

The peacemaking efforts of David Lloyd George during the Paris Peace Conference

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Introduction

The first world-wide conflict of the 20th century, known as The Great War, was centred in Europe between mainly Great-Britain, France, the Russian Empire, and Italy known as the Entente powers and the German Empire, the Monarchy of Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria known as the Central powers. What caused the European conflicts were countries, such as Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire, which had a mixed ethnic population with their rights subdued. Ethnicities had to speak the official language of their country when interacting with officials, attending to legal matters or being at their workplaces. These facts alone caused disturbances within and without mixed ethnicity countries. The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand was the *casus belli* that enabled Austria-Hungary to make the “Balkan Powder Keg” explode, leading to the first war, in which every continent was involved.

Having joined the war on 6th April, 1917, the U.S provided the Entente powers with enormous military and economic advantages, ending the war eventually. United States President Woodrow Wilson's peace proposal of national self-determination contributed to the early surrender of Germany without further battles on German lands, preserving lives and most of the German economy, which could ensure the economic reintegration into Europe. Although Germany surrendered on the condition that the war would end in a non-vindictive peace agreement that had been proposed by the U.S.A. However, the treaties that had been signed in Versailles, Saint-Germain and Trianon, created a peace settlement that was based upon strategic and economic matters rather than national self-determination. As the German Empire had been promised that the treaties would not be vindictive, territorial gains and losses would be determined considering ethnicities and nationalities and the indemnities would be a fixed sum, performable. However, as the Paris Peace Conference proceeded, it became clear that the lenient proposals of the Allies were unattainable both economy-wise and ethnicity-wise. The innumerable amount of problems mainly arose because of the cultural and

ideological conflicts between the Allies. Although the face of the national self-determination was Wilson, David Lloyd George was also a promoter of the lenient and just peace based on the U.S President's ideals.

“The Big Three” was chiefly responsible for determining the aspects of the peace treaties and responsible for reaching an agreement with the Central powers after the armistice. As a classical liberal, Lloyd George supported Woodrow Wilson's famous Fourteen Points whole-heartedly, in which Wilson explained what he wanted to achieve with the peace treaties, such as disarmament, national self-determination, free trade routes and most importantly the League of Nations. Although having been constantly confronted by Georges Clemenceau and generally the French media for being overly generous and idealistic, the two great leaders, Wilson and Lloyd George agreed upon the non-vindictive, just peace. However, their efforts were in vain as the Treaty of Versailles enforced the ruthless dismemberment of the vanquished, which were driven by hopes for excessive territorial gains, generating new, rather than solving the old ethnic conflicts in both Central and South Eastern Europe overshadowing the Old Continent for the next 40 years.

On the contrary to popular belief, Lloyd George did not lose the Treaty of Versailles¹. It was rather due to the circumstances, in which Lloyd George and his colleagues had to work. Not only did Lloyd George lack hinterland support, but also had to mediate between the idealist Woodrow Wilson and the germanophobe Georges Clemenceau, not to mention the need to reach an agreement with both the Allies and the Germans. If Great-Britain was politically one of the most powerful nations, how could the peace treaty become one that was not truly supported by one of its authors, namely Lloyd George? What could have possibly caused the downfall of the Prime Minister and the President, in terms of creating the just peace? Who could oppose the leaders and victors of the Great War and how? The questions are to be observed from a British-American aspect, through the political life of British Prime Minister David Lloyd George and his work *The Truth about the Peace Treaties*.

¹YOUNG, W. John: *Britain & the World in the 20th century*, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 1997, page 74

The Personal History of David Lloyd George

Born in 1863, Dwyfor, Wales, David Lloyd George was given many titles by various people, ranging from his own colleagues to the masses. “Welsh Wizard”; “Goat-footed Bard”; “The Champion of the People”; just to mention some. However, what enabled him to reach the position of Prime Minister, his becoming the famed victorious Prime Minister of the Great War and his peace aims were mainly due to his upbringing.

Having been moved to his uncle's home after his father's death, David George was brought up by his uncle, Richard Lloyd. Lloyd was a shoemaker and also a minister at the local church. Although he lacked education, Richard Lloyd certainly did not lack practical experience, political motivation and a goal to raise his nephew to be a fine lawyer, which David exclaimed he wanted to be at around the age of 5. Richard Lloyd provided David education in Latin, History and French, faculties that was not taught in the local school, which David attended². Throughout his carrier, Richard Lloyd provided David advice not only during his lawyership, but also during his time in the Parliament. He would always support Lloyd George with numerous advice on political matters, for instance as Lloyd George's private secretary later remembered:

'As the weeks went by Uncle Lloyd would notice that Herbert Lewis, another Welsh Member had made a speech. Immediately the old man acted. Writing to “his boy” he pointed out how active Herbert Lewis had been; what a fine speech he had made;(…) Lloyd George then sprang into action, and the next day he would receive a letter from his old Uncle containing perhaps only one word “Bravo” written in huge letters on a sheet of paper.'³

The advice given to David not only helped him climb the ladder of politics, but also reminded him of his origins that he was a child of a nonconformist, Liberal minded lower class family. Upon his becoming Prime Minister, David George was still getting letter from his uncle, although rarely. In 1917, Richard Lloyd passed away and David George took up the surname of his uncle, honouring him after his death. Thus, David Lloyd George was born, the only Prime Minister, who sprang from Welsh origins.

The fact that the childhood of David Lloyd George became one of the most important

² SYLVESTER, A.J.: *The Real Lloyd George*, London: Casell and Company, LTD. 1947, page 6

³ Ibid.: 9-10

pillars of his political career and policies is undeniable. Not only because his uncle supplied him with advice, but also Lloyd George remembered what it had been like to live in a small way. Not only was he a foster son of a shoemaker, Lloyd George was also a member of a religious minority, which left a permanent mark on his life. Also, his Welsh origins contributed to the stubborn, sometimes illogical personality while he was a Member of Parliament and the Prime Minister. What these permanent marks lead to, was Lloyd George's extraordinary sense of justice with which Lloyd George earned the title of "The Champion of the People" at the time of his social reforms. His sense of justice visualised itself during the primary school years of Lloyd George, when he opposed the annual Catechism at the school, in the presence of a vicar⁴. Lloyd George justified his actions by pointing out that his religious beliefs forbade him to attend either the Catechism or the religious services that the most of the school attended. Although, the former opposition could be expected in a protestant majority village, the fact that the pacifist Lloyd George became one of the promoters of war, even resigning as the Chancellor of the Exchequer to become the Minister of Munitions in 1915, was astounding. This was a most unforgettable sin for Richard Lloyd, who did not understand why "his boy" would be associated with war, let alone give up the prosperous position of the Chancellor of the Exchequer⁵. Lloyd George's sense of justice, and his becoming the Minister of Munitions, according to his private secretary: '(...) certainly saved us and gave us the victory'⁶. This unique sense of justice will be the motivation of the Prime Minister at the Paris Peace Conference, where his goal was to end the war with a just peace, acceptable for every nation.

The importance of a just peace was not only important as a goal of ideology, it was also economically significant. As every other British, Lloyd George was also a promoter of British interests. With the just peace, the British would have gained the ability to trade with Germany and achieve an economically consolidated Europe, possibly without war. To achieve this was so important that Lloyd George created a coalition with the Conservatives in order to ensure his victory during the elections of 1918. This commitment to personal goals meant to Lloyd George that he had to relinquish some of his ideas, to gain the support of both the Coalition and the hinterland.

In conclusion, the Prime Minister's peace aims originated mainly from his sense of justice other than, his political beliefs. Although, Lloyd George's aims were rational, during

⁴ DU PARCQ, Herbert: *Life of David Lloyd George*, London: Caxton Publishing Company, 1912

⁵ SYLVESTER, A.J.: *The Real Lloyd George*, London: Casell and Company LTD. 1947, page 10

⁶ Ibid.

the Paris Peace Conference, he had two irrational political figures, Wilson and Clemenceau, to mediate between. The mediation was difficult as the contradicting peace aims precluded the delegates from reaching a favourable agreement, compromises had to be made.

The Political History of Great-Britain and David Lloyd George

The Liberal Split

In 1914, the Great War started, which was clearly a European conflict. The failure of the German Schlieffen-plan proved to be a decisive factor in terms of economy and manpower during a full-scale war. The plan's essence was to invade France as fast as possible in order to ensure a swift victory to the Central powers. Since the plan failed, the armies of both sides dug trenches all across Europe, creating frontlines, where men could live and fight from a safe distance. As France was overcome even by the failed blitz of Germany, Great-Britain had to support her ally not only on seas but also on land. It was imperative for Great Britain to provide support on the battlefields as almost half of France was occupied by the Germans, however her armies were less fit for prolonged fighting, not having been equipped for trench-warfare, consisting mainly of conscripts, rather than regular army men unlike in the German Empire. Therefore the British War Council and the Liberal Government had to go through serious changes in order to be able to maintain their presence on the frontlines in France.

From 1910, the British government was led by Herbert Asquith liberal prime minister, whose government faced several crises, such as the notorious Shell Crisis of 1915, when the frontlines lacked artillery shells. During the First World War, artillery was considered and used as an individual unit in the military, rather than a support for infantry. Therefore it was crucial for the frontlines to be provided with the required amount of shells. This crisis proved that the War Cabinet of Great-Britain had flaws concerning military supplies, which, during a war, is unaffordable. David Lloyd George of the Liberal Party was the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the war started, which was considered to be the right hand man of the Prime Minister. Lloyd George with the press baron Lord Northcliffe criticized Asquith's and the War Cabinet's leadership and competency due to the known flaws of supplying the frontlines. As Northcliffe owned the most known and read papers at that time in Great-Britain, which were called the Daily Mail and The Times, and since the media consisted of mainly newspapers, Asquith had to react to the criticisms. Asquith had to create a coalition government and asked if Lloyd George wanted to be the Minister of Munitions in 1915. This event indicated the downfall of Asquith and the rising of Lloyd George in politics. The fresh, well-founded leadership of the British war effort affected the outcome of the war almost as the joining of

the United States in 1917.

Due to criticisms concerning the leadership of the Prime Minister, which was rather slow and ineffective compared to the passionate and fast-to-think Lloyd George. Asquith eventually had to resign in 1916 and there was a split in the government. The Liberal Party was broken into two. Those who supported Asquith's policy, known as Asquithian Liberals and those, who preferred a stable coalition for the endgame of the war and the soon-to-come Peace Conference.

Thus, the Liberal and Conservative Coalition were created and took on the role of the government, with David Lloyd George as Prime Minister and Bonar Law as the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Revamping the war effort not only in Britain, but with more support from the government, the Allies could hold their ground against the German Empire.

The Coalition Government

The split in the Liberal Party was not a balanced one. Most of the liberals preferred the “conservative liberal” Asquith to the “radical liberal” Lloyd George. Since the Prime Minister's liberal supporters were fewer than the Conservative representatives and Labour representatives, the liberals were weak compared to them. For instance, the Coalition War Cabinet consisted of two conservatives, namely Bonar Law and Lord George Curzon, Arthur Henderson as a labour, David Lloyd George as a liberal and an independent representative Lord Alfred Milner⁷. Obviously, the Prime Minister was politically dependant on the other War Cabinet members as they occupied important and influential roles within both the Cabinet and the Government.

Consequently, Lloyd George gave the roles of Minister of Education, Minister of Food Control and the Director of the Propaganda occupations to politically independent men to make himself breathing space. The most significant of all, the Directorship of the Propaganda was given to Lord Northcliffe, even though Lloyd George offered him a position in his government. With giving these positions to independent representatives, the tips of the scale became balanced. Though the Conservative Party had two prominent representatives in the Cabinet, the Prime Minister could achieve a Unity of Command.

Although, a new administration was created by the Liberal Coalition, Lloyd George wanted to make sure that the Coalition would not be stabbed in the back by Asquith's

⁷ PEARCE, Malcolm, STEWART, Geoffrey: *British Political History 1867-1995: democracy and decline*, London: Routledge, 1996, page 215

Liberals. As the Prime Minister wanted to achieve a Unity of Command, he wanted to reconcile the Liberals and unite every party possible. The Unity was essential in terms of achieving victory, without it, the Cabinet and the government could not have possibly worked together, hindering one another. Therefore, moderate Asquithian supporters proposed the idea of including Asquith in the Coalition on a high legal position, such as the Lord Chancellor, to Lloyd George⁸. The Prime Minister welcomed the idea, for the Unity would be achieved, as well as the experience of Asquith would be appreciated during the formation of the peace. Furthermore, uniting the Liberal Party would cause the general elections in 1918 to be a balanced one, where the Liberal Party as a whole could participate. However, Lloyd George had to consult with Bonar Law, the Prime Minister's right hand as the Chancellor of the Exchequer⁹, leader of the Conservative Party. Law accepted the suggestion without hesitation. On the other hand, Asquith refused to accept the position and distanced himself from the Coalition.

Thus, the unison of the Liberal Party failed to be created. Lloyd George titled this event disastrous for Liberalism, for this separation of parties was not based on opposing ideals or political aims, rather than personal issues, as Asquith clearly disliked the circumstances, in which he had to resign from office, due to mainly Northcliffe and Lloyd George. This personal issue of Asquith was present during the upcoming General Elections in 1918. The Asquithian Liberals were opposed to Lloyd George and the Coalition, who would stop at nothing to win the elections, in order to continue the foreign policy of ending the war justly.¹⁰

The General Elections of 1918

The enormous support that was given to the Liberal Coalition by the public was definitely in connection with the unison of the parties into the Coalition, the election programme of Lloyd George, and of course, winning The Great War. The Unity of Command, which was achieved during the year 1917, paid off and resulted in a successful war effort, defeating the German forces with the collaboration of the United States, France, Italy and the allied states. Obviously, winning the war affected the Coalition's popularity by a tremendous amount; however, it was simply not enough for Lloyd George and his Party to win the upcoming General Elections. If the Coalition was to represent Great-Britain during the peace

⁸ LLOYD GEORGE, David: *The Truth about the Peace Treaties, Volume I.*, London: Victor Gollanz LTD., 1938, page 174

⁹ Ibid.: 176

¹⁰ Ibid.: 174

conference, it was imperative for the Party to win the elections with flying colours. The General Elections of 1918 were the opportunity for the Prime Minister to continue leading the nation towards a peace that would endure and secure peace for Europe. Not only his leadership and the winning of the war were accountable for the winning the General Elections, but also Asquith's policy and the Conservative Party's popularity.

As the Coalition consisted mostly of Conservative and Labour representatives, politically as mixed as it was, the Party had invaluable support from the population. For the first time women could vote on the General Elections, increasing the number of the electors by millions. This further increased the voting base of Britain, which is an additional electoral layer to have, for a party like the Coalition. However, the representation of revenge based foreign policy gained popularity among the people. For instance, executing the Kaiser of the German Empire and demanding astronomical amounts of indemnities were common demands by the public¹¹. While Lloyd George was opposed to the idea of a punitive peace, the upcoming elections precluded him from firmly stating that there would be no such things as destroying the German economy or hanging Wilhelm II the Kaiser of the German Empire. According to the memoirs of the Prime Minister concerning his election programme:

'As to the "hanging of the Kaiser", I never used the phrase. I said: - 'The Kaiser must be prosecuted. The war was a crime. Who doubts that? (...) Is there to be no punishment? Surely, that is neither God's justice nor man's. The men responsible for this outrage on the human race must not be let off because their heads were crowned when they prepared the deed.'¹²

Lloyd George was definitely against the vindictive peace, but he had to let the radicalities live to enable the Coalition to appeal to the public.

As mentioned above, Asquith felt backstabbed and betrayed, as he was made to leave his position as Prime Minister by Lloyd George and his supporters in the Liberal Party. Asquith's main idea was to eliminate the Coalition before the General Elections, to get both his revenge on Lloyd George and reclaim his position as Prime Minister. Asquith had one affair up in his sleeve that could stagger the Coalition. That was the Maurice Affair, named after Frederick Maurice, who was a high ranking officer in His Majesty's Army during the

¹¹ LLOYD GEORGE, David: *The Truth about the Peace Treaties, Volume I.*, London: Victor Gollanz LTD., 1938, page 177

¹² Ibid.: 178

Great War. The report about the affair itself was written in 1917, when David Lloyd George and Andrew Bonar Law forged reports about the Western Front, concerning the number of troops there. Maurice knew about this, but instead of reporting it, he kept it a secret. However, Asquith wanted this to be very well-known among both the politicians and the electors. Therefore the former Prime Minister challenged Lloyd George and Bonar Law to a debate just before the General Elections to make sure no one would forget the Maurice Debate, ensuring his victory. The role Maurice played, apart from writing the report, is still debated even today¹³. However, Asquith took full responsibility and expressed: 'It was a motion by me, and I must say at once that there is no act in the whole of my parliamentary life, now extending for more than thirty years, for which I am less repentant or ashamed.'¹⁴. The Prime Minister and Bonar Law accepted the challenge, concluding that a debate this important would sort out the true supporters of the Government and those, who oppose it. The debate took place on the 9th May, 1918. However much Asquith tried to defeat the Prime Minister in an open debate, Lloyd George was determined to win both the debate and the General Elections. The Prime Minister's oratory skills overshadowed Asquith's dull, emotionless reasoning. The Prime Minister vigorously reasoned with no logical flaw. Lloyd George explained the reason behind the forging of the documents: he did not want to send more men to the Western killzone wasting military manpower, rather sending the intended troops to other fronts, relieving pressure on the Allies.¹⁵ Consequently, Lloyd George's speech about his former intentions of holding back information while in the War Cabinet, won him not only the Parliament, but also the public. Thus, the Maurice affair indicated the irreversible tear inside the Liberal party and won Lloyd George "one half" of the General Elections.

The "other half" of winning the General Elections still remained for the Coalition. The Maurice Debate boosted considerably the popularity of the Party, on the other hand though, the Liberal split staggered mainly the public. The Prime Minister both gained support and lost it at the same time. Fortunately for Lloyd George, the Coalition consisted of more than one party and the most prominent one was the Conservative Party. As the Conservative Party was as old as the Liberal Party, a decent part of the public supported it. But with the Liberal split, the other half of decent supporters of the liberals were split too, leaving Lloyd George in a most uncomfortable position. He either reunite the liberals or lean upon the conservatives and

¹³ GOOCH, John: *The Maurice Debate 1918*, *Journal of Contemporary History*: Vol. 3, No. 4, London: Sage Publications Ltd., 1968, page 211

¹⁴ LLOYD GEORGE, David: *The Truth about the Peace Treaties, Volume I.*, London: Victor Gollanz LTD., 1938, page 170

¹⁵ Ibid.

let the radical ideas live. As Asquith was irreconcilable, the Prime Minister had to choose the latter. From the following chart¹⁶, it is clear that the General Elections was won by the conservative part of the Coalition, rather than the liberals or altogether.

Percentages of the General Elections of 1918	
Coalition	Labour: 22.2%
-Conservatives: 38.7%	Asquith Lib.: 12.1%
-Lloyd George Lib.: 13.5%	Sinn Fein: 4.5%
	Irish Nationalists: 2.2%
-National Labour:1.5%	Other: 5.3%

The overwhelming plurality of the conservatives and their support in the Coalition left no chance for the opposition to hold ground against the governing party. It can also be observed that the opposition tried to include the Irish in the Elections, however with little succession. Lloyd George could again become the Prime Minister of Great-Britain and prepare for the forthcoming Peace Conference but with the knowledge that he would have to appeal to both the conservatives and the public.

The rising of David Lloyd George in politics was flanked with subtle manoeuvres, supporting conservatives and attacking liberals. However, the circumstances, in which Lloyd George acquired his position and won the General Elections of 1918, were two of the precursors of his downfall during the Peace Conference. Not only the division of the Liberal Party, but the fact that Lloyd George could not achieve victory on his own and had to represent a policy he did not support. These precluded him from a position in the Conference that could have weighted more concerning the treaties and foreign policies of Great-Britain. The ideology of the follower of the Gladstoneian tradition definitely coincided with the ideology of the President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, who also sought an alternate way of reconciling the warring Europe and preventing further wars form happening.

¹⁶ PUGH, Martin: *The Making of Modern British Politics 1867-1939*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1982, page 282

“The Big Three”

David Lloyd George and Woodrow Wilson

In 18th January, 1919 the most infamous and controversial peace conference of the world began in Versailles. The crucial questions of ending the war and creating a continent, which is not only safe, but also without confrontations and powerful both in terms of economy and consolidated politically, were but a few of the most important aspects of the Paris Peace Conference. A peace conference to this world-wide scale has never been established before and for this reason, the attendants of the conference had their own incapacibilities mixed with the tensions caused by the aftermath of the Great War. Among the Great Four, the representatives of the United States may have been the weakest link of the conference, in terms of understanding the politics of Europe and the importance of firm acting. Not only the British delegates felt that Wilson was unprepared for a conference of this critical matter, but also the subordinates of the President¹⁷, which of course prevented the Americans to express, what they intended to do exactly during the progression of the conference. In addition, the Congressional Elections of 1918 proved to be also decisive in the matter of distrust, concerning Wilson. Despite the fact that the U.S. support ended the war, Britain's prominent leading figures were hesitant to trust Wilson's authority at the Peace Conference.

The British attitude towards the American delegates and foreign policy was rather profound. The most significant aspect of the distrust concerning Wilson's capability was due to the American Congressional Elections that took place in 1918, where Woodrow Wilson in his speech asked the nation to vote for democrats only, despite the fact that the war efforts had been made united, regardless of political affiliation¹⁸. The Great War was still raging on and Wilson needed the support in order to successfully represent the U.S. both in wartime and at the Peace Conference. However, this address of Wilson's proved to be a grave mistake in during the Congressional Elections. As almost every member of the Congress and electors had stood united in wartime, this request of Wilson was most untactful. The Congressional Elections ended in favour of the Republicans, which meant that the President's aims could be vetoed whenever the Congress wanted and irrespectively of what those aims may be. As the

¹⁷ LLOYD GEORGE, David: *The Truth about the Peace Treaties, Volume I.*, London: Victor Gollanz Ltd., 1938, page 271

¹⁸ Ibid.: 154

U.S. would be present at the Peace Congress, the authority of the country's leader was essential, however without the Congress' support and the trust of the population, Wilson's presence at the Conference, undoubtedly, was not as weighted as the President had wanted it to be. The President's not being tactful enough regarding the handling of internal affairs did not forecast much political subtlety for the Peace Conference, where the people of another continent were present and differed both ethnically and in foreign political aims. Obviously, the prominent leaders of Great-Britain could not have trusted Wilson's presence at the Conference, when he could not even handle the politics of his own country.

Lloyd George's personal opinion was that Wilson had a rather frosty attitude towards Great-Britain. Several of the Prime Minister's subordinates stated that, as Wilson was an academic, the President's behaviour would be eloquent and indoctrinating as far as politics is concerned¹⁹ This made the Prime Minister feel rather disturbed about the visit of Wilson to Great Britain, fearing that Wilson's coldness will contribute to the diplomatic fragility between the Entente members and weaken the authority of the victors over the losing countries. Not only Wilson's personality disturbed the British Prime Minister, but also the result of the U.S. Congressional Elections, especially because the relationship between the President and the de-facto leader of the Congress, Cabot Lodge. The mutual dislike between these statesmen prevented Wilson from every goal and aim he wanted to reach. Lodge considered Wilson to be too academic and sentimental for a position like presidency²⁰ In return, the President thought Lodge was too narrow and self-praising. Thus, American government and peace delegates would have a constant opposition regardless of their aims, whether they were reasonable or not.

Lloyd George also feared that the behaviour of Wilson would have a grave effect on the conference as both the French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau and the Italian Prime Minister Vittorio Orlando were opposed to a lenient, just peace, intending to extract as many resources as possible from the defeated states. However, while in Britain, the private conversation between Lloyd George and Wilson made it clear that Wilson was not intrigued by the peace conference itself to the scale Britain was. The U.S. president first and foremost wanted to create the League of Nations, to start an era of peace, and wanted the League to deal with the Peace Conference. This idea of Wilson's was too idealistic even for Lloyd George himself, not to mention Clemenceau or Orlando.

¹⁹ LLOYD GEORGE, *David: The Truth about the Peace Treaties, Volume I.*, London: Victor Gollanz Ltd., 1938, page 179

²⁰ *Ibid.*: 155

The British Prime Minister and his fellow delegates considered Wilson to be unprepared for a Peace Conference this important, as he was fonder of the creation of the League of Nations than the practical issues at hand, for instance the territorial division of the German Empire. Moreover, Wilson did not have a full national support behind him unlike Lloyd George or Clemenceau, as Wilson was opposed by the Congress. Thus the President's influence and authority were not to be taken for granted.

David Lloyd George and Georges Clemenceau

On the contrary to the United States and Great-Britain, France was under a constant and terrifying threat by Germany. The Franco-Prussian War, which resulted in the loss of Alsace-Lorraine for France and the creation of the united German state, left a permanent scar in the French mentality concerning Germany. During the Great War, France, again, was invaded by the Germans within the time span of 40 years. As Clemenceau, the French Premier during the War, had lived through both the Franco-Prussian and the First World War, his germanophobia and scepticism towards the Germans became insurmountable by the time the Great War ended and the Peace Conference began. While, the beginning of the conference was smooth, Clemenceau's firm resistance towards a peace based on ideology, proposed by Wilson and Lloyd George, and his peace aims were eventually hindering the creation of a non-vindictive peace treaty.

Intriguingly, the extent of the germanophobia Clemenceau had, matched the extent of his anglophilia that ensured a fairly smooth beginning between him and Lloyd George²¹ Clemenceau's war efforts and anglophilia made the British Prime Minister confident that unlike Wilson, the French Premier would be a fitting figure, both politically and personally, for the Paris Peace Conference. While with Wilson Lloyd George had had a rather uneventful talk privately, which made clear that Wilson is not interested in the Treaties themselves, the first meeting with Clemenceau was quite action-packed, as the two leaders confronted each other and had a row. However, this row enabled Lloyd George and Clemenceau not only to acquaint themselves with each other, but also to come to know their private policies respectively²². On the one hand, this first meeting created familiarity and relaxed atmosphere between the two politicians, Clemenceau was rather infamous for his limited temperament

²¹ HANKS, K. Robert: *Georges Clemenceau and the British*, *The Historical Journal*, 45, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, page 53

²² SYLVESTER, A.J, *The Real Lloyd George*, London: Casell and Company LTD. 1947, page 23

control, which caused negotiations tense and difficult. For instance, upon a negotiation with the Belgian Prime Minister, the Belgian was rather rude towards the French Premier. The negotiations concluded in Clemenceau's request for the Belgian Prime Minister to drown himself²³.

Although at the beginning of the Peace Conference both the British and French Prime Minister were on good terms, the events turned for the worse as the peace aims of the Lloyd George and Clemenceau contradicted each other. The British aims of just peace frightened the French as the British peace terms would have enabled the Germans to rebuild their army, economy and infrastructure. This is what Clemenceau wanted to avoid desperately, for he did not want to leave any possibilities for Germany for another invasion, which meant that the first French peace terms were downright punitive, crushing the German economy, dismembering the country: creating a pro-French Poland, which would allow France to dominate Germany. The French claims regarding the peace treaties were the reuniting of France and Alsace-Lorraine, a defence line against Germany and possibly to annex the Rhineland and the Saar²⁴. However, these claims could not be achieved, for Lloyd George and Wilson refused to give way to terms this harsh²⁵. In return, in 1919 they both Great-Britain and the United States agreed to defend France in case of German aggression, which seemed to reassure Clemenceau of having proper defences against German aggression. Though, when the American Congress refused to support Wilson's foreign policy, Clemenceau's own foreign policy shifted even more towards the punitive peace treaty. The French and British began to drift away from each other in terms of policies, as the French ambitions were definitely contradicting the British and American aims, which meant for the French that they had to look for alternative defences against Germany. Upon the failed negotiations over the Rhineland and the Saar, Clemenceau's hardliner nationalist criticisers, Marshal Foch and Tardieu, formed a formidable opposition against Clemenceau, Lloyd George and Wilson²⁶. Towards the end of the Conference, Clemenceau was attacked by the French media and the hinterland, just as Lloyd George and Wilson was, implying that Clemenceau's foreign policy options were limited by the hinterland²⁷.

The hinterland opposition of France created further obstacles for the conference,

²³ SYLVESTER, A.J, *The Real Lloyd George*, London: Casell and Company LTD. 1947, page 33

²⁴ LAMB, Margaret, TARLING, Nicholas: *From Versailles To Pearl Harbor: The Origins of the Second World War in Europe and Asia*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2001, page 24

²⁵ LLOYD GEORGE, David: *The Truth about the Peace Treaties, Volume I.*, Victor Gollanz Ltd., 1938, page 396

²⁶ Ibid.: 580

²⁷ Ibid.: 578

making Wilson's health worse, creating a situation, where the British peace aims were opposed by the uncompromising and irreconcilable extremism of the French. Although the opposition's claims were plausible, they were also extremely nationalist, placing the French needs before everything else Lloyd George and Wilson had agreed on.

The British Aspects of the Peace Conference

The Lack of Hinterland Support

The peace conference, which started in 1919, was still in the phase of formation, clashing the different ideas and making resolutions for them. Although this time was hardly enough to reconcile the World, discontent with the British delegates rose with the passing of time. A number of reasons lead to this discontent, ranging from the speculations to the intentional denigration of the Delegates. While the speculations had no foundations whatsoever, the denigrations of Lord Northcliffe, the press baron, had some truth in them and he had the tools to spread the accusations concerning the peace conference and the British Delegates.

What mainly caused Northcliffe to turn against Lloyd George and the delegates was that he was neither made a peace delegate, nor was he given the job to be a propagandist of the conference²⁸. According to Lloyd George, Northcliffe's "pride was hurt", when the British Government did not recognize his rightful claims of attending the Peace conference, in spite of what he had done in the war²⁹. As he was the owner of the leading newspapers, Lord Northcliffe had little difficulty to spread rumours about the ongoing conference. The newspapers were full of horrible accusations, from conspiring with the Americans to breaking the pledges that had been made during of the elections of 1918.³⁰ The charges were so severe, that Lloyd George's right hand, Bonar Law, had to return to the House of Commons to clarify the claims that had been made during the elections of 1918³¹, disrupting the delegates' work in Paris.

The most arguable accusation of the media was the extensive time the conference took. According to Lloyd George only the Congress of Vienna was close to the Paris Peace Conference regarding the amount of work and time spent to settle the affairs of Europe only. However, the peace settlement of the Great War literally had to reconcile a planet, as every continent had taken part in the war.³² The tremendous amount of work that had to be done was shown by the numbers of the occasions the "Big Three" had to meet. According to Lloyd

²⁸ LLOYD GEORGE, David: *The Truth about the Peace Treaties, Volume I*, London: Victor Gollanz Ltd., 1938, page 558

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.: 559

³¹ Ibid.: 560

³² Ibid.: 565

George's personal assistant: 'There were in all 206 meetings which took place in 101 days, including 15 Sundays. No fewer than 674 conclusions were arrived at'³³. These intimidating numbers concerning only the meetings were the proofs of the ongoing work in Paris. However, the British Parliament was concerned the least by the extensive time the conference had been taking, but by rather what the Peace Delegates were trying to achieve during that time.

While the accusations regarding the conspiracies of Clemenceau, Wilson and Lloyd George were ill-founded, the British Parliament's concern with Lloyd George's political agenda and peace aims were not. This distrust towards the Peace Conference was caused primarily by the politics of the British Prime Minister during his campaign in the General Elections of 1918. In order to win the affection of the masses, Lloyd George could not campaign with his personal policy concerning the peace conference as it was too lenient in the eyes of several politicians and the public as well. To integrate into the Coalition and to appeal to the public, Lloyd George stated points concerning the peace that were not exclusively against the punitive peace he wanted to avoid. The masses and several politicians came to the conclusion that the Prime Minister promised to extract as much money and property from Germany as he could, paying the costs of war. However, Lloyd George stated that the reparations and indemnities would be based on the current economic state of Germany, rather than making her pay for 4 years of warfare.³⁴ The charges regarding this particular statement were so severe that the Prime Minister had to return to London to prove the delegates' being right concerning the peace agenda. Besides defending the British Delegates and himself against the accusations of the media, the Prime Minister also felt that this was the time to ask the Parliament if they trusted him enough to let him continue the work he started at the conference.³⁵ Lloyd George stated firmly what he wanted to achieve was to have a peace treaty that was just and rigorous, punishing the aggressors that caused the war with a peace that was logical and understandable, rather than based on anger and despise³⁶. The Parliament accepted the argumentation of the Prime Minister, understanding the delicate matter of reconciling nations that fought each other vigorously for 4 extensive years.

In spite the successful defence of the conference and delegates, Northcliffe's attacks through the media made a serious point about the fallibilities of Lloyd George in

³³ SYLVESTER, A.J, *The Real Lloyd George*, London: Casell and Company LTD. 1947, page 33

³⁴ LLOYD GEORGE, David: *The Truth about the Peace Treaties, Volume I.*, London: Victor Gollanz Ltd., 1938, page 562

³⁵ Ibid.: 567

³⁶ Ibid.: 574

politics. The fact that Lloyd George could not present a straightforward foreign policy during the General Elections precluded him from not only to achieve his personal peace aims but also to have the much needed hinterland support that could have secured Lloyd George an extra supportive pillar during the conference. On the one hand, Lloyd George and the Coalition Government were right regarding their agenda. However, this agenda that let Lloyd George attend the conference caused partially his failure at achieving the peace terms he supported whole-heartedly.

The League of Nations

Apart from the lack of hinterland support, the British Delegates had to cope with the formation of Wilson's ultimate idea, the League of Nations. The League's idea provoked various thoughts amongst the leading members of the respective nations. Obviously, the French standpoint, along with the Italians, regarding the League of Nations was the most extreme. Clemenceau considered the league to be a "club of victors"³⁷ at first, but when it turned out that the League would not be exclusively for the victors, he became sceptic about Wilson's idea. However, the British and French delegates had to cope with another set of problems apart from their respective ideological beliefs when the formation of the League began.

The problems arose regarding the League, when it turned out that Wilson's contribution to the creation of the League of Nations was in the rough and was so vague that the constitution of the League was practically the work of the British and French experts, rather than the representatives of the United States and her President, essentially those, who presented the idea itself. Robert Lansing, a subordinate of Wilson's admitted that the President himself hindered his and his colleagues' work with the constitution and with the drafts for the League. According to Lansing:

'From first to last there was no team work, no common counsel, and no concerted action. It was discouraging to witness this utter lack of system, when system was so essential. The reason was manifest. There was no directing head to the American Commission to formulate a plan, to organise the work and to issue definite instructions'³⁸.

³⁷ BOEMEKE, F. Manfred, FELDMAN, D. Gerald, GLÄSER, Elisabeth: *The Treaty of Versailles: A Reassessment after 75 years*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, page 181

³⁸ Robert Lansing: *The Big Four and others of the Peace Conference*, Boston: General Books LLC, 2011, pages 40-44

This issue gave way to distrust towards the American delegates. Mostly for the fact that Wilson's sole purpose was to establish the League and if his beloved idea was not treated with the highest priority, what would do the President, when the Conference reached a certain point that would not intrigue him? As expected, the above mentioned factors influenced the outcome of the Conference for the worse, mostly due to President Wilson, and his lack of competence in the field of foreign policy.

The British and French experts in accordance with David Lloyd George and other prominent members of the British Commonwealth, such as General Jan Smuts of South Africa and Arthur Balfour, the Foreign Secretary of Great-Britain, did everything to make the League viable to supervise the Peace Conference. Although it was clear that Wilson and his partners were incapable of working together, the invested work of the British and French paid off: the foundations of the League were set down and they stated that:

It is essential to the maintenance of the world settlement, which the associated nations are now met to establish, that a League of Nations be created to promote international co-operation, to ensure the fulfilment of accepted international obligations, and to provide safeguards against war.

This League should be created as an integral part of the general treaty of peace, and should be open to every civilised nation which can be relied on to promote its objects.

The members of the League should periodically meet in international Conference, and should have a permanent organisation and secretariat to carry on the business of the League in the intervals between the Conferences.

The Conference therefore appoints a Committee representative of the associated Governments to work out the details of the constitution and functions of the League.³⁹

With the cornerstones laid down, the League was on its way to be the determining factor of the Peace Conference. What improbable was that Clemenceau would approve the existence of such an idealistic governing system. On the contrary, the French Prime Minister's support was exceeding expectations and later Lloyd George genuinely stated that the League's hindered progression at the Conference was caused by the American delegation, rather than the opposition of Clemenceau⁴⁰. With the support of the radical conservative Clemenceau, it

³⁹ Lloyd George, David: *The Truth about the Peace Treaties, Volume I.*, London: Victor Gollanz Ltd., 1938, page 277

⁴⁰ Ibid.: 276

was plausible that the British Prime Minister's opinion was not unsubstantiated.

Nevertheless, the League's basis was created, and with the practical issues like reparations and disarmament at hand, the British Prime Minister had to mediate between his own political aims, the British interests and the aggressive foreign policy of France.

The Fontainebleau Memorandum

While the question of the League of Nations was an issue of ideology, the borders and minerals of the defeated countries, on the other hand, were not. These aspects and the indemnities for the damage done were to be thoroughly inspected. As Lloyd George had anticipated, the French were reluctant to loosen the grip on the German Empire's territories, especially on the Rhineland. The French delegation argued that the Germans intentionally destroyed French factories such as, textile mills, foundries, woollen mills and coal mines⁴¹. These mines were deemed to not to be able to become productive for years, therefore the French expressed their “righteous claim” for the Rhineland, where the German mines were intact. Though the accusations of France were plausible, neither Lloyd George nor Wilson would resort to letting France take Rhineland, as it goes against their respected ideals. To express his refusal, Lloyd George and his advisors, including General Smuts and Sir Maurice Hankey, retired to the forest of Fontainebleau to discuss the situation and make a resolution for it.

This resolution is known as the Fontainebleau Memorandum. The memorandum opposed French occupation of Rhineland and the British Prime Minister referred to the French claims as absurd. The memorandum also stressed that the stern, punitive peace would strengthen resistance and patriotism, while the starvation, which would be caused by the loss of the mines, was known to be the main factor of Bolshevism⁴². The Fontainebleau Memorandum could be referred to as one of the most important documents of the Peace Conference from the British point of view. According to Lloyd George's private secretary: ‘(...) it (the Memorandum) was one of the most far sighted documents ever drafted’⁴³.

⁴¹ Ibid.:442

⁴² Crosby, Travis L., *The unknown David Lloyd George: A Statesman in Conflict*, London: I.B.Tauris, 2014 , page 247

⁴³ SYLVESTER, A.J, *The Real Lloyd George*, London: Casell and Company LTD. 1947, page 38

Not only did it shed light on the fallibility of the French claims, but also expressed the firm goals that Lloyd George, Hankey and Smuts and the rest of the British delegation set up to achieve during the Conference.

Lloyd George and his colleagues envisioned a possible harsh opposition against the document. The reason, why the French opposition was so intransigent, was that the German forces invaded France twice within 40 years of time. As most of the French High Command lived during the Franco-Prussian War and the Great War, it was only natural of them to take revenge on the losing German nation. Living through two invasions and sacrificing innumerable lives to fight for France, the French germanophobia was understandable. However, if Clemenceau and his fellow delegates had really been after the security of their country, they would have understood the importance of the suggestions this document promoted. Lloyd George and his trusted advisors retired to Fontainebleau to work on a possible alternative to what the French wanted to achieve. To do this, unbelievably, they role-played. For instance; Maurice Hankey played the role of Britain, whereas Sir Henry Wilson played the role of both a German officer and a French woman⁴⁴. When the discussions had ended, Lloyd George and the other advisors made a draft themselves, and that was the Fontainebleau Memorandum. The Memorandum was the sum of goals the British Delegation wanted to achieve and it mirrored their true intentions.

The first point that the document expresses that in order to achieve a lasting peace; it must be based on justice. This point in itself had been firmly stated and caused conflicts between the victors even before the conference began. This was the main principle that motivated the Prime Minister, because he suspected the German patriotism would be a factor that later on, could lead to an aggressive revision of the peace. To emphasize his standpoint Lloyd George stated:

‘To achieve redress our terms may be severe, they may be stern and even ruthless, but at the same time they can be so just that the country on which they are imposed will feel in its heart that it has no right to complain. But injustice, arrogance, displayed in the hour of triumph, will never be forgotten or forgiven.’⁴⁵

Indeed, the facts that were pointed out here were true, for if we take the Franco-Prussian war

⁴⁴ Crosby, Travis L., *The unknown David Lloyd George: A Statesman in Conflict*, London: I.B.Tauris, 2014 , page 247

⁴⁵ Lloyd George, David: *The Truth about the Peace Treaties, Volume I.*, London: Victor Gollanz Ltd., 1938, page 405

as an example, the humiliation France had suffered for her defeat was the fuel of the germanophobia that rendered the creation of the just peace more difficult. Of this Lloyd George was confident. Were the French more considerate of the circumstances concerning the Central powers, a future war could have been possibly avoided.

Another problem of the just peace was, as the document states, the question of the ethnicities and their newly formed countries. The document and Lloyd George argued that generally these races had never had, throughout the course of history, a stable government, which was not the most problematic aspect of the matter, but that these countries would have German minorities in large numbers, who without a doubt, would long for a reunion with Germany.⁴⁶ The example the Prime Minister provided, was about Poland and Hungary. In the case of Poland, the difference of race, religion and the lack of governmental experience would prove to be a fatal factor in international relations, resulting in another war. In the case of Hungary, however, the Memorandum argues that the “Magyar Irredenta”⁴⁷ in the surrounding countries, such as Romania, Czechoslovakia, would preclude the countries above from any peaceful coexistence. Therefore the suggestion was, relying on the support of Wilson, similar to the Fourteen Points: these nations should have their borders set based on the nationality of their respected subjects, rather than economic and strategic advantages, which aims were opposed by the newly formed countries of Czechoslovakia, and Romania the most.

Although the purpose of the document was not to prevent the spread of Bolshevism, the Prime Minister stressed the importance of helping the German economy before political balance tips for the favour of the bolshevists.⁴⁸ Lloyd George expressed the probable causes of bolshevism. His proposal was that as soon as Germany accepts the terms of the peace, more importantly the terms of reparations and indemnities, the allies would open their markets and support the economy of Germany with raw materials enabling her subjects to work and live, instead of despair and starvation. What Lloyd George did was that in order to make France accept the Memorandum, as it was to help the German economy; he had to frighten the French leadership with the menace of the ever spreading Bolshevism, which was not far-fetched at all. This political manoeuvre also depicts Lloyd George’s stubborn attitude towards the peace conference, he fought desperately for his sense of justice and more importantly for the good of the British people as the trade with Germany provided Great-

⁴⁶ Lloyd George, David: *The Truth about the Peace Treaties, Volume I.*, Victor Gollanz Ltd., 1938, page 406

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.: 407

Britain with a considerable amount of income before the Great War⁴⁹.

Another important aspect of the Memorandum, other than the importance of the League of Nations and the disarmament, was the case of the reparations. As the costs of the war were so tremendous that the Allied leaders could not decide in how Germany could pay for the war costs at all. According to the Memorandum, the victors could extract money from the losing states, especially Germany; by either have them pay a fixed amount of money up to a certain time, or have them pay a fixed amount of money for an uncertain amount of time⁵⁰. This, however, could not have appealed to the Germans, as the uncertainty of the time interval was rather demoralizing than reassuring. Although the topic of the indemnities was delicate and crucial, the Allies' opinions concerning it were sound.

Lastly, Lloyd George summarized the Memorandum, pointing out the most important and crucial aspect of it, what he thought would be the precursors of a lasting, peaceful era. The clear outline of the Memorandum presented three major points that should be the basis of a permanent peace treaty. Firstly, the punishment of the German Empire was inevitable, justice have to be made for the Allies. Secondly, the peace terms should be acceptable for Germany, and should be achievable in every term. Thirdly, the treaty should preclude any chance for war happening and should create a peace settlement that prevents bolshevism to spread further into Europe⁵¹. However, much these points were essential to agree on, the ways to achieve the points were numerous, as almost every other Allied power sought a different method to achieve these terms. Just to mention an example of preventing the bolshevist ideas to break into Europe, the French Delegates wanted to make Poland and practically the whole of Eastern Europe, including Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania and several other smaller countries, into a *cordon sanitaire*, a defensive border against bolshevism, which can be questioned both morally and ethically.

The Fontainebleau Memorandum was a fairly reasonable assessment of British opinion regarding the Peace Conference and the draft of the treaties. While the offered resolutions were reasonable, the French opposition considered them too lenient and was to give a cold reception to the Memorandum.

The Opposition of the Memorandum

⁴⁹ CRAMMOND, Edgar: *The Economic Relations of the British and German Empires*, London: Wiley, 1914, page 31

⁵⁰ Lloyd George, David: *The Truth about the Peace Treaties, Volume I.*, London: Victor Gollanz Ltd., 1938, page 416

⁵¹ *Ibid.*: 408/409

The Fontainebleau Memorandum presented a most generous set of terms for the German Empire, in terms of ethnicity and economic justice. The Germans would have been punished, but they might have accepted the terms probably without, or rather much less resentment. However, the problem was that the meaning of justice of the respective nations was relative, as almost every nation had a unique peace proposal during the conferences. The French were no exception, and their reasons for fighting off a generous peace, proposed by the British, was understandable, but not effective. The opposition of France and their makeshift compromises with the United States rendered the peace draft inconsistent.

Although the French response to the Memorandum began with the acceptance of Lloyd George's aims and points, the method with which they wanted to achieve to lasting peace differed from each other. Clemenceau's opinion regarding the territorial "appeasement"⁵² of Germany was that the reconciliation and reintegration of the German Empire should not be based on territories and ethnic as Lloyd George and Wilson had suggested, rather on the colonies, naval power and trade⁵³. Furthermore, Clemenceau wanted Poland and the so-called "sham republics" to defend Europe against the menace of bolshevism, on the one hand trusting their national consciousness⁵⁴, on the other hand, using their presence as defence against both bolshevism and Germany. The discussed *cordon sanitaire*'s bases were to be mainly Poland and Czechoslovakia. Thirdly, Clemenceau argued that the term "just peace" might be different for Germany than the Allies and presented the French perception of the treaties⁵⁵. This claim of Clemenceau's was quite right, as other than the lasting peace, both Lloyd George and Wilson sought their own countries' interests, and so did he. Therefore, the ethnic principle of self-determination was subordinated to the victors' interests, only those questionable areas were to have plebiscites that would not contradict the plans or interests of "The Big Three". However, what the French Premier thought of the Germans' case was that the Allies should not be so lenient towards the aggressor of the war. In other words, the proposals made in the Fontainebleau Memorandum were acknowledged but not accepted by the most powerful of the opposition of the just peace what Lloyd George sought.

Of all the claims of France regarding the German territories, the occupation of the

⁵² Lloyd George, David: *The Truth about the Peace Treaties, Volume I.*, London: Victor Gollanz Ltd., 1938, page 417

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.: 418

⁵⁵ Ibid.: 418-419

Rhineland was the most problematic to settle. Not only was the Rhineland an important industrial area for Germany, but also it contained massive German minority. Clemenceau's proposal of taking the Rhineland, even temporarily, was opposed by both Lloyd George in the Fontainebleau Memorandum and Wilson. The French could not achieve the occupation of the Rhineland with two of the most powerful states opposing their plans. However, the media wanted to intimidate Lloyd George and Wilson and lessen their influence at the Peace Conference, but the politically hardened Lloyd George resisted the attacks made against him. Wilson, on the other hand, was unfamiliar with the vicious nature of the European media attacks and the French attacks had made his fragile health worse to such an extent that he was on "sick leave" for a week⁵⁶. For this fallibility of Wilson's, the French could create a situation, where the President supports the French cause to occupy the Rhineland. This compromise meant for the French that they would have the support of Wilson, while the French media would begin to praise Wilson in return. Lloyd George could not stop this compromise to be made as he had to attend a Parliamentary assembly⁵⁷. This compromise was considered to be one of the main reasons that lead to the failure of the peace treaties. The antagonistic issue of the occupation of the Rhineland lead to serious confrontations both between the Allies and between Germany and the Allies. Although Lloyd George tried to make Wilson rethink what he had done, he could not talk sense into the President⁵⁸. Thus, the occupation of the Rhineland was officially in the draft of the Peace Treaty, which indicated the rather bad course of events.

Lastly, the fallibility of Wilson and the compromise that had been made caused several severe issues in the long run. Lloyd George personally was disheartened by the fact that no one thought that the severity of the draft would cause further problems after the peace was concluded. Not even his own supporters provided help in his struggle to redress the peace terms that had been concluded by mainly the French and with the support of the United States⁵⁹. The idea of the just treaty was defeated to a certain extent, but the treaties did not become the worst possible scenario, namely the permanent occupation of the Rhineland and the total dismemberment of the German Empire.

⁵⁶ ⁵⁶ Lloyd George, David: *The Truth about the Peace Treaties, Volume I*, London: Victor Gollanz Ltd., 1938, page 425

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.: 427

⁵⁹ Ibid.: 434

The Final Draft

Prior to the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, the draft that was created after the compromise of Clemenceau and Wilson, needed to be double-checked, because The German Delegates pleaded for a more lenient peace treaty, for some of the points seemed to them unnecessarily harsh. The German Delegates accepted their defeat and were ready to make sacrifices in order to achieve the peace, however, the occupation of the Rhineland, the loss off Upper Silesia and the infamous War-Guilt clause seemed to them as unacceptable and asked for revision. Fearing that Germany would not sign the treaty, Lloyd George and his colleagues, once again, could control to an extent what the treaty would look like, but essentially the British Delegates could only soften and not prevent the causalities.

The occupation of the Rhineland, as it had been stated, was one of the major claims of France to restart their economic growth at the expense of Germany. What caused the problems concerning the treaty was that the time of the occupation was indefinite. Moreover, the French extremists felt that the whole of the Rhineland should belong to France, getting revenge for Alsace-Lorraine and “disarm” the German Empire⁶⁰. The British Delegates’ experts’ opinion on the matter of the occupation was that a long-term occupation would do more harm than good, requiring manpower and enormous amounts of money⁶¹. Moreover, the money the “Army of Occupation” would consume would be paid by only the British taxpayers. Theoretically, the unreasonable conception of a long-term occupation of the Rhineland might have consolidated more the French economic status; however, the British economy would have suffered from it, endangering the fragile *status quo* that existed in Europe after the war. For the fact that every British delegate refused the idea of the long occupation, the Draft Treaty was changed to a positive indefinite amount of time, claiming the occupation would be ‘as short as possible’⁶², making the Treaty more moderate.

Although the French case was somewhat settled by enabling them to occupy the Rhineland, the Polish case of restraining Germany and defending Europe against bolshevism was problematic almost in every aspect. The Draft stated that Upper Silesia should be the part of Poland, because of the large number of Polish citizens, to further strengthen the Polish state, to cripple Germany and stop the spreading of bolshevism. However, the German Delegates stated firmly that if the Allies wanted them to pay the indemnities and reparations,

⁶⁰ Lloyd George, David: *The Truth about the Peace Treaties, Volume I.*, London: Victor Gollanz Ltd., 1938, page 432

⁶¹ Ibid.: 692

⁶² Ibid.: 719

the German ownership of Upper Silesia was imperative, for the other source of income was trade for Germany and that could not provide enough income to pay the huge amounts indemnities and reparations. Furthermore, the ethnics in Silesia were not unquestionably all Polish. Wilson and his colleagues wanted Silesia for Poland, based on ethnicity but a good deal of Polish fanaticism was also present⁶³. Lloyd George argued that the Silesian territory, which was part of the German Empire for more than 800 years, might want to stay with Germany in spite of its considerable amount of Polish ethnicity⁶⁴. After a considerable amount of time and arguments, Wilson finally agreed to a plebiscite to be held in Silesia if they wanted to remain with the German Empire or not⁶⁵. The result of the vote was in favour of the German Empire, in other words, a considerable amount of Polish ethnicities voted for the preservation of the historic *status quo*. While the whole plebiscite of Upper Silesia was in favour of Germany, it was noticed that the Polish majority of the voters were the residents of the part of Upper Silesia that was close to Poland. the result of the plebiscite caused several riots and conflicts between the Germans and the Polish that had to be settled by Allied forces⁶⁶. Having settled the conflicts between Poland and Germany, the Allied standpoint was that Upper Silesia should be separated by on the basis of the result of the plebiscite⁶⁷, which eventually proved to be the best decision, letting the Polish ethnicity join their homeland and enabling the Germans to use the remaining part of Silesia to recuperate. This example shows how hard was for the Allies to determine just one country's borders. The idea of self-determination was too vague to create a resolution for delicate matters of Upper Silesia, the Polish self-determination unfortunately was achieved mainly by conflict and force.

The War Guilt clause was the least arguable point of the Draft Treaty, which claims the German Empire and her allies, accept their role in the war as the aggressors of the war and therefore the Treaty as such, will handle the case of Germany and her allies so. The Allied leaders, especially Clemenceau, failed to see the problem Germany pointed out. According to them, the text implied that Germany was responsible for everything bad in the Great War, the German leaders and their subjects resented this idea⁶⁸⁶⁹. However, it must be said that not even Lloyd George thought that the question of the War Guilt clause should be up for

⁶³ Ibid.: 722

⁶⁴ Ibid.: 721

⁶⁵ Lloyd George, David: *The Truth about the Peace Treaties, Volume I.*, London: Victor Gollanz Ltd., 1938, page 722

⁶⁶ BURKE, Edmund, DODSLEY, James: *Annual Register*, v 2., Google Print, 2008, page 179-180

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ MORROW, John H.: *The Great War: An Imperial History*, London: Routledge, 2005, page 290

⁶⁹ BINKLEY, Robert C, MAHR, Dr. A. C.: A New Interpretation of the "Responsibility" Clause in the Versailles Treaty", *Current History*, New York, 1926, 398-400

question⁷⁰. He could not imagine any scenario where the German Empire could be pardoned for what she had committed in 1914, waging war against Europe, against neutral states. Although the Germans resented the Treaty for reasons other than this, the Allies refused to reword the clause, making Germany accept her role in the Great War.

The presentation of the Treaty of Versailles was in its final stadium and still, the compromises that had to be made were numerous, as the German Delegates found out that the Draft Treaty had almost nothing to do with the Fourteen Points of Wilson, because of which they surrendered regardless of the arguably stalemate situation during the endgame of the war. The fact that so many compromises had to be made even in this phase of the Paris Peace Conference meant that the ideology based Fourteen Points was almost unaccomplishable, the political manoeuvres and forced compromises derailed “The Big Three” during the Conference, preventing Europe from becoming a more peaceful continent than it had been before and was during the Great War.

⁷⁰ Lloyd George, David: *The Truth about the Peace Treaties, Volume I.*, London: Victor Gollanz Ltd., 1938, page 684

Conclusion

The Paris Peace conference and its resolutions, mainly the Treaty of Versailles, evoked controversial feelings in Lloyd George's contemporaries and historians alike. While the colleagues of the British Prime Minister and the British public generally accepted the terms concluded in the Treaty of Versailles, some British Members of the Parliament expressed their opposition regarding reparations and the state of Poland after the Treaty had been concluded⁷¹. Jules Cambon, a diplomat of the French opposition, remarked the Treaty as 'une improvisation'⁷². While Cambon has a point, in terms of a peace treaty that was concluded poorly, to say that it was an improvisation, therefore a waste of both money and time, contains hardly any truth.

The reason behind the failure of the conference originated from various sources. The Liberal Split was one of the gravest events of the British Peace Delegates and personally for Lloyd George. The Prime Minister could not act on his own, was restrained by the both the public and the Parliament leading to a balancing role between two completely controversial ideologies and their respective representatives, Wilson and Clemenceau. What indicates this declining role was that Britain had been the main supporter of the French war effort during the war, yet it was Wilson's name, which was praised by the French newspapers. The British media, especially the newspapers, also hindered Lloyd George's efforts at the conference, raising further difficulties.

Additionally, Wilson's support of the United States' Congress declined after the Congressional elections. Combined with Wilson's incapability of working on practical matters and his lacking of knowledge concerning politics of Europe, the economically and militarily powerful United States was just reduced to a mere observer, rather than the conductor of the Peace Treaties, giving way to French *revanchism*. Wilson's illness and generally his personality gave a hard time for the British and Commonwealth delegates, making it almost impossible to work together with Wilson. Nothing presents this better than the precedent of Clemenceau's persuading Wilson to agree to the occupation of the Rhineland in exchange for the French media's "silence".

Moreover, Clemenceau's and the extremist Marshal Foch's and Tardieu's insurmountable germanophobia did not facilitate the creation of the resolution either. On the

⁷¹ Ibid.:731-732

⁷² LAMB, Margaret, TARLING, Nicholas: *From Versailles To Pearl Harbor: The Origins of the Second World War in Europe and Asia*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2001, page 21

one hand, France genuinely needed Alsace-Lorraine and the support of the Rhineland to be able to consolidate her economic position. However, the long-term occupation of the Rhineland and the crippling of the German Empire clearly did not forward the issue of the reintegration of Germany into European politics and economy. Due to both Lloyd George and Wilson, the extreme ambitions of the French, for example the permanent occupation of the Rhineland, were thwarted, creating a moderate peace. This might have been the reason of Cambon's rejection of the Treaty of Versailles.

While the personalities and hinterlands of "The Big Three" hindered the conference, the inapplicability of Wilson's Fourteen Points, the reason and hope behind the German surrender, seemed to cause the most problems and controversy. Not only the role of the League of Nations was questionable, the idea of national self-determination was unattainable. It was the problem of dividing ethnicities and creating new, indefensible borders, making European economy fragile that prevented the creation of plebiscite areas in questionable areas, such as the Highlands on the border of Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Thus, the ideology based peace proved to be rather unattainable, for the clash of different ideologies of different nations and ethnicities.

Other than "The Big Three", the numerous ideological contradictions were the reasons for misleading the Peace Conference, and forced the Peace Delegates to make compromises that benefitted both the Allies and the Germans, and none at the same time. The compromises were sometimes based upon personal preferences, as in Wilson's case, or on strategic and economic interests in the case of the Rhineland. Either way, the compromises that were made during the conference undisputedly contributed to, if not caused, the failure of the Treaty of Versailles. Although he himself was not pleased with the Treaty, Lloyd George considered this peace acceptable; knowing the tremendous amounts of controversies the Allies had to overcome in order to make just a draft, not to mention the final resolution. Lloyd George gave an honest and vivid description of what it could have been like working with Wilson and Clemenceau at the Paris Peace Conference, arguing that he 'did not do badly (...) seated between Jesus Christ and Napoleon'⁷³.

⁷³ HARRIS, Wilson Henry: *The Peace in the Making*, E.P. Dutton, 1920, page 48