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common set of peace terms for Germany, which they could all agree on. The drawing up of those terms had been painful and difficult.

A particularly divisive issue was how France should be protected in future from Germany. Should Germany be disarmed completely? – which would leave it defenceless against its neighbours and perhaps against Bolshevism. Or partially? – in which case, how big an army should it have and with what sort of weapons? There were those in France who wanted Germany to be broken up completely and returned to the collection of states it had been before 1870. Others were content to take the Rhineland, part of Germany west of the Rhine River, and turn it into an either independent state or a state attached to France. Lloyd George refused, pointing out that Europe had already been disturbed enough in the 19th century by unfulfilled German ambitions. On the other hand, the French argued, with some justification, that they still needed to be protected from Germany. The basic French problem was that there was still a very big Germany and there were more Germans than French and therefore more future German soldiers than French ones. The demographic gap was clearly going to widen.

Trying to come up with a figure on what Germany should pay for war damages was also extremely difficult, partly because of public expectations. Huge figures had been floated around in the weeks preceding the Peace Conference and the Allied publics in Britain and France in particular had come to expect that Germany would make up for all the money spent during the war (and perhaps even for the future pensions to widows and orphans of soldiers) and for damage to Allied property. Even Canada drew up a list which included freighters that had been sunk in order not to be left out of the final distribution. Then there was the damage done by the fighting on Belgian and French soil. It was hard even to get any estimate of what that amounted to. American army engineers who were starting to do surveys of the battlefields assumed it would take at least two years to get any realistic estimate.

When the Allies finally managed to reach agreement on the German terms, no one wanted to sit down and reopen the whole thing in discussions with the Germans. By May 1919, there was another