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with this opinion?



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Treaty of Versailles was seen by many as treaty drawn up in order to cast revenge on Germany, which never really offered a solution to long standing problems throughout Europe during the inter-war period. Through the 1920s it can be seen that Britain foreign policy was often shaped around the treaty, leading to significant efforts being made in order to correct the more arguable clauses.

The British Prime minister at the time Lloyd George drew up the treaty with his respective counterparts Clemenceau of France and Wilson of the USA. Lloyd George was under enormous pressure from the worst affected from the war - France and also his electorate, which had voted him in on the promise of punishing Germany to the full extent of his ability. He therefore had no other choice but to go ahead with many of the more drastic measures such as stripping Germany of large amounts of her territory, reducing their military capabilities and also implementing ' War Guilt' clause, that justified the huge reparations bill that the Allies presented Germany with. All of this went against what Lloyd George essentially wanted, therefore it became obvious that, although some short term objectives such receiving payments for costs of the war and strengthening territorially had benefited Britain, weakening Germany to the extent that its economy would effectively be paralyzed and the people would look upon Britain with bitterness, was against its long term interests. Many Eastern European states had been created which had large numbers of displaced Germans and growing nationalist movements. In turn meant that Britain would most probably not sustain the peace it had hoped for with the '10 year rule' but instead would have to be more involved. Also the Germanys economics situation would not

be beneficial to the overall economy of Europe, advised by economist such as J. M. Keynes that Germany was a viable trade partner that was restricted by the huge reparations placed upon her.

As a result of all of these factors, it became clear to Britain that was not happy with the massive burden placed on Germany and although it was not seen to be as bad as an embarrassment, many areas of the treaty were seen as a mistake therefore they needed to be modified in order to promote long term peace in Europe.

Britain took action to attempt to moderate the treaty first of all in 1922 with proposition of suspending reparations, however the French opposed it.

Britain continued to oppose France's view to uphold the treaty to the letter.

An example of this was seen in January 1923 when Germany failed to meet their payments and the Ruhr, Germany's main industrial area was invaded. In this situation the Germans were outraged committing themselves to passive resistance leading to the hyperinflation crisis and collapse of the German economy. Britain although infuriated by this unnecessary collapse, did not oppose France's actions directly to avoid conflict, although clearly viewed the treaty as the key catalyst. However after the invasion Britain along with the USA set up the Dawes plan. The Dawes plan restructured the debt from reparations and also received loans from USA to make it easier for it to be paid. In 1929 the Young Plan was introduced. The Young Plan furthered the progress made by the Dawes Plan and was able to reduce the burden of reparation by actually cutting the annual payments. These changes allowed Germany to improve their economic situation, and ease the reparation Britain saw as harsh.

The treaty continued to be restructured and changed. The introduction of the Locarno pact in 1925 eased many of Britain's concerns on the borders surrounding Germany by allowing change to eastern borders, which pleased Germany as it meant that land such as the Polish Corridor, which they thought was rightly theirs would not be set in stone and may be retrieved in the future. However the western borders would from now on be unchangeable. This meant Germany had to relinquish any hopes it had for reclaiming Alsace-Lorraine, but it was France and their plans for strict upholding of the Treaty who had to concede most, by promising never to occupy the Ruhr again. This move ensured that what Britain saw as a large mistake was corrected and also further improved their relationship with Germany.

Although it can be seen that Britain asserted itself to changing parts of Treaty it's not to say the whole was a mistake, as said before the idea of disarmament was a promoted idea, as reduced their burden on military spending with the "10 year rule" guaranteeing no war for at least 10 years. Under the terms of the treaty, Germany was substantially disarmed. Her army was limited to a maximum of 100,000 men, capital ships were limited to six and the existence of an air force, submarines or heavy artillery and tanks were strictly prohibited. The 1926 Preparatory Commission for Rearmament had France looking to increase the arm and with that Germany wanted equal terms. However Britain did not back down and prevented it, keeping a main idea that disarmament was the way forward for peace in Europe.

Britain also benefited from the treaty with its Middle Eastern territories. Britain received valuable territory in Iraq, Jordan and Israel. The land protected their Mediterranean trade routes, extremely important in upholding the empire. These areas however were only cemented with the pacification of Turkey after the Chanak crisis. However it only occurred after revising of the previous settlement, which mandated all Arab territories and demilitarised the straits in the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne. This showed Britain's willingness to correct problems faced instead of strictly upholding them and infringing their interests in doing so.

It can be said in the 1920's Germany was sympathetic towards Germany and unfavorable to the French strict view. Britain did not approve of their irrational attitude towards security and aggressive policies. In the creation of the League of Nations Britain fashioned somewhere where arguable clauses could be negotiated. In this case Britain was extremely favorable towards the Germans, mainly due to their importance economically to Britain and Europe. Therefore it is unfair to say that the treaty was an embarrassment but instead a settlement containing a number of mistakes with room for improvement.