

What were the primary purposes of the peacemakers in Versailles?

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Having read the document, for me it seems that at the historical moment of drawing up this Treaty all the Victors agreed upon the fact that Germany must be severely punished. (Partly to prevent her from becoming able to start an aggressive foreign policy in the future, partly to make this case a deterrent for other future aggressors.) The shock of the war was still present and the hatred towards Germans was still on the peak. This is reflected in the decisions of the sections dealing with territorial questions, in the military clauses and in the reparation section as well.

Section I. deals with Belgium. As Article 35 mentions, the boundary between Germany and Belgium will be determined by a "Commission of seven persons, five of whom will be appointed by the Principal Allied and Associated Powers, one by Germany and one by Belgium". Since it has been already decided in the previous articles that Belgium gets Moresnet and Prussian Moresnet as well as Eupen and Malmedy, the German committee's presence in the Commission is only formal. He could not even get across his point in less significant questions, because it was him against the six others from the other side and decisions were taken by a majority. Exactly the same method is being used later on in the case of Poland (Section VIII), which shows clearly that the Allied Powers did not allow Germany to interfere with the results of Europe's redefining at all.

France obviously wanted to humiliate Germany, when in Chapter III. Section V. the text emphasizes that Alsace-Lorraine have been usurped by Germany since 1871, so it is a "moral obligation" to give it back to France. The French also got the coal-mines of the Saar Basin in the previous chapter, so out of the members of the Council, her needs were satisfied the

most in the first sections. This is especially true if we consider that the demilitarization of the west bank of the Rhine (Part V, Section IV) and its occupation by the Allied forces for 15 years (Part XIV, Article 428) was mainly to guarantee France's safety.

Section VI, VII and VIII guarantees the independence of Austria, the Czecho-Slovak State and Poland. These new states (we could count Hungary here as well) were strengthened in order to create a cordon sanitaire, in other words: to isolate Russia from the West. It was an

issue all the Allied Powers must have agreed upon, just like in the case of former German colonies. These were naturally taken away and shared among the Victors. It becomes clear in Part IV, Section V, where the text reads that Germany can not intervene in negotiations "which may take place between France and the other Powers". In the far east the winner was obviously Japan, who got Shantung. It was obviously a great opportunity for the victorious Powers to satisfy their imperialistic greed hiding behind the mask of a fair-minded jury.

Britain's most significant wish, which was to do away with the German Navy, was fulfilled in Part V, Section II. All the other constraints in the Military clauses can be regarded to be reasonable, their purpose was to reduce the possibility of another German aggression. Part VII deals with the punishing of the wrong-doer, William II. The former German emperor was probably the most responsible for the sufferings of the war in the eyes of the public, so this section was absolutely necessary. In the section concerning the Reparations, as it turns out from Article 232, the Allied Powers were aware of the fact that Germany's resources were not adequate to pay compensation for the damage caused by her. As the hatred towards Germany started to decrease later on, it became clear for everyone that if they destroyed Germany, she would never be able to pay.