

The German-Great Britain Trade Rivalry in Comparison to the U.S.- Japan Trade Rivalry?

The German-Great Britain trade rivalry like the U.S.-Japan trade rivalry involved a rising power cutting into the trade of an already dominant trading power. There were several causes of the German-Great Britain trade rivalry according to Hoffman. The first was German's industry's zeal in procuring new contracts and expanding markets. They did this by fulfilling contracts even if they were very small and constantly trying to stay up with market demand. Second, Germans had a knowledge of languages that the English firms lacked. Third, German industry was aided by their government. In contrast Great Britain did not even supply consular assistance in helping develop markets in British colonies. Fourth, British trade was hurt by the conservatism of British manufacturers who were unwilling to develop new markets or hold onto those it already possessed. These four factors are just some of the factors that helped German industry grow and rival that of Great Britain.

These four factors are all very similar to the Japan-U.S. trade rivalry. Japan like Germany was able to catch up to the U.S. because the U.S. was large and arrogant and refused to believe it could face competition from Japan. Like Britain, U.S. industry believed that they could hold onto markets and would not face competition. British and U.S. industry were startled by the fast rate of growth and industrialization that allowed Germany and Japan to transform themselves quickly into trading rivals. This fast rate of growth also caused friction between both sets of countries. Relations between Germany and Great Britain were damaged as they bickered over markets in particular colonies in Africa . This is similar to the friction between the U.S. and Japan unfair trading practices and closed markets.

Both the U.S. and Great Britain in response to losing markets toyed with the idea of economic nationalism and tariffs. As Britain lost markets to Germany many in Britain felt that Britain should adopt tariffs on goods while others known as the free traders believed that a free trade would benefit Britain by creating markets. This split between Tariff Reformers and Free Traders is similar to the split in the U.S. between those in favor of free trade and those opposed to it. Germany's grab for new markets in the 1890's through commercial treaties such as the 1891 treaty with Austria-Hungary is similar to both the United States and Japan's free trade zones with neighboring countries using treaties such as ASEAN and NAFTA.

The German-Great Britain trade rivalry is different then the U.S.-Japan trade rivalry because a large sector of Japan's market for selling goods is the United States who it is competing against; this was not true of Germany. Both Britain and Germany were competing for markets outside of both their countries. Also the trade rivalry between Japan and the United States did not involve a fight over colonies. Trade rivalries between rising and dominant powers change little over time. The German-British trade rivalry and the Japan U.S. rivalry were very similar in their causes, effects, and the solutions that both sets of governments used to overcome their trading rival.

