



AUSTRIA 1918

After the First World War, the huge Austro-Hungarian Empire was reduced to one eighth of its former size. Austria changed from being a world power to a small and relatively weak country. In 1918 the German-speaking members of the imperial parliament¹ declared the formation² of an Austrian nation consisting of the German-speaking areas of the former Austro-Hungarian empire. Several of the provinces tried to break away and form independent states.



Look at the map below. Compare the Austria of 1918 with the Austro-Hungarian Empire which existed before the First World War. Which states or parts of states are today on the territory of the former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy? (Solution: see the answer page)



¹ Reichsrat, ² Bildung

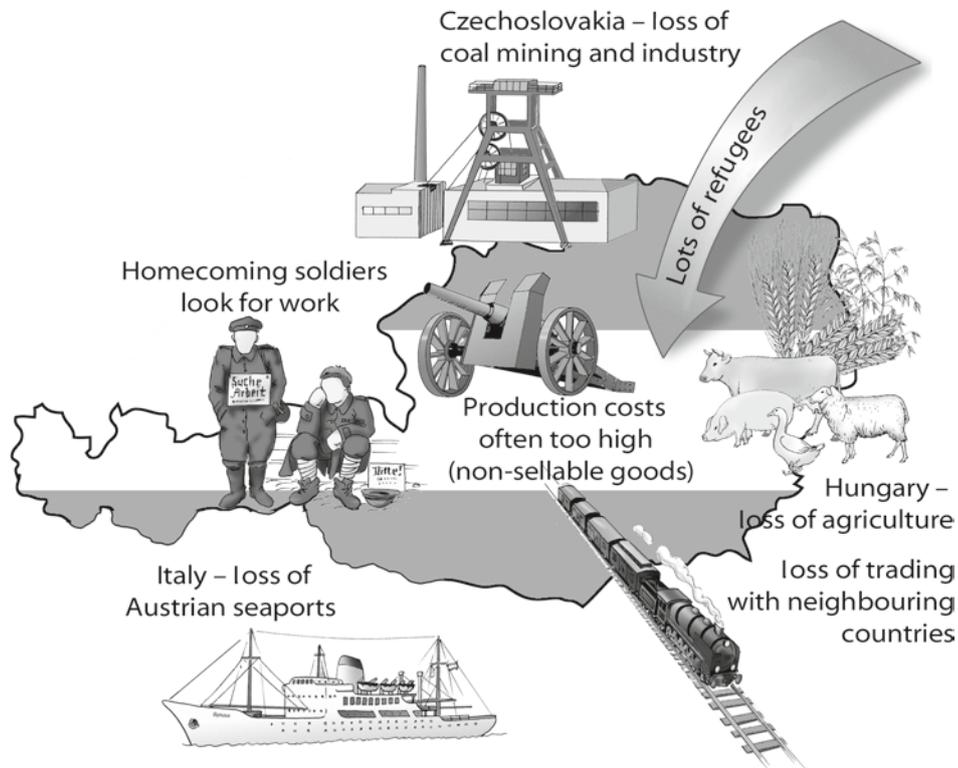


AUSTRIA – CHANGES

After the First World War, Austria lost its huge empire and became a small country in the middle of Europe. On 11th November 1918 the Austrian-Hungarian monarchy was over and Austria became a Republic. The Peace Treaty in St. Germain (near Paris) was signed in September 1919. Austria lost a lot of land – Hungary, Czechoslovakia, northern Italy, northern Yugoslavia, for example. It had therefore also lost huge trading markets.



Look at the following map and explain the consequences for Austria.



LOSS OF RAW MATERIAL	LOSS OF TRADE



WINNERS AND LOSERS

After the First World War, Europe was left in chaos and ruin. Negotiations¹ were held in and around Paris to determine² the terms³ of peace and territorial rights. The Allied leaders agreed on a peace treaty⁴ (called the Versailles Treaty) which was finally signed in May 1919. The treaty made the Germans take all the blame⁵ for the war and they had to pay for all the damage⁶ the war had caused. This basically made the Germans very weak – too weak to start another war.



Use the above information to order the following sentences into true or false. Use the numbers to find the word at the bottom. The solution is the first name of the man who was president of the United States at the end of the First World War. (Solution: see the answer page)

		True	False
1	After the war, the world was in chaos and ruin.	S	W
2	Germany had to take full blame for the war and its consequences.	O	A
3	Negotiations for peace were held in Berlin.	L	O
4	The Allies agreed on a peace treaty.	D	A
5	It was called the Versailles Treaty.	R	A
6	This treaty made the French pay for war damage.	S	O
7	The treaty was finally signed in May 1918.	F	W

Solution

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

¹ Verhandlungen, ² bestimmen, entscheiden, ³ hier: Angelegenheiten, ⁴ Vertrag, ⁵ Schuld, ⁶ Schaden



REPARATION¹ AND ITS EFFECT ON GERMANY

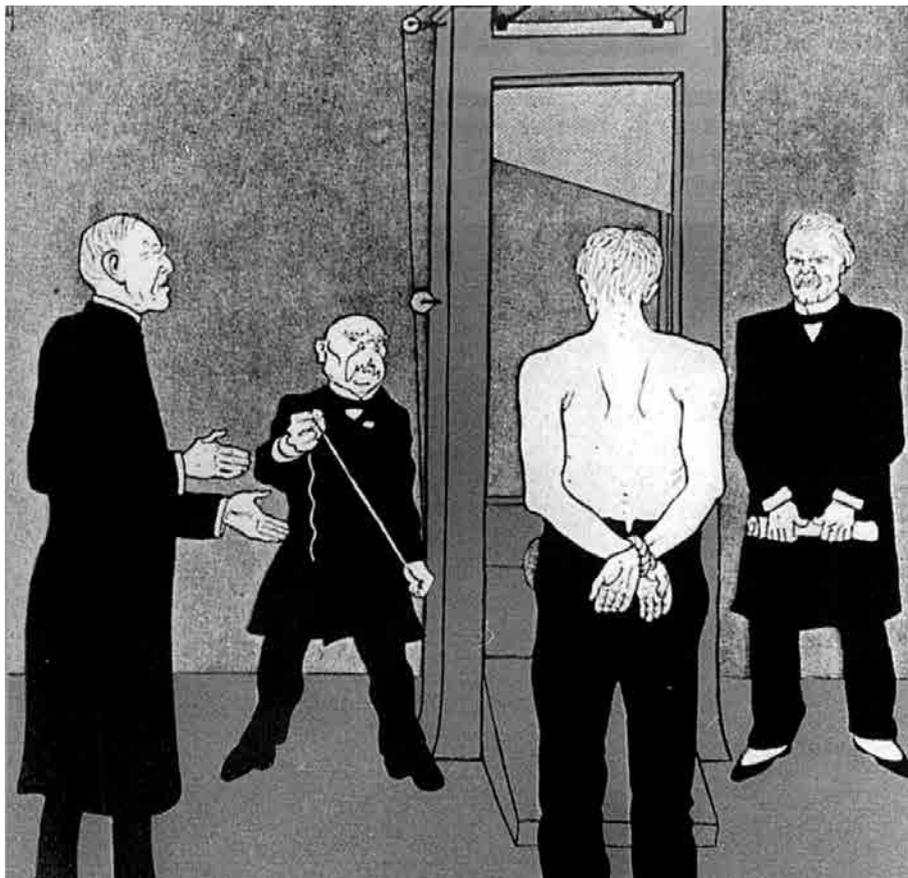
In 1921, Germany was ordered to pay reparation – huge compensation² for damages³ to the winning powers over the next 42 years, because it had started the war. Part of the payments could be in goods, such as coal. But this was difficult for Germany. The French invaded⁴ the Ruhr industrial area in 1923 to make sure that the Germans paid their dues⁵. The Germans responded with strikes – but this damaged the German economy. German bank-notes became worthless, and many Germans lost all their savings⁶.

The people were starving⁷. They exchanged valuable⁸ possessions⁹ for food. The “Black Market” flourished.

In 1931, the American President Hoover asked for a one-year stop (“moratorium”) on Germany’s reparations. Most European nations (except Finland) stopped paying war debts¹⁰ to the United States in 1932.



This German cartoon shows us what many Germans thought about the Versailles Treaty and reparation. “The big three” – the leaders of the USA and Great Britain look on as the French leader prepares to guillotine a man who represents Germany.



A question for thought: What could you exchange for food if your money became worthless overnight?

¹ Wiedergutmachung, ² Entschädigung, ³ Schäden, ⁴ einmarschieren, ⁵ hier: Abgaben, ⁶ Ersparnis, ⁷ hungern, ⁸ wertvoll, ⁹ Besitz, ¹⁰ Schulden