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borders. In its place, were generally weak states, which tended to quarrel with each other. And thanks to the reconstitution of Poland, after a gap of almost over a century, Germany no longer had a common border with Russia, something which had always made German statesmen look uneasily eastwards. Germany was also relatively unscathed by the war. Certainly its population suffered much from the Allied blockade but its infrastructure was relatively untouched, certainly by comparison with that of France's. Most of the fighting had been, of course, on the Belgian and French soil, on the western front, or on Russian on the eastern. German factories and mines were largely intact unlike those in France or Belgium. That perhaps does not matter because what also counts in international relations as in domestic affairs is what people believe. The Germans, who had a tendency as see themselves as surrounded by hostile nations even before the First World War, felt themselves to be weak and vulnerable after 1918.

No one who loses a war ever likes conditions of the peace settlements but the widespread and deeply-felt rejection of the Treaty of Versailles in Germany has much to do with the way in which the war ended and the often unrealistic expectations that the Germans developed in the months before they finally saw the peace terms. and so, there was no way that Germany was going to like any peace terms.

Unfortunately the Allies made it worse by not negotiating with Germany. The Peace Conference was initially meant to be like earlier ones, where winners and losers sat down and hammered out a peace. The Allies met in Paris in January 1919 for what they expected would be a preliminary conference for two to three weeks, where they would hammer out common peace terms and then call representatives from Germany and the other defeated nations and have a full-blown peace conference.

When the Allies started their discussions, they rapidly found that the issues were so complicated and involved so many parts of the world, that it was difficult to get agreement. Matters were also complicated by Woodrow Wilson's insistence – and one can see why he did it – that the covenant of the league of nations be included in the German Treaty. Two to three weeks turned into two to three months. It was not until the beginning of May 1919, that the Allies managed to draw up a