



The 'Other' WW1 Peace Treaties

This is a transcript of the 'Other' WW1 Peace Treaties podcast from www.mrallsophistory.com

While the Treaty of Versailles often receives the most focus in terms of the post-WW1 peace treaties, there were another four treaties that dealt with Germany's allies. These changed the shape of Europe and the Middle East, and their effect still resonates strongly today. This podcast is designed to give an overview of the terms of the four 'other' treaties as well as exploring the specific effects of the Treaty of Sèvres with Turkey.

The first of these settlements to be signed was the Treaty of St Germain in 1919. Dealing with Austria, the treaty formally broke up the Habsburg empire and dramatically changed the shape of central and eastern Europe. Partly as a result of separating Austria from Hungary, the Treaty of St Germain reduced Austria to just 25% of its pre-war land surface and turned it into a land-locked state. The wealthy industrial regions of Bohemia and Moravia were lost to the new state of Czechoslovakia while Dalmatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina were joined to form the new Yugoslavia. In the north, Poland gained the region of Galicia while the western areas of South Tyrol, Trentino and Istria were ceded to Italy.

In terms of the military, the Austrian armed forces were limited to 30,000 soldiers. Union with Germany – *Anschluss* – was expressly forbidden, and Austria was also forced to pay reparations (although in reality no money was ever actually paid).

The following year Austria's neighbour Hungary also had to recognise the independence of the new states of Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia and Hungary in the Treaty of Trianon. Hungary lost Slovakia, Ruthenia and Bratislava to Czechoslovakia while Croatia and Slovenia joined the newly-formed Yugoslavia. One of the most devastating territorial losses was that of Transylvania, which was given to Romania along part of the Banat. Similarly to Austria, Hungary was forced to pay reparations while its military was reduced to 35,000 men.

Bulgaria, meanwhile, had signed the Treaty of Neuilly in 1919. It was forced to hand its Aegean coastline to Greece, while other territory was given to the newly-formed Yugoslavia. Approximately 300,000 Bulgarians therefore found themselves in new countries. Bulgaria was also required to reduce its army to 20,000 men and pay reparations.

Arguably the most complicated settlement was the Treaty of Sèvres that was signed with Turkey in 1920. The Ottoman Empire was already 'the sick man of Europe', and Britain, France and Italy sought to benefit from its disintegration. They each wished to use the treaty to benefit their own national interests in the region, but the necessary compromise resulted in a final treaty that was seen as both harsh and humiliating. Italy felt justified in demanding Turkish territory in return for joining with the Entente powers, while Britain hoped to expand



its control over the merging oilfields in Iraq and Iran. President Wilson of the USA, meanwhile, hoped for Armenian independence.

The final terms of the treaty stated that Turkey was required to abandon all its claims all claims to its Arab and North African territory and, although Constantinople remained Turkish, it lost control of large areas of its previous empire. Greece gained Eastern Thrace and the area around the Dardanelles as well as being allowed to occupy and administer Smyrna for five years. Armenia and Kurdistan were to become independent states while Palestine, Iraq, Transjordan and Cyprus became British mandates. Syria was put under the control of France. Turkey's finances, meanwhile, were put under Allied control.

The Turkish ruler, Sultan Muhammad VI, was ready to accept the treaty but it was met with significant opposition by the Turkish people who were offended by the loss of the empire to the same foreign forces that were now controlling areas their sovereign country. The treaty was also rejected by the emerging nationalist movement under Mustapha Kemal Pasha who established a new National Assembly at Ankara. The Turkish War of Independence soon followed, which saw the nationalists force Greece out of Smyrna and negotiate both a French withdrawal from Turkish territory and a compromise agreement with Britain.

Rather than becoming an independent state, Armenia opted to join the Soviet Union after years of fighting against Turkey. The war in Armenia is a highly contentious period of history, with Turkey fiercely rejecting claims by Armenians and many historians of forced movement and mass killing that amounted to genocide.

An armistice was eventually agreed between Turkey and its enemies in 1922, and this was followed by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 which recognised Smyrna, Anatolia and Thrace as Turkish territory. This replaced the Treaty of Sèvres, and essentially established the modern Turkey that we know today.