

Peacemaking, Peacekeeping—  
International Relations 1918-1936

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WWI as the 'primal catastrophe'  
of the century

Country	Year Entered	Year Left	Deaths (Millions)	Deaths as % of Pop.	Year Left	Year Left	Year Left
Austria	1914	1918	1.5	10.0	1918	1918	1918
Bulgaria	1915	1918	0.5	10.0	1918	1918	1918
Germany	1914	1918	1.5	10.0	1918	1918	1918
Italy	1915	1918	0.5	10.0	1918	1918	1918
Japan	1914	1918	0.1	10.0	1918	1918	1918
United States	1917	1918	0.1	10.0	1918	1918	1918
France	1914	1918	1.5	10.0	1918	1918	1918
Great Britain	1914	1918	1.5	10.0	1918	1918	1918
Spain	1914	1918	0.1	10.0	1918	1918	1918
Portugal	1914	1918	0.1	10.0	1918	1918	1918
Canada	1914	1918	0.1	10.0	1918	1918	1918
India	1914	1918	0.1	10.0	1918	1918	1918
China	1914	1918	0.1	10.0	1918	1918	1918
South Africa	1914	1918	0.1	10.0	1918	1918	1918
Other	1914	1918	0.1	10.0	1918	1918	1918
<b>Total</b>	<b>1914</b>	<b>1918</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>1918</b>	<b>1918</b>	<b>1918</b>

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Peacemaking and failing to  
keep the Peace

- Peacemaking produces a deceptive stability in the 1920s centred around the "Versailles System"
- 1930s witness the breakdown of the system and set the stage for a renewal of total war

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## The "Versailles System"

- Versailles Treaties of 1919
- League of Nations
- Washington Treaty 1922
- Treaty of Locarno 1925
- Briand-Kellogg Pact 1928
- French Alliance System

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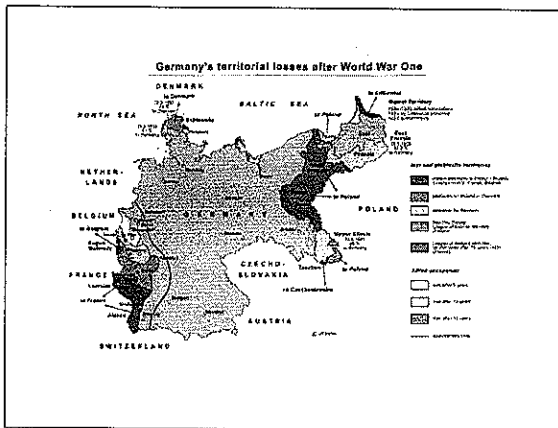
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## Principal Features of the Versailles System

- Territorial losses: One-eighth of German territory lost and 10% of population. Colonies lost.
- Disarmament: German army limited to 100,000 troops, deprived of heavy artillery, and tanks; no naval submarines, no air force

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## Versailles System (2)

- War guilt: Article 231 placed sole responsibility for the war on Germany and its allies
- Reparations: Germans were ordered to pay 132 billion gold marks (about \$US33 to 35 billion)

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## Versailles System (3)

- Creation of new states: geopolitics of Eastern Europe transformed; three Empires disappear; small, unstable states emerge

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### Versailles System (4)

- League of Nations; collective security in place of old balance of power
- Dedicated to solving disputes through arbitration
- Committed to achieving disarmament (Article 8 of the Charter)

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### Versailles System (5)

- Washington Treaty of 1922 (USA, Great Britain and Japan)
- Agreement to limit naval armaments and guarantee future security of China

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### Versailles System (6)

- Locarno Treaty of 1925; guarantees German-French border established in Treaty of Versailles (but not eastern borders); Germany admitted to League of Nations (1926)
- 'Spirit of Locarno' thought to mark the end of Great War hostility

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## Versailles System (7)



Briand-Kellogg Pact of Paris 1928  
"The High Contracting Powers...condemn  
recourse to war...and renounce it as an  
instrument of national policy." (Article I)

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## Versailles System (8)

French Alliance System; so-called 'Little  
Entente'  
France concluded treaties with  
Poland (1921)  
Czechoslovakia (1924)  
Romania (1926)  
Yugoslavia (1927)

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### Structural Flaws (1)

- 1) Failure to curb German potential for war

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### Williamson Murray and Allan Millett

"In strategic terms Germany had won the Great War. Its industrial base remained intact; it lost little territory of value; it now fronted on one major power (a debilitated France) rather than on three (France, Austria-Hungary, and Russia). Its industrial strength, its geographic position, and the size of its population gave it the greatest economic potential in Europe, while the small states of Eastern Europe and the Balkans were all open to German political and economic domination."

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### Structural Flaws (2)

- 2) Germans not reconciled to Versailles system

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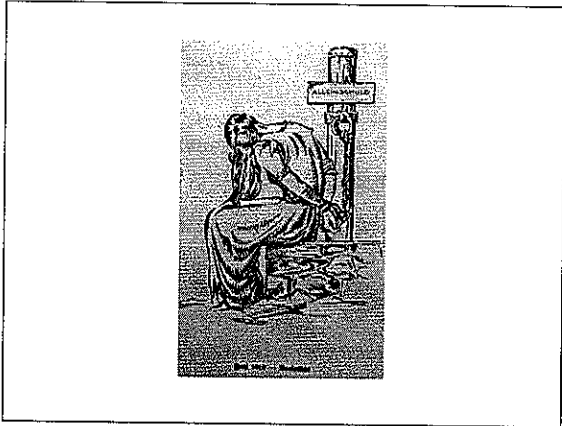
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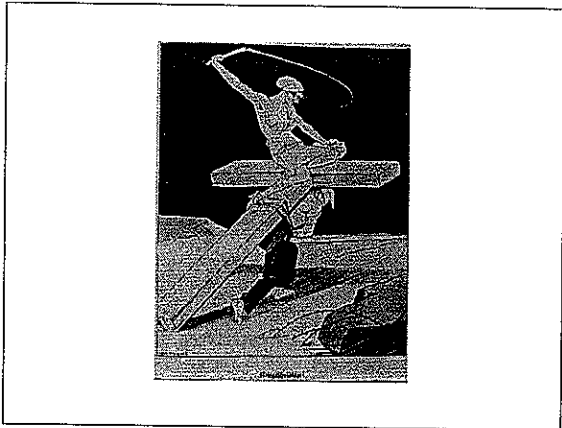
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**Structural Flaws (3)**

3) System does not incorporate USA or the USSR  
US isolationism  
USSR ravaged by Civil War

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### Structural Flaws (4)

- 4) continuation of war beyond 1918 in Central and Eastern Europe
  - Revolution and upheaval in Germany
  - *Freikorps* combat in the Baltic states
  - Civil War in Russia
  - Russo-Polish war 1919-21
  - Graeco-Turkish war 1920-22

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### Structural Flaws (5)

- 5) continuing resentment of the "losers" emergence of "revisionist" states Italy, Germany, Turkey, Bulgaria, Hungary, Austria, Soviet Union all seeking to overturn the "Versailles System"

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### Structural Flaws (6)

- 6) hypocrisy of Britain and France preached self-determination and democracy but denied these to the subject peoples of their empires; liberal at home but illiberal in their colonies

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## Elements of Breakdown (1)

- 1) Great Depression beginning in 1929  
Historian Richard Overly has argued that "no single factor was more important in explaining the breakdown of the diplomatic system in the 1930s than the world economic crisis."

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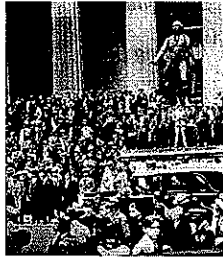
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## "Black Thursday" on Wall Street 24 Oct. 1929



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Table 4.2 Selected statistics on economic performance in the slump

	% change in exports * (1929-33)	% change in industrial prod. (1929-33)	% change in steel output (1929-33)
Austria	-64.6	-37.2	-64.3
Belgium	-55.2	-35.9	-35.5
Czechoslovakia	-71.1	-39.4	-66.5
France	-63.1	-19.5	-30.5
Germany	-53.7	-34.0	-53.1
Italy	-50.4	-8.9	-16.5
Netherlands	-60.2	-9.2	-
Poland	-65.9	-31.6	-35.9
Spain	-68.1	-16.0	-49.5
Sweden	-39.5	-9.1	-9.2
UK	-49.5	-3.8	-27.0
USA	-69.5	-36.0	-56.9

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### Elements of Breakdown (3)

- 3) The Discrediting of the League of Nations
  - Japanese invasion of Manchuria Sept. 1931; Japan withdraws from League in March 1933
  - German withdrawal from the League October 1933

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### Elements of Breakdown (4)

- 4) German reintroduction of conscription in March 1935
- 5) Anglo-German naval agreement 1935
  - allowed the Germans to build submarines again and to have a fleet 35% the size of the British
  - this kind of bilateral agreement on military strength was an implicit repudiation of the Versailles Treaty

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### Elements of Breakdown (5)

- 6) Italian war against Ethiopia 1935/36  
Ethiopia had been admitted to League of Nations in 1923; should have been protected by League

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## Benito Mussolini

Mussolini blamed France, Britain and the US because of their behaviour at Versailles in 1919 where he said they "withheld from Italy all but a few crumbs of the rich colonial loot. We have waited thirteen years, during which time the egoism of these Allies has only increased and suffocated our vitality." (Oct. 1935)



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## Elements of Breakdown (6)



7) German reoccupation of the Rhineland March 1936

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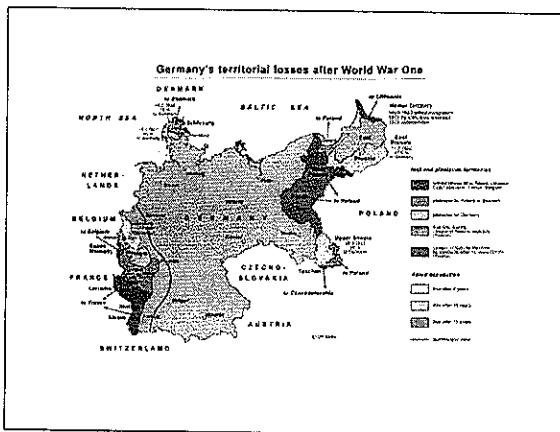
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*Daily Express* cartoon 9  
March 1936



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**Conclusion**

1. "Versailles System" destroyed by 1936; collective security discredited
2. Fascist regimes in Italy and Germany announce formation of the Rome-Berlin Axis, 25 October 1936

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"Brutal Friendship" of Hitler and Mussolini  
cemented in October 1925



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