

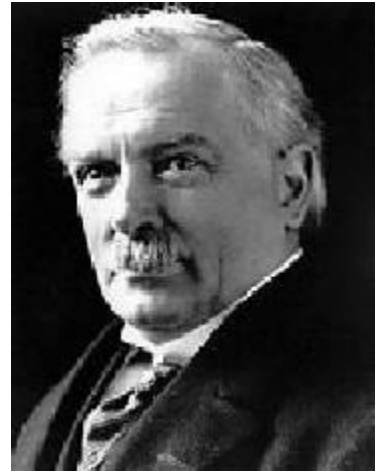
## David Lloyd George

He was Prime Minister of Great Britain.

He *said* he would '**make Germany pay**' – because he knew that was what the British people wanted to hear.

He wanted '**justice**', but he **did not want revenge**. He said that the peace must **not be harsh** – that would just cause another war in a few years time. He tried to get a '**halfway point**' – a compromise between Wilson and Clemenceau.

He ALSO wanted to expand the British Empire, maintain British control of the seas, and increase Britain's trade



### Source A

We want a peace which will be just, but not vindictive... Above all, we want to protect the future against a repetition of the horrors of this war.

Lloyd George speaking to Parliament (1919) before he went off to the Conference.

### Source B

We propose to demand the whole cost of the war from Germany.

From a speech by Lloyd George, made in December 1918, during an election campaign.

### Source C

Lloyd George says that Woodrow Wilson can think and talk of nothing but his League of Nations. Wilson will only take any interest in talks if everything centres on the League. He has started to annoy Lloyd George by talking of matters that have already been settled as though they were still open for discussion.

From the diary (March 1919) of Frances Stevenson, Lloyd George's private secretary.

[http://www.johndclare.net/peace\\_treaties3.htm](http://www.johndclare.net/peace_treaties3.htm)

Details: In Britain most people wanted Germany to be punished: "Make Germany Pay" and

"Squeeze them until the pips squeak" were popular slogans, but Lloyd George believed that:

- Germany should not be treated too harshly; it would only lead to more trouble in the future.
- Germany should be allowed to recover.
- France should not be allowed to take the Rhineland. Lloyd George was only prepared to make the Rhineland "demilitarised".

[http://www.schoolhistory.co.uk/year9links/wwi/Versailles\\_roleplay.PDF](http://www.schoolhistory.co.uk/year9links/wwi/Versailles_roleplay.PDF)

# Lloyd George at the Conference

Lloyd George was *brilliant* at the Conference.

Politically, he completely dominated and outmanoeuvred both Wilson (the schoolteacher visionary), and Clemenceau (the bitter old soldier).

He had got almost everything he wanted out of the peace by the end of February month, and he was able to spend the last months of the Conference brokering a compromise between Wilson and Clemenceau.

In the ultimate, Lloyd George saved the peace, and the Treaty of Versailles was his handiwork. Whether or not he was happy with it when it was finished, however, is open to question.

## ***Wilson and Clemenceau***

In his desire to create a diplomatic new world, Wilson was adamant about two issues:

- There had to be a League of Nations, a kind of parliament of the nations (Clemenceau did not think that it would be strong enough to protect France from attack by Germany – he wanted to set up a Council of victorious countries to enforce the peace).
- There had to be self-determination (nations had to rule themselves).

In his hatred of Germany, Clemenceau wanted to do two things:

- To make France safe from future attack by wrecking and dismembering Germany – by making the Rhineland into an independent country, giving large areas over eastern Germany to Poland, and giving France the 'natural frontier' of the River Rhine.
- To charge Germany huge 'reparations' to pay for the war and to rebuild the areas of France destroyed in the fighting (Wilson did not agree – he wanted much smaller reparations.)

To some degree, Lloyd George was unhappy about ALL these things.

He did not want Britain being told what to do by a League of Nations, and he certainly did not want the countries of the British Empire deciding that they wanted to rule themselves.

At the same time, he did not want to ruin or dismember Germany. Britain needed Germany as a trading partner, and Lloyd George wanted a strong Germany as a buffer against the threat from Communist Russia.

## ***In Britain – 'Appeasers' and 'Realists'***

Back in Britain, Lloyd George was head of a coalition government with both Liberals and Conservatives in it. He knew he would have to keep them happy as well. But where most Liberals were internationalist and wanted the mild peace proposed by Wilson (the 'Appeasers' – eg Nicolson, Cecil and Keynes), the Conservatives were anti-German and wanted a harsh peace along Clemenceau's lines (eg Cunliffe, Sumner and Balfour – the 'Realists').

Lloyd George knew that he had to keep Parliament happy. Indeed, on 8 April 1919, over 200 MPs – fearing that he was going to set a low figure on reparations – sent him a telegram reminding him of his election promise to 'make Germany pay'.

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Asked how he felt he had done at the Conference, Lloyd George answered: 'Not badly, considering I was seated between Jesus Christ and Napoleon'.

[http://www.johndclare.net/ToV3\\_lloyd\\_george\\_negotiating.htm](http://www.johndclare.net/ToV3_lloyd_george_negotiating.htm)

