

TEXT OF GERMANY'S REPLY TO PEACE TREATY

DECLARE ALLIED POWERS WANT PEACE OF MIGHT

Germany's Answer to Conditions laid down at Versailles consists of 60,000 words Protesting that Allies have "Forsaken Peace of Justice."

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lations, and especially to the abolition of compulsory military service, provided this is the beginning of a general reduction of armaments and abandonment of compulsory military service. Their own readiness to reduce armaments at once is a proof of their sincerity. But a period of transition must be allowed during which Germany may retain such forces as are required to preserve internal order before reducing her army to the hundred thousand limit. On condition that Germany enters the league at once she will dismantle the fortresses in the west, and establish a neutral zone, but no special supervision of the process of disarmament, except that of the league, can be admitted, and an extension of time must be granted after discussion on a basis of equality.

Under the provision of a financial arrangement, Germany is prepared (?) to surrender not only the surface warships demanded, but all ships of the line. Germany is also told to accept all general regulations of the league as regards aviation.

Immediate oral negotiations to settle details are proposed. Germany is prepared to do everything in her power to preserve humanity from another war, and, if the nations are disappointed in their hope of this it will not be her fault.

CHAPTER TWO—Deals with territorial questions.—The first section lays down the principle of the right of self-determination in accordance with President Wilson's four points in his speech of February 11, 1918, and the second point in his speech of July 14, 1918. The German delegations claim that on those principles the cession of Upper Silesia and the Saar district cannot be demanded at all, and that where territorial cession can be acquiesced in it must be preceded in every case by a plebiscite with universal suffrage under fair conditions administered by a neutral power after evacuation of foreign troops. Further proposals are made as to the exchange of enclaves and the fixing of frontiers.

This section also advocates the principle of protection of national minorities under the league, including such German minorities as may pass under alien sovereignty. These must be afforded the fullest possible cultural autonomy.

These conditions deal with Belgium. It claims that the contested territories of Moresnet and Prussian Moresnet have a german majority. Eupen again is purely German, and the Walloons are considerable in a minority in Malmody. Germany cannot consent in principle to the occasion of such indisputably German districts, and in these instances a real plebiscite is not provided for. Germany is prepared to supply wood from the Eupen forests in reparation to Belgium, but cannot consent to the bartering of human beings.

The brief third section on Luxemburg declares that the proposed economic and practical conditions are one sided and inadmissible.

The fourth section deals with considerable length with the Saar district. Germany declares that the frontiers have been drawn to include important industrial districts beyond the coal mines, but even the cession of mining district could not be admitted. A supply of coal can be guaranteed; but the total coal computed to exist in the Saar mines would represent a hundred times the maximum French demands.

The population of the Saar district is peculiarly uniform and has been attached to Germany for over a thousand years, during which period France has possessed it for not more than sixty-eight years. The people to-day are as

German as they were a hundred years ago when they demanded to be reunited with Germany, but on account of the coal mines they are put under an abnormal and unfavourable form of Government; and since the armistice they have begun to learn what they will have to suffer.

All this is to compensate France for the coal destroyed in the north; but such a question can only be settled on an economic basis, not by tearing away a nationality, undisputed territory and degrading the league of nations by involving it in the transaction. The German government declines to make any reparation in the form of punishment, and still more emphatically declines to pass on to individual parts of the population the punishment intended for the whole of the community. The annexation of the Saar district to France would mean the creation of another Alsace-Lorraine, and Germany claims that the whole question must be reconsidered.

The fifth section, dealing with Alsace-Lorraine, insists that for the most part this district is German, but admits that according to present conceptions of right an injustice was committed in 1871 when the people were not consulted. Germany has therefore promised reparation, but it would be no reparation to concede Alsace-Lorraine with its immensely increased economic wealth to France at once.

A vote must be taken allowing a choice between union with France, union with Germany as a free state, and complete independence. If the population should decide for France, the present conditions must be modified as to the dating back of the cession and the question of nationality; and if France is to take over the results of Germany's effort she must equally take over a proportionate share in the German debt.

A short sixth section declares that Germany has never intended to shift the frontier with Austria by force, but cannot pledge herself to oppose a possible desire of German Austria to be united with her.

A long and important seventh section deals with Germany's eastern frontiers. Germany has agreed to a creation of an independent Polish state, but the terms of the treaty include in it a number of totally German towns and extensive German tracts of land for military or economic reasons without regard to nationality or to history.

It is claimed that this particularly applies to Upper Silesia, which has had no connection with the Polish empire since 1163. The wishes of the inhabitants have been clearly expressed by the elections of the Reichstag in 1903 and 1907 when the majority voted for Germany rather than Polish deputies. In 1919, when the Poles proclaimed their abstention from voting, sixty per cent of possible voters voted for German candidates.

With regard to language, the parents of less than twenty-two per cent of the school children have declared themselves in favour of education in a non-German language under the new provisions, and the Polish dialect spoken by a considerable part of the Upper Silesians is really a mixed language, and does not reveal a mark of nationality.

Upper Silesia owes everything to Germany, and Germany cannot dispense with Upper Silesia, while Poland does not really need it. The Upper Silesian coal has supplied almost the whole industry of eastern Germany, and last year the output was forty-three million five hundred thousand metric tons. Poland at the same period used about ten millions five hundred thousand tons, and the Polish output was nearly seven million. Half the deficit came from Upper Silesia, the remainder from the mines now in Czechoslovakia but the new Poland could probably supply herself with all the coal she needs.

German conditions for working class life are incomparably better than those in Poland, and the cession of Upper Silesia, to which Germany cannot consent, would be as disadvantageous to its own population as to the rest of the mankind.

The province of Posen cannot be regarded as indisputably Polish. Germany is prepared to cede such parts as are truly Polish, but the proposed frontiers are based on obsolete strategic, not national, considerations.

As to West Prussia, the treaty gives almost the whole of it, and even a part of Pomerania, to Poland. West Prussia is claimed as old German territory on which the Polish dominion of 300 years has left little trace. In the district assigned directly or indirectly to Poland, it is claimed that the population includes about 744,000 Germans against 580,000 Poles and Cassubians who are not to be identified with the Poles, and the German population is of far greater economic and cultural importance.

Germany cannot consent to the severance of East Prussia, with the German population of a million and a half, from the German empire. A connecting bridge must absolutely be preserved, but Germany is ready to cede to Poland such West Prussian territories as are indisputably Polish.

The cession of Danzig, a purely German town, is claimed to be in direct opposition with President Wilson's principles. To make it a free city and to surrender certain of its rights to Poland would lead to violent opposition and a continuous state of war in the east. Danzig must remain with the German empire. But Germany is ready to make Memel, Königsberg and Danzig free ports in order to secure to Poland the promised access to the sea, and to grant special transit facilities under specified conditions reciprocally applied.

In the southern parts of East Prussia a plebiscite is demanded; but these districts are indisputably Polish, and the fact that a non-German language is spoken in certain regions is in itself of no importance.

SECTION FOUR.

With regard to Memel and the adjoining districts, even the Lithuanian-speaking inhabitants have never shown any desire to separate from Germany, and the delegates state that in the whole territory there are about 68,000 Germans, as against about 54,000 Lithuanian-speaking inhabitants, who generally also speak German. Memel in particular is claimed as a purely German town, and Germany therefore declined to cede this territory.

If any German territory is ultimately ceded to Poland, Germany must protect its former nationals. This is all the more necessary because the Poles have not so far shown themselves trustworthy protectors of the national and religious rights of minorities.

The Germans further protest against the regulations as to change of nationality, and against the lack of security for German interests in the districts affected; and they demand a commission to assess damages caused by recent Polish disturbances.

In the eighth section the German delegates agreed to the holding of a plebiscite in Silesia, although this point was not mentioned by President Wilson. They protest, however, against the delimitation of the voting districts, and propose another boundary and a different system of voting and control for the plebiscite.

A short ninth section accepts the dismantling of Heligoland, but insists on any measure necessary for the protection of the coast and port in the interest of the population.

The tenth section deals with the colonies. The delegates maintain that the demand that Germany should relinquish all her rights and claims is an irreconcilable contradiction of Point 5 of President Wilson's address.

To U.S. Congress of the 8th January, 1918, which promised a free, sincere, and impartial settlement of colonial claims.

Germany's claim is based on the fact that she has acquired them lawfully and developed them laboriously. The pos-

session of them will be even more necessary to her in the future than in the past, as owing to the low rate of exchange, she must obtain raw material from her own colonies. She further requires her colonies as a market, and as settlements for a part of her surplus population.

As a great civilized nation, the German people have the right to co-operate in the joint task of mankind, in which they have already achieved great things. The interests of the coloured population of the colonies speak for Germany remaining in possession of them, for the German administration has abolished abuse and introduced peace, order, justice, health, education, and Christianity.

Germany has clearly looked after the interests of the natives. She has refrained from militarizing them, and has adhered to the principle of the open door. The demand that the colonies should be renounced is therefore considered unjustified.

Without modifying this position, the delegates further point out that the conditions under which the cession is demanded are unacceptable in detail, particularly as to state and private property and compensation; and they claim that any mandatory power should pay all expenses incurred by the German Empire, and that the territory should still be responsible for liabilities incurred.

They therefore make a counter proposal that an impartial hearing of the colonial question should take place before a special committee.

Germany claims that though justified in demanding the restoration of her colonies, she is ready to administer them, according to the principles of the League of Nations, if a league is formed which she can enter at once as a member with equal privileges.

The eleventh section agrees to the renunciation of German rights and privileges regarding Kiaoo Chow and Shantung, with certain stipulations as to compensation.

Section twelve deals with Russia and the Russian states. Germany does not claim or propose to interfere with any territory which belonged to the former Russian Empire. The peace of Brest-Litovsk has already been renounced in the armistice.

But Germany cannot recognize any right on the part of Russia to demand restitution and reparation, and it is only able to recognize the relevant treaties and agreements if their contents are known, and if they do not prove to be unacceptable.

CHAPTER THREE—Germans' rights outside Europe.—The German delegates complain that according to the draft treaty Germany is to have no rights whatever in Europe, outside her own frontiers.

If Germany is to continue to exist, the realization of these terms is impossible. Germany must have the use of shipping, but she is called upon to deliver up her entire overseas fleet with all tonnage which happened to be in enemies' harbour at the beginning of the war. Further, the Allies refuse to recognize the decisions of German prize courts, or to consider German claims for damages, while German seaports are deliberately weakened by a number of claims so that a reconstructed German mercantile fleet will encounter totally unfair conditions in traffic.

The German submarine cables are to be taken away. Germany's foreign trade is to be excluded from all kinds of activity. Germany is called upon to violate the Egyptian right to self-determination by recognizing the British Protectorate. All concessions and privileges acquired in Russia since August, 1914, are annulled, and many other foreign rights are left in jeopardy. The Allies have proposed economic and financial provisions which put Germany under a continued disadvantage, and they reserve themselves the right to take exceptional war measures in regard to German rights, properties and interests abroad, so that German citizens will be placed in an unbearable state of uncertainty.

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