

In addition, for three years the Russians had fought on the side of the Allies, suffering higher casualties than any other nation. However, because Russia was excluded from the peace conference, it lost more territory than Germany did. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (or Soviet Union), as Russia was officially called after 1922, became determined to regain its former territory.

Finally, the treaty ignored claims of colonized people for self-determination, as in the case of Southeast Asia, where the Vietnamese people were beginning to demand the same political rights enjoyed by people in Western nations.

OPPOSITION TO THE TREATY When Wilson returned to the United States, he faced strong opposition to the treaty. Some people, including Herbert Hoover, believed it was too harsh. Hoover noted, "The economic consequences alone will pull down all Europe and thus injure the United States." Others considered the treaty a sell-out to imperialism because it simply exchanged one set of colonial rulers for another. Some ethnic groups objected to the treaty because the new national boundaries it established did not satisfy their particular demands for self-determination. For example, before the war many Poles had been under German rule. Now many Germans were under Polish rule.

DEBATE OVER THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS The main domestic opposition, however, centered on the issue of the League of Nations. A few opponents believed that the League threatened the U.S. foreign policy of isolationism. Conservative senators, headed by **Henry Cabot Lodge**, were suspicious of the provision for joint economic and military action against aggression, even though it was voluntary. They wanted the constitutional right of Congress to declare war included in the treaty.

POINT

"The League of Nations was the world's best hope for lasting peace."

President Wilson campaigned for the League of Nations as "necessary to meet the differing and unexpected contingencies" that could threaten world peace. Wilson believed that the League would create a forum where nations could talk through their disagreements. He also hoped it would provide collective security, in which nations would "respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all members of the League," and thereby prevent devastating warfare.

Critics complained that membership in the League would limit American independence in international affairs. However, Wilson argued that League membership included "a moral, not a legal, obligation" that would leave Congress free to decide its own course of action. Wilson tried to assure Congress as well as the general public that the League was "not a straightjacket, but a vehicle of life." It was also a definite guaranty . . . against the things that have just come near bringing the whole structure of civilization into ruin."

COUNTERPOINT

"The League of Nations posed a threat to U.S. self-determination."

Senator William Borah was one of the foremost critics of the Treaty of Versailles because he objected to U.S. membership in the League of Nations. Borah feared that membership in the League "would draw America away from her isolation and into the internal affairs and concerns of Europe" and involve the United States in foreign wars. "Once having surrendered and become a part of the European concerns," Borah wondered, "where, my friends, are you going to stop?"

Many opponents also feared that the League would nullify the Monroe Doctrine by limiting "the right of our people to govern themselves free from all restraint, legal or moral, of foreign powers."

Although Wilson argued that the League of Nations would have no such power of restraint, Borah was

unconvinced. He responded to Wilson's argument by asking, "What will your League amount to if it does not contain powers that no one dreams of giving it?"

THINKING CRITICALLY

1. CONNECT TO HISTORY Summarizing Both supporters and opponents of the League hoped to preserve peace. How did each group propose to secure peace for the United States?



SEE SKILLBUILDER HANDBOOK, PAGE R4.

2. CONNECT TO TODAY Identifying Problems What are some contemporary arguments against United States participation in international organizations such as the United Nations or the World Court?