

MODERN HISTORY: *WORLD WAR ONE*

Explain the differing goals and attitudes of the peacemakers between 1918 and 1919.

In 1918 on the 11th November at 11am the guns fell silent on the western front and the war to all wars came to an end as an Armistice was established (an end to fighting under agreed terms). However the problems that had led to war in 1914 still remained unsolved and a number of new ones had been created. Therefore when the peacemakers 'the big 4' David Lloyd George (Prime Minister of Britain), Woodrow Wilson (US President), Georges Clemenceau (Premier of France) and Vittorio Orlando (Prime Minister of Italy) met they were faced with an enormous amount of difficulties. Many peace conferences were held and treaties were signed over the years of 1918 and 1919, such as the treaty of St Germain, treaty of Neuilly and treaty of Versailles, these were prepared by the USA, Britain and France, as a result of the Armistice in 1918. All peacemakers had differing goals and attitudes between 1918 and 1919.

By September 1918 the German army had been forced to retreat beyond the Hindenburg line, these caused German allies to collapse and the German home front could not maintain the war effort. On the 4th of October 1918 the German government applied to President Wilson for an Armistice and peace negotiations began based on Woodrow Wilson's fourteen points. These fourteen points were Wilson's goals, known as a program for peace which argued the morality and ethics should be the basis of foreign policy. The allies agreed to make peace based on the fourteen points with two limitations: that the allies had complete discretion over the freedom of the seas and that occupied territories be restored and compensation for all damages caused to the civilian populations be paid for by Germany. At the signing of the armistice Germany had no alternative but to accept the terms of the armistice, as Germany was in chaos and the Kaiser had abdicated on the 9th of November. The terms of the Armistice were enormous penalties such as, return of all prisoners of war, the handing over of 5000 heavy guns to the allies, surrender of its naval fleet to a neutral power or Great Britain and return and replacement of stolen property.

The peacemakers were a council of four that consisted of Woodrow Wilson, David Lloyd George, Georges Clemenceau and Vittorio Orlando. All other nations at the peace conferences were represented at general sessions. But Vittorio Orlando failed to gain all Italy's territorial claims and left the conference as a result, it was the 'big 3', Wilson, Lloyd George and Clemenceau who dominated and directed the conference and drew up the terms of the peace treaties. All these peacemakers had differing goals and attitudes in the treaties.

The settlement in Eastern Europe revolved around treaties with Austria and Bulgaria signed in 1919. These treaties were not prepared by the general peace conference but by the 'big 3', which were influenced by the goals and attitudes of the peacemakers. The treaty of St Germain signed with Austria on the 10th of September 1919, required her to recognise the independence of Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia and Hungary. Austria had to also pay reparations and had her army limited, she was forbidden to reunite with Germany and her population was only 20%. The treaty of Neuilly with Bulgaria signed on the 27th of November 1919, resulted in Bulgaria losing territory in Thrace to Greece and some in Macedonia to the new state of Yugoslavia and her army was also limited to 20000 men.

The character of each of the men in the 'big 3' was different as were the objectives they brought to negotiations and these differences had a great impact on the outcome of the conference and the terms of the treaty of Versailles. The conference which drew up the treaty of Versailles was convened on the 18th of January 1919, at the Palace of Versailles. The conference was a conference of victors and did not include those countries that remained neutral in the conflict, neither was Russia included. All peacemakers had one goal and attitude in common and this was to award blame for the war to a country, this country was Germany. Woodrow Wilson was an idealist who hoped for a generous and a lasting peace with Germany. He wanted justice and the 14 points built into the treaty. Wilson had spoken of a 'League of Nation' as far back as 1915 and in January at the

peace conference Wilson incorporated it in his fourteen points as one of the ideas for a fair settlement. Wilson wanted the League to be an integral part of the treaties and believed and wanted Europe to form a League of Nations to preserve peace. Wilson thought that Germany should eventually be allowed into the League. Wilson's had differing goals and attitudes compared to the other peace makers between 1918 and 1919.

Lloyd George goals shared to a degree Wilson's desire for generosity towards the defeated nations. However he still wanted to see Germany punished. He used the slogan 'make Germany pay' as an electoral promise in 1918 as it was what the British people wanted to hear, but really George wanted justice and not revenge. Now Lloyd George was trapped by the attitudes he himself had helped to create among the British population. He also wanted to expand the British Empire, maintain British control of the seas and increase British trade in response to this Lloyd George wanted to gain five specific conditions. These conditions consisted of destruction of the German fleet, destruction of the German colonial possessions, re-establishment of European trade disrupted by the war and prevention of any country dominating Europe. Lloyd George also felt that reparations should not exceed the sum of 2000 million; to cripple the German economy would not be in Britain's long term interests. Lloyd George wanted to make Europe secure from a future attack or domination, and set his goals to provide this opportunity.

Clemenceau had revenge on his mind, and this revenge was influenced by the war between 1914 and 1918 and also early invasions on France territory by German forces. He was fearful of a resurgent Germany and wanted the peace treaty to humble Germany in such a way as to prevent her from ever being a threat to French Security again. Clemenceau was in a position to pursue his objects such as the disarmament of Germany, guarantees for French security, the restoration of Alsace and Lorraine, reparations and the creation of a separate buffer state to the west of the Rhine. Clemenceau knew that Germany's defeat gave France a short term advantage and he intended to make the most of it. He realised Germany could not be destroyed but sought to make peace terms harsh enough to cripple her economically and militarily for a long time. Clemenceau had the objective of demanding harsh reparations from Germany. This goal of Clemenceau's was intended as France needed money and materials to rebuild her shattered economy as a result of the war, but also to fulfil the desire for revenge harboured by many French people. Revenge was a goal that Clemenceau was out to achieve.

The goals and attitudes of the peacemakers were differing and when the conference ended on the 28th of June 1919, not all goals were achieved. Only two of Wilson's fourteen points survived to influence the treaty of Versailles. However many goals were achieved in matters of war guilt, military restrictions, reparations and territorial settlement. All peacemakers agreed on one objective and this was to award blame to Germany. To a clause in the treaty, Article 231 declared that Germany had been guilty of aggression and bore sole responsibility for the war and its losses. Germany also suffered military restrictions, which was the goals of Clemenceau and Lloyd George. The treaty imposed stringent restrictions on Germany's future military power. The Germany army was limited to 100000 men with no air craft, tanks or heavy guns. Clemenceau slightly achieved his goal with a buffer state at the Rhine, as part of the treaty the Rhineland was to be temporarily occupied by Allied troops and to be demilitarized together with a 50 kilometre strip of the bank of the Rhine adjacent to France. Lloyd George goal and attitudes in response to reparations wasn't achieved as they exceed 2000 million, therefore Clemenceau's goal was achieved in making Germans economy suffer and enabling France to rebuild her economy through the payment of reparations. Germany had to pay not only for the damage caused in the war zones but also for shipping losses as well as service pensions and allowances for the allied soldiers and their families. Germany was expected to pay the reparations bill of 32 billion. Under the terms of the territorial settlement of the Treaty of Versailles, Germany lost enormous amounts of land including her colonies, an area of 2.6 million square kilometres and was forbidden to unify with the new republic of Austria. This further more achieves the goals of Clemenceau and Lloyd George.

Clemenceau and Lloyd George gained the most from the treaty as a great amount of their goals were built into the treaty; Clemenceau achieved his goal to cripple Germans economically and

militarily for a long time, he also regained the land of Alsace and Lorraine and Lloyd George succeed in making sure Germany could not dominate Europe. The treaty of Versailles hugely impacted Germans economy and military, and achieved some of the goals and attitudes set out by the peace makers.

Historian's views imply that there is no argument that the Treaty of Versailles was not as harsh as it could have been. Many historians believe that the treaty and especially the reparations that Germany had to pay were unfair and impossible. John Maynard K, believes that the consequences of the peace was the most controversial, powerful and influential to be written. He claims that the reparations demanded of Germany were simply impossible for Germany to pay without becoming bankrupt. However immediately after the war western historians in the main held the belief that the Treaty was just and reflected the sacrifices that Allied men had made at the Front. Historians also say that the peacemakers and the negotiations of the treaty of Versailles recognized problems for European stability at the time. Mark Mazower supports this view by saying 'two cheers for Versailles'. Mark says that it is a credit of the Versailles peacemakers that they confronted the problems and violence head on. Historians have differing views towards the treaty of Versailles and the punishment that Germany received, just as the peacemakers had differing goals and attitudes between 1918 and 1919.

The peacemakers David Lloyd George, Woodrow Wilson and Clemenceau had differing goals and attitudes between 1918 and 1919. Lloyd George wanted to prevent any country dominating Europe, Wilson hoped for a generous and lasting peace with Germany and Clemenceau want revenge and aimed to make Germany suffer. However they shared one goal in common and this was to give blame to a county and this country was Germany. Goals and aims of the peace makers were achieved in matters of war guilt, reparation, military restrictions and territorial settlements.

Bibliography

Condon- Chapter 10

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