Erich Maria Remarque in 1929. The book vividly relays the extreme physical and emotional trauma of World War I as experienced through a German soldier stationed on the front lines.

“I am young, I am twenty years old; yet I know nothing of life but despair, death, fear, and fatuous superficiality cast over an abyss of sorrow. I see how peoples are set against one another, and in silence, unknowingly, foolishly, obediently, innocently slay one another. I see that the keenest brains of the world invent weapons and words to make it yet more refined and enduring. And all men of my age, here and over there, throughout the whole world see these things; all my generation is experiencing these things with me. What would our fathers do if we suddenly stood up and came before them and proffered our account? What do they expect of us if a time ever comes when the war is over? Through the years our business has been killing; -- it was our first calling in life. Our knowledge of life is limited to death. What will happen afterwards? And what shall come out of us?”

--Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, 1929

1. Due to the war, what does this soldier know of life?

2. How has the war affected this soldier?

3. Do you think this soldier's experiences will make it more likely or less likely for him to want to become involved in any future wars? Why or why not?

4. Highlight or underline the two sentences of parts or sentences that you believe to be most powerful. Why did you choose these? What do they mean to you?

Document 2

Europe Before and After World War I



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1. What new countries were created following World War I?

2. How did the changes to the geographical boundaries in Europe after the war affect Germany?

3. Prior to Italy's joining the Allied powers, France and Britain had promised Italy major land gains in the Balkans by the Adriatic Sea. Did Italy gain this land from its victory in the war? What happened to this area instead?

World War I Casualties and Deaths

Country	Killed	Wounded	Prisoners and Missing	Total Casualties	Casualties as % of Forces
Allied Powers and Associated Countries					
Russia	1,700,000	4,950,000	2,500,000	9,150,000	76.3
British Empire	908,371	2,090,212	191,652	3,190,235	35.8
France	1,357,800	4,266,000	537,000	6,160,800	73.3
Italy	650,000	947,000	600,000	2,197,000	39.1
United States	116,516	204,002	4,500	323,018	7.1
Japan	300	907	3	1,210	0.2
Romania	335,706	120,000	80,000	535,706	71.4
Serbia	45,000	133,148	152,958	331,106	46.8
Belgium	13,716	44,686	34,659	93,061	34.9
Greece	5,000	21,000	1,000	27,000	11.7
Portugal	7,222	13,751	12,318	33,291	33.3
Montenegro	3,000	10,000	7,000	20,000	40
TOTAL	5,142,631	12,800,706	4,121,090	22,062,427	52.3
Central Powers and Associated Countries					
Germany	1,773,700	4,216,058	1,152,800	7,142,558	64.9
Austria-Hungary	1,200,000	3,620,000	2,200,000	7,020,000	90
Turkey	325,000	400,000	250,000	975,000	34.2
Bulgaria	87,500	152,390	27,029	266,919	22.2
TOTAL	3,386,200	8,388,448	3,629,829	15,404,477	67.4
GRAND TOTAL	8,528,831	21,189,154	7,750,919	37,466,904	57.5

1. What is the definition of a a casualty? How do casualties differ from deaths?

2. What factors accounted for the high number of casualties during World War I?

Document 4

Excerpts from Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points

What we demand in this war ... is nothing peculiar to ourselves. It is that the world be made fit and safe to live in; and particularly that it be made safe for every peace-loving nation which, like our own, wishes to live its own life, determine its own institutions, be assured of justice and fair dealing by the other peoples of the world as against force and selfish aggression. All the peoples of the world are in effect partners in this interest, and for our own part we see very clearly that unless justice be done to others it will not be done to us. The program of the world's peace, therefore, is our program; and that program, the only possible program, as we see it, is this:

1. Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view.

3. The removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers ... among all the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance.

4. Adequate guarantees given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety....

14. A general association of nations must be formed ... for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.

... we feel ourselves to be intimate partners of all the governments and peoples associated together against the Imperialists. We cannot be separated in interest or divided in purpose. We stand together until the end.

-- Woodrow Wilson, *Fourteen Points Address to Congress*, January 8, 1918

1. What are three goals of Wilson's plan?

2. What is the tone of Wilson's speech?

Document 5

Speech by Senator Henry Cabot Lodge

As it stands there is no doubt whatever in my mind that American troops and American ships may be ordered to any part of the world by nations other than the United States, and that is a proposition to which I for one can never assent. It must be made perfectly clear that no American soldiers... can ever be engaged in war or ordered anywhere except by the constitutional authorities of the United States....

The lives of Americans must never be sacrificed except by the will of the American people expressed through their chosen Representatives in Congress. This is a point upon which no doubt can be permitted.... [So] let us retain in our own hands and in our own control the lives of the youth of the land. Let no American be sent into battle except by the constituted authorities of his own country and by the will of the people of the United States....

I have loved but one flag and I cannot share that devotion and give affection to the mongrel banner invented for a league.... The United States is the world's best hope, but if you fetter her in the interests and quarrels of other nations, if you tangle her in the intrigues of Europe, you will destroy her power for good and endanger her very existence.... [If] we stumble and fall, freedom and civilizations everywhere will go down in ruin.

-- Henry Cabot Lodge, Opposition to the Treaty of Versailles, August 12, 1919

1. What organization did Senator Henry Cabot Lodge oppose?

2. List two of Lodge's arguments.

3. Ultimately, what action did the U.S. take in regards to the League of Nations?

Document 6

Excerpts from The Treaty of Versailles

ARTICLE 159.

The German military forces shall be demobilised and reduced....

ARTICLE 198.

The armed forces of Germany must not include any military or naval air forces.

ARTICLE 231.

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 232.

The Allied and Associated Governments ... require, and Germany undertakes, that she will make compensation for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allied and Associated Powers and to their property during the period of the belligerency....

ARTICLE 233.

The amount of the above damage for which compensation is to be made by Germany shall be determined by an Inter-Allied Commission, to be called the Reparation Commission....

1. Why do historians commonly refer to Article 231 as the “War Guilt Clause”?

2. Who decides the reparations that must be paid after the war? Who must pay reparations?

3. How might articles 231, 232, and 233 create a feeling of resentment among the German people against the allies following WW I?

Punch magazine, July 28, 1920



MORAL SUASION.

THE RABBIT. "MY OFFENSIVE EQUIPMENT BEING PRACTICALLY *NIL*, IT REMAINS FOR ME TO FASCINATE HIM WITH THE POWER OF MY EYE."

1. What does the rabbit represent? What does the snake represent?

2. Why is the rabbit's "offensive equipment practically *nil*"? What does that mean?

3. How does the rabbit plan to calm the snake?

4. What is the message of this cartoon?

Document 8

Remarks at the Nobel Peace Prize Award Ceremony by Anders Johnsen Buen, President of the Norwegian Parliament, on December 10, 1920.

The letter from the Nobel Committee of the Norwegian Parliament reads as follows: “The Nobel Committee of the Norwegian Parliament has the honor of announcing herewith its decision to award the Nobel Peace Prize for 1919 to the President of the United States of America Mr. Woodrow Wilson....”

Today, Gentlemen, as the Norwegian Parliament meets to present the Nobel Peace Prize for the first time since the World War I, it is with the conviction that the great ideal of peace, so deeply rooted in the hopes for survival of the nations, will gain fresh ground in the minds of men as a result of the recent tragic events.

As the name of President Wilson comes to the fore on this occasion as the recipient of the Peace Prize, I know that the award is accompanied by the thanks of the people of Norway, because in his celebrated Fourteen Points the President of the United States has succeeded in bringing a design for a fundamental law of humanity into present-day international politics. The basic concept of justice on which it is founded will never die, but will steadily grow in strength, keeping the name of President Wilson fresh in the minds of future generations.

1. What award did President Wilson receive? Why did he receive this award?

2. According to the speaker, what are the benefits of the Fourteen Points?

3. How might the Fourteen Points be helpful to future generations?

4. Do you think Woodrow Wilson deserved the Nobel Peace Prize? Why or why not?

Document 9

**The Washington Naval Conference, Washington DC
November 12, 1921 - February 6, 1922**

**Treaty Between the United States of America, the British Empire, France, Italy, and Japan,
Signed at Washington, February 6, 1922**

The United States of America, the British Empire, France, Italy and Japan:

Desiring to contribute to the maintenance of the general peace, and to reduce the burdens of competition in armament;

Have resolved, with a view to accomplishing these purposes, to conclude a treaty to limit their respective naval armament....

Article I

The Contracting Powers agree to limit their respective naval armament as provided in the present Treaty....

Article III

... the Contracting Powers shall abandon their respective capital ship [war ship] building programs, and no new capital ships shall be constructed or acquired by any of the Contracting Powers....

Article XIX

The United States, the British Empire and Japan agree ... that no new fortifications or naval bases shall be established in the territories and possessions specified; that no measures shall be taken to increase the existing naval facilities for the repair and maintenance of naval forces, and that no increase shall be made in the coast defences of the territories and possessions....

1. Which nations signed this treaty? What was their goal?

2. What does this treaty tell you about the desire of the certain nations maintain peace and avoid a future war? How can you tell this?

Document 10

The covenant forming the League of Nations was included in the Treaty of Versailles. The League came into effect on January 10, 1920 and had 48 member nations by the end of that year. By 1928, 54 countries had joined the League.

Membership in the League of Nations as of 1928



1. Was a majority of the world members of the League of Nations in 1928?

2. What, if anything, does this document tell you about the strength of the League in 1928?

Document 11

Excerpts from *Mein Kampf*

Adolf Hitler was only one of the millions of teenagers who fought for Germany in World War I. He survived the trenches and even a poison gas attack, returning home a decorated soldier. In 1924, Hitler, already the leader of the Nazi party, unsuccessfully tried to stage a revolution in Germany. He was arrested and jailed. While imprisoned, he wrote the book *Mein Kampf* (*My Struggle*), which outlined his striking political philosophy. Below is an excerpt detailing his feelings about Germany's defeat to the Allied Powers in the Great War.

“Everything went black before my eyes; I tottered and groped my way back to the ward, threw myself on my bunk, and dug my burning head into my blanket and pillow....

And so it had all been in vain. In vain all the sacrifices and privations; in vain the hours in which, with mortal fear clutching at our hearts, we nevertheless did our duty; in vain the death of two million who died.... Had they died for this?... Did all this happen only so that a gang of wretched criminals could lay hands on the Fatherland?...

“Miserable and degenerate criminals!... The more I tried to achieve clarity on the monstrous events in this hour, the more the shame of indignation and disgrace burned my brow.... I knew that all was lost.... Only fools, liars and criminals could hope for mercy from the enemy. In these nights hatred grew in me, hatred for those responsible for this deed.”

1. Why does Hitler believe that millions of German people died “in vain”?

2. What descriptive words does Hitler use to describe the Allied Powers?

3. Is Hitler's resentment justifiable?

Kellogg-Briand Pact

[Originally, France, the U.S., the U.K., Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India, Belgium, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Italy and Japan signed the pact. Shortly afterwards, an additional forty-seven nations followed suit, so the pact was eventually signed by most of the established nations in the world -- sixty-two nations in all.]

Treaty between the United States and [fourteen] other Powers providing for the renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy. Signed at Paris, August 27, 1928

ARTICLE I

The High Contracting Parties solemnly declare in the names of their respective peoples that they condemn recourse to war for the solution of international controversies, and renounce it, as an instrument of national policy in their relations with one another.

ARTICLE II

The High Contracting Parties agree that the settlement or solution of all disputes or conflicts of whatever nature or of whatever origin they may be, which may arise among them, shall never be sought except by pacific means.

1. Define the words: condemn, recourse, renounce, and pacific. Check both a dictionary and thesaurus to ensure that you define the words as they are used in in context.

2. What are the “high contracting parties” that signed the Kellogg-Briand Pact?

3. What does the Kellogg-Briand Pact say about the future of war?

4. How would a nation enforce the Pact if another nation broke the agreement? Is this a realistic treaty?
