

Document Packet - The Controversial Peace: 1919

Document 1

ARTICLE 10, the "covenant" clause

The Members of the League undertake to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all Members of the League. In case of any such aggression or in case of any threat or danger of such aggression the Council shall advise upon the means by which this obligation shall be fulfilled.

ARTICLE 22, the "mandates" clause

To those colonies and territories which as a consequence of the late war have ceased to be under the sovereignty of the States which formerly governed them and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilization and that securities for the performance of this trust should be embodied in this Covenant. The best method of giving practical effect to this principle is that the tutelage of such peoples should be entrusted to advanced nations who by reason of their resources, their experience or their geographical position can best undertake this responsibility, and who are willing to accept it, and that this tutelage should be exercised by them as Mandatories on behalf of the League. The character of the mandate must differ according to the stage of the development of the people, the geographical situation of the territory, its economic conditions, and other similar circumstances.

ARTICLE 231, the "war guilt" clause

The Allied and Associated Governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her allies for causing all the loss and damage to which the Allied and Associated Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies.

ARTICLE 232, the "reparations" clause

The Allied and Associated Governments recognize that the resources of Germany are not adequate, after taking into account permanent diminutions of such resources which will result from other provisions of the present Treaty, to make complete reparation for all such loss and damage. The Allied and Associated Governments, however, require, and Germany undertakes, that she will make compensation for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allied and Associated Powers and to their property during the period of the belligerency of each as an Allied or Associated Power against Germany by such aggression by land, by sea and from the air, and in general all damage as defined in Annex I hereto.

SOURCE: Key Articles of the Treaty of Versailles, 1919.

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We entered this war because violations of right had occurred which touched us to the quick and made the life of our own people impossible unless they were corrected and the world secured once for all against their recurrence. What we demand in this war, therefore, is nothing peculiar to ourselves. It is that the world be made fit and safe to live in; and particularly that it be made safe for every peace-loving nation which, like our own, wishes to live its own life, determine its own institutions, be assured of justice and fair dealing by the other peoples of the world as against force and selfish aggression. All the peoples of the world are in effect partners in this interest, and for our own part we see very clearly that unless justice be done to others it will not be done to us. The program of the world's peace, therefore, is our program; and that program, the only possible program, as we see it, is this:

I. Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understanding of any kind but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view.

II. Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas, outside territorial waters, alike in peace and in war, except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action for the enforcement of international covenants.

III. The removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance.

IV. Adequate guarantees given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety.

V. A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined.

VI. The evacuation of all Russian territory and such a settlement of all questions affecting Russia as will secure the best and freest cooperation of the other nations of the world in obtaining for her an unhampered and unembarrassed opportunity for the independent determination of her own political development and national policy and assure her a sincere welcome into the society of free nations under institutions of her own choosing; and, more than a welcome, assistance also of every kind that she may need and may herself desire. The treatment accorded Russia by her sister nations in the months to come will be the acid test of their good will, of their comprehension of her needs as distinguished from their own interests, and of their intelligent and unselfish sympathy.

VII. Belgium, the whole world will agree, must be evacuated and restored, without any attempt to limit the sovereignty which she enjoys in common with all other free nations. No other single act will serve as this will serve to restore confidence among the nations in the laws which they have themselves set and determined for the government of their relations with one another. Without this healing act the whole structure and validity of international law is forever impaired.

VIII. All French territory should be freed and the invaded portions restored, and the wrong done to France by Prussia in 1871 in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine, which has unsettled the peace of the world for nearly fifty years, should be righted, in order that peace may once more be made secure in the interest of all.

IX. A readjustment of the frontiers of Italy should be effected along clearly recognizable lines of nationality.

X. The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development.

XI. Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro should be evacuated; occupied territories restored; Serbia accorded free and secure access to the sea; and the relations of the several Balkan states to one another determined

by friendly counsel along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality; and international guarantees of the political and economic independence and territorial integrity of the several Balkan states should be entered into.

XII. The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development, and the Dardanelles should be permanently opened as a free passage to the ships and commerce of all nations under international guarantees.

XIII. An independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant.

XIV. A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike....

SOURCE: President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, 1919.

Document 3

It is accordingly understood between the French and British governments:

That France and great Britain are prepared to recognize and protect an independent Arab states or a confederation of Arab states (a) and (b) marked on the annexed map, under the suzerainty of an Arab chief. That in area (a) France, and in area (b) great Britain, shall have priority of right of enterprise and local loans. That in area (a) France, and in area (b) great Britain, shall alone supply advisers or foreign functionaries at the request of the Arab state or confederation of Arab states.

That in the blue area France, and in the red area great Britain, shall be allowed to establish such direct or indirect administration or control as they desire and as they may think fit to arrange with the Arab state or confederation of Arab states.

That in the brown area there shall be established an international administration, the form of which is to be decided upon after consultation with Russia, and subsequently in consultation with the other allies, and the representatives of the sheriff of Mecca.

That great Britain be accorded (1) the ports of Haifa and acre, (2) guarantee of a given supply of water from the Tigres and Euphrates in area (a) for area (b). His majesty's government, on their part, undertake that they will at no time enter into negotiations for the cession of Cyprus to any third power without the previous consent of the French government.

That Alexandretta shall be a free port as regards the trade of the British empire, and that there shall be no discrimination in port charges or facilities as regards British shipping and British goods; that there shall be freedom of transit for British goods through Alexandretta and by railway through the blue area, or (b) area, or area (a); and there shall be no discrimination, direct or indirect, against British goods on any railway or against British goods or ships at any port serving the areas mentioned.

That Haifa shall be a free port as regards the trade of France, her dominions and protectorates, and there shall be no discrimination in port charges or facilities as regards French shipping and French goods. There shall be freedom of transit for French goods through Haifa and by the British railway through the brown area, whether those goods are intended for or originate in the blue area, area (a), or area (b), and there shall be no discrimination, direct or indirect, against French goods on any railway, or against French goods or ships

at any port serving the areas mentioned.

That in area (a) the Baghdad railway shall not be extended southwards beyond Mosul, and in area (b) northwards beyond Samarra, until a railway connecting Baghdad and Aleppo via the Euphrates valley has been completed, and then only with the concurrence of the two governments.

That great Britain has the right to build, administer, and be sole owner of a railway connecting Haifa with area (b), and shall have a perpetual right to transport troops along such a line at all times. It is to be understood by both governments that this railway is to facilitate the connection of Baghdad with Haifa by rail, and it is further understood that, if the engineering difficulties and expense entailed by keeping this connecting line in the brown area only make the project unfeasible, that the French government shall be prepared to consider that the line in question may also traverse the Polygon Baniyas Keis Marib Salkhad tell Otsda Mesmie before reaching area (b).

For a period of twenty years the existing Turkish customs tariff shall remain in force throughout the whole of the blue and red areas, as well as in areas (a) and (b), and no increase in the rates of duty or conversions from *ad valorem* to specific rates shall be made except by agreement between the two powers.

There shall be no interior customs barriers between any of the above mentioned areas. The customs duties leviable on goods destined for the interior shall be collected at the port of entry and handed over to the administration of the area of destination.

It shall be agreed that the French government will at no time enter into any negotiations for the cession of their rights and will not cede such rights in the blue area to any third power, except the Arab state or confederation of Arab states, without the previous agreement of his majesty's government, who, on their part, will give a similar undertaking to the French government regarding the red area.

The British and French government, as the protectors of the Arab state, shall agree that they will not themselves acquire and will not consent to a third power acquiring territorial possessions in the Arabian peninsula, nor consent to a third power installing a naval base either on the east coast, or on the islands, of the red sea. This, however, shall not prevent such adjustment of the Aden frontier as may be necessary in consequence of recent Turkish aggression.

The negotiations with the Arabs as to the boundaries of the Arab states shall be continued through the same channel as heretofore on behalf of the two powers.

It is agreed that measures to control the importation of arms into the Arab territories will be considered by the two governments.

I have further the honor to state that, in order to make the agreement complete, his majesty's government are proposing to the Russian government to exchange notes analogous to those exchanged by the latter and your excellency's government on the 26th April last. Copies of these notes will be communicated to your excellency as soon as exchanged. I would also venture to remind your excellency that the conclusion of the present agreement raises, for practical consideration, the question of claims of Italy to a share in any partition or rearrangement of turkey in Asia, as formulated in article 9 of the agreement of the 26th April, 1915, between Italy and the allies.

His majesty's government further consider that the Japanese government should be informed of the arrangements now concluded.



SOURCE: Sykes-Picot Agreement, 1916.

Document 4

- **ARTICLE 1.** Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey on the one hand and Russia on the other declare that the condition of war between them has ceased. They have decided to live in peace and accord in the future.
- **ARTICLE 2.** The contracting parties will refrain from all agitation or propaganda against the governments or all state and military institutions of the other side. . . .
- **ARTICLE 3.** The territories lying to the west of the line determined by the contracting powers and which formerly belonged to Russia will no longer be under her sovereignty. ... Russia gives up all interference in the internal affairs of the said countries. Germany and Austria-Hungary intend to determine the future fate of the said territories with the consent of their inhabitants.
- **ARTICLE 4.** Germany is ready, as soon as general peace is established and Russian demobilization will have completely taken place, to vacate the territories lying east of the line mentioned in ... article 3. ... Russia will do all in her power to have the provinces of eastern Anatolia promptly evacuated and returned to Turkey. The territories of Ardakhan, Kars and Batum will also be cleared without delay of Russian forces... .
- **ARTICLE 5.** Russia will, without delay, proceed to demobilize her army, including those army units newly formed by her present government. Moreover, Russia will either bring her warships into

Russian ports and keep them there until general peace is concluded, or will disarm them at once....

- **ARTICLE 6.** Russia undertakes to conclude peace at once with the Ukrainian people's republic and to recognize the treaty of peace between the state and the powers of the Quadruple Alliance. The territory of the Ukraine must be, at once, cleared of Russian troops and the Russian Red Guard. Russia ceases all agitation or propaganda against the government or the public institutions of the Ukrainian people's republic. Estonia and Lithuania must also be immediately cleared of Russian troops and the Russian Red Guard... Finland and the Aland Islands will also be, without delay, cleared of Russian troops and the Russian Red Guard and Finnish ports of the Russian fleet and of Russian naval forces.... Russia ceases all agitation or propaganda against the government or public institutions of Finland....
- **ARTICLE 7.** ... the contracting parties bind themselves to respect the political and economic independence and the territorial inviolability of Persia and Afghanistan.
- **ARTICLE 8.** The prisoners of war of both parties will be allowed to return home... .
- **ARTICLE 9.** The contracting parties mutually renounce all indemnifications for their war expenses, that is, for government expenses for conducting the war, ... including all requisitions made in the enemy's country.
- **[ARTICLES 10-13 deal with technical matters]**
- **ARTICLE 14.** The present peace treaty must be ratified. Exchange of ratification documents must take place in Berlin as soon as possible. The Russian Government binds itself to execute the exchange of ratification documents ... in the course of two weeks

SOURCE: Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, 1918.

Document 5

In October 1918, with the military defeat of Germany at hand, the German government sent a request for an immediate truce to the U.S. government, suggesting that peace be established on the basis of President Wilson's Fourteen Points. Wilson communicated this request to the Allied governments and received their approval to make peace "on the terms of peace laid down in the President's address to Congress of January 8, 1918," (i.e., the Fourteen Points) though adding that there should be no doubt in anyone's mind that "compensation will be made by Germany for all the damage done to the civilian population of the Allies and their property by the aggression of Germany by land, by sea and from the air." When this was conveyed to the German government on Nov. 3, however, that government--the monarchical system of Imperial Germany--had disappeared in a radical upsurge within Germany that brought the flight of the Kaiser into exile and a new socialist-led democratic government usurping power in the defeated country. It was this latter government that agreed, under threat of invasion of Germany, to accept the armistice of Nov. 11, 1918. The resulting treaty was delivered to the Germans on May 7, 1919 and was immediately denounced on all sides, especially in regard to the imputation of the 'war guilt' of Germany and the incompatibility of the harsh terms with the broad principles enunciated in the Fourteen Points.

The Germans were allowed to submit their counter-proposals on May 29, to which the following extract is the preamble. But the Allied reply was uncompromising, rejecting all arguments and conceding only border adjustments in relation to Polish territory. The German position was, of course, untenable and in an atmosphere of bitter hostility the country's representatives were forced to sign the hated document on June

28, 1919.

I have the honor to transmit herewith the observations of the German Delegation on the Draft of the Treaty of Peace. We had come to Versailles in the expectation of receiving a proposal of peace on the basis actually agreed upon. . . We hope to get the Peace of Right which has been promised us. We were aghast when, in reading (the treaty), we learned what demands Might Triumphant has raised against us. The deeper we penetrated into the spirit of this Treaty, the more we became convinced of its impracticability. The demands raised go beyond the power of the German Nation.

[here follow a narrative of the territorial sacrifices to be made by Germany: most of West Prussia to Poland, the German city of Danzig, the German town of Memel, the heavily industrialized Upper Silesia, occupation of the Rhineland, and so on.]

In spite of such monstrous demands the rebuilding of our economic system is at the same time made impossible. We are to surrender our merchant fleet. We are to give up all foreign interests. We are to transfer to our opponents the property of all German undertakings abroad, even of those situated in countries allied to us. Even after the conclusion of peace the enemy states are to be empowered to confiscate all German property. No German merchant will then, in their countries, be safe from such war measures. We are to completely renounce our colonies, not even in these are German missionaries to have the right of exercising their profession. We are, in other words, to renounce every kind of political, economic and moral activity.

But more than this, we are also to resign the right of self-determination in domestic affairs. Dictatorial powers are conferred on the International Reparation Commission over our whole national life in economic and cultural matters, its power by far exceeding those ever enjoyed within the German Empire by the Emperor, the German Federal Council and the Reichstag put together. This Commission has the unrestrained power of disposal over the economic system of the state, of the municipalities and of private individuals. All matters of education and public health likewise depend on it. . . . The Commission . . . can, in order to augment the payments of Serfdom, inhibit the whole system of social care for the working classes in Germany.

Also in other respects Germany's right of sovereignty is abrogated. Her principal rivers are placed under international administration, she is obliged to build on her own territory the canals and railways desired by the enemy, she must, without knowing the contents, assent to agreements which her adversaries intend concluding with the new states in the East [i.e., Poland and the Baltic states] and which affect Germany's own boundaries. The German people is excluded from the League of Nations to which all common work of the world is confided.

Thus a whole nation is called upon to sign its own proscription, yea, even its own death warrant.

Germany knows that she must make sacrifices in order to come to Peace. Germany knows that she has promised such sacrifices by agreement and wishes to carry them through to the utmost limit she can possibly go to.

1. Germany offers to take the lead before all other nations in disarming herself, in order to show that she is willing to help them in bringing forth the new era of the Peace of Right. She will give up compulsory service and will . . . diminish her army to 100,000 men. She is even prepared to surrender the battleships which her opponents intend leaving her. But she hereby acts on the assumption that she will be immediately admitted, as a state with equal rights, into the League of Nations. . . .

2. In territorial questions Germany unreservedly endorses the Wilson program. She renounces her sovereignty in Alsace-Lorraine, desiring, however, a free plebiscite to be carried through there. . . . [here follow a description of the further concession Germany is willing to make: cession of territory indisputably inhabited by Poles and Danes; a free port in Danzig and Polish access to the sea; submitting her former colonies to the administration of the League of Nations, with mandatory rights for Germany. All this is coupled with a 'demand' that the right of self-determination be respected also in favor of the Germans in

Austria and Bohemia.]

3. Germany is prepared to make the payments incumbent on her . . . up to the maximum amount of 100 billion marks gold, namely, 20 billion marks gold until May 1, 1926, and the remaining 80 billion marks gold afterwards, by annual installments bearing no interest . . . In conceding this, Germany acts on the assumption that she will have to make no further sacrifices of territory beyond the above mentioned ones, and that she will again be granted freedom of action at home and abroad.

4. Germany is ready to devote her entire economic power to the work of reparation. She is desirous of actively cooperating in the restoration of the devastated territories in Belgium and Northern France. . . .

9. The German Delegation again raise their demand for a neutral inquiry into the question of responsibility for the war and of guilt during the war. An impartial commission should have the right of inspecting the archives of all belligerent countries and examining, as in a court of law, all chief actors of the war. The high aims which our adversaries were the first to establish for their warfare, the new era of a just and durable Peace, demand a Treaty of a different mind. Only a cooperation of all nations, a cooperation of hands and intellects, can bring about a permanent peace. We are not under a misapprehension as to the intensity of hatred and bitterness that is caused by this war; and yet the forces at work for the union of mankind are now stronger than ever. It is the historical task of the Peace Conference of Versailles to bring about this union.

Accept, Sir, the assurance of my high esteem,

(signed) Brockdorff-Rantzau [German Foreign Minister]

SOURCE: A German view of the Versailles Treaty, 1919.