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Don't forget the League of nations, and the Great Depression of 1930's...

The purpose : to prepare a course about national reactions towards the Versailles treaty.

The historical problem is simple : should the 1919 peace conference be blamed for causing the rise of Hitler and World War II ?

I think the answer is clearly no, despite of analysis at that moment from cassandras like Keynes or Comintern. When war came in 1939, it was a result of 20 years of decisions taken or not taken, not of arrangements made in 1919.

I/ prerequisite : to know the decisions of the Versailles treaty

what is a treaty ?

Treaty : a written agreement between two or more countries formally approved and signed by their leaders.

How analyse it ?

To analyse a treaty, the concepts of diplomatics and international relations must be employed, introducing especially the diplomats who work for a government whose decisions depend on various pressures from business lobbies and versatile public opinion.

The peace conference (1919)

The treaties after the first world war revealed a very important turning in the diplomatic history : the stability of the world is no longer based only upon the counterbalance between nations, but also upon an international Law, and a specialised institution, the League of nations imagined by the Président Wilson in his famous " Fourteen Points ".

The treaty

1/ draws inferences from the war in the geopolitical, military, economical, financial and even historical spheres

2/ founds a new International order based upon the law

1/ France and United Kingdom were made the guarantors of the geopolitical balance of the whole Europe against the new Russia, and even the World, especially in the middle East inherited from the breaking up of the ottoman Empire. The legacy of Versailles traduced the new situation :

- new boundaries : Germany lost around 13 per cent of its European land and population. Alsace and Lorraine were taken by France, for instance, and a strip of land given to Poland ('the Polish corridor') even cut off East Prussia from the rest of the country

- reparations : germany had to pay large reparations and sustain economic conditions, as compensation for damage the war had caused.

- There was to be an allied occupation of the Rhineland for 15 years, after which time the Germans were forbidden ever to station troops there. The German army was to be restricted to 100,000 men.

2/ the notion of " sécurité collective "

- (art 227) an international court Un tribunal pénal international est prévu pour mettre en jugement des criminels de guerre et de Guillaume II (art 228 et 229), car l'Allemagne est considérée comme seule responsable (Art. 231).
- Peace organisation : the League of nations (art 10)

II/ Reactions towards the Versailles treaty

one must differentiate : who those reactions come from / reactions that concern the consequences on the everyday life / reactions that concern diplomatic and international relations

2.1/ The german reactions : a diktat ?

- A general German point of view. The terms of the 1919 peace treaty were hotly resented by Germans. For the whole German opinion, the consequences of the treaty were too hard to be supported by German people.

- All German governments >from 1919 were determined to revise Versailles, by a peaceful revisionism :

On the 23rd of June 1919, the treaty is ratified by the Assembly of the new Weimar Republic, except the articles 228, 229, et 231.

German diplomats, notably Count Brockdorff-Rantzau [German Foreign Minister in Versailles], then Gustav Stresemann, during the following years, try to smooth down the clauses, with appreciable results :

§ Germany had to accept the blame for causing the war, but Wilhelm II had never been tried 8 Sep 1926
Germany admitted to the League of Nations.

§ Reparations, for instance, were scaled down twice, in 1924 with the Dawes Plan and in 1929 with the Young Plan, before being scrapped altogether in 1932.

§ Allied troops left the Rhineland in 1930, five years in advance.

§ Germany also signed the Locarno Treaty in 1925 by which it voluntarily accepted its western borders with France, whose right to Alsace and Lorraine was recognised, and agreed never to have troops in the Rhineland. It seemed that the hostilities of the war years were finally at an end.

- From the enemies of the regime : To objugate the treaty and its consequences

§ The nationalist, and the extreme-Right side of the political opinion denounced the principle of a League of Nations because the nation cannot be surrendered by any other institution. The reversal of the outcome of World War I by the nullification of the Treaty of Versailles, because they don't accept the German defeat. For them, Germany had not lost the war. Cf Maréchal Hindenburg 12 nov. 1918 : ...Vous avez tenu l'ennemi à l'écart de nos frontières et vous avez sauvé votre pays des malheurs et des désastres de la guerre... Fiers et la tête haute, nous terminons la lutte où nous avons tenu pendant quatre ans en face d'un monde rempli d'ennemis.

§ The communist extreme Left had denounced the war like an imperialist war. The treaty was yet denounced because of its remaining imperialist schedule against peoples.

conclusion

The alternative for Germans was between smoothing down the clauses by diplomacy and invalidating them by force

2.2/ reactions in UK.

In the same way, it is possible to make a distinction between 3 attitudes

Acceptation by the government :

§ UK was recognized again as a major country in the world

§ The historical aim of Britain foreign policy is to prevent the emergence of a too strong continental power

§ The war, the blocus against Germany, were retrospectively justified

Hesitations inside the government

§ The choice between American and French alliance. A France guaranteeing the stability of continental Europe seemed risky in regard for the historical conflict with France (the "Entente Cordiale" was dated only from 1904, and concerned especially colonial affairs in Morocco and Egypt), and for the French economical weakness.

§ The Wilsonian idealism seemed rather inquisitive

Criticism outside the government

§ Businessmen wanted to make business again with Germany, a major industrialized country

§ Keynesianist iconoclasm

Sources :

one can find a lot of informations, pictures... about the League of nations on this web site of the Indiana University : <http://www.indiana.edu/~league/>

Références à des sites anglais :

<http://www.chez.com/christiangagnon/wwi.htm>

<http://history.acusd.edu/gen/text/versaillestreaty/vercontents.html>

site de l'historial de la Grande guerre

<http://www.historial.org/fr/centre/sommaire.htm>

texte français et anglais sur le site du Sénat

<http://www.senat.fr/evenement/traite.html>

émission Galilée sur le traité de Versailles

<http://france5.fr/galilee/003250/4>

carte du front Ouest très précise

http://www.atlas-historique.net/1914-1945/cartes_popups/Armistice1918GF.html

The articles :

1. Articles 1-26 The Covenant of the League of Nations
2. Articles 27-30 Boundaries of Germany
3. Articles 31-117 Political Clauses for Europe
4. Articles 118-158 German Rights and Interests Outside Germany
5. Articles 159-213 Military, Naval and Air Clauses
6. Articles 214-226 Prisoners of War and Graves
7. Articles 227-230 Penalties
8. Articles 231-247 Reparations
9. Articles 248-263 Financial Clauses
10. Articles 264-312 Economic Clauses
11. Articles 313-320 Aerial Navigation
12. Articles 321-386 Ports, Waterways and Railways
13. Articles 387-399 Labour
14. Articles 400-427 Procedure
15. Articles 428-433 Guarantees
16. Articles 434-440 Miscellaneous Provisions

The League of nations

ARTICLE 10.

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.

Imperialism after the war

ARTICLE 22.

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 civilisation 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. Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can

be provisionally recognised subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone. The wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory. Other peoples, especially those of Central Africa, are at such a stage that the Mandatory must be responsible for the administration of the territory under conditions which will guarantee freedom of conscience and religion, subject only to the maintenance of public order and morals, the prohibition of abuses such as the slave trade, the arms traffic, and the liquor traffic, and the prevention of the establishment of fortifications or military and naval bases and of military training of the natives for other than police purposes and the defence of territory, and will also secure equal opportunities for the trade and commerce of other Members of the League. There are territories, such as South-West Africa and certain of the South Pacific Islands, which, owing to the sparseness of their population, or their small size, or their remoteness from the centres of civilisation, or their geographical contiguity to the territory of the Mandatory, and other circumstances, can be best administered under the laws of the Mandatory as integral portions of its territory, subject to the safeguards above mentioned in the interests of the indigenous population. In every case of mandate, the Mandatory shall render to the Council an annual report in reference to the territory committed to its charge. The degree of authority, control, or administration to be exercised by the Mandatory shall, if not previously agreed upon by the Members of the League, be explicitly defined in each case by the Council. A permanent Commission shall be constituted to receive and examine the annual reports of the Mandatories and to advise the Council on all matters relating to the observance of the mandates.

Penalties

PART VII.

PENALTIES.

ARTICLE 227.

The Allied and Associated Powers publicly arraign William II of Hohenzollern, formerly German Emperor, for a supreme offence against international morality and the sanctity of treaties.

A special tribunal will be constituted to try the accused, thereby assuring him the guarantees essential to the right of defence. It will be composed of five judges, one appointed by each of the following Powers: namely, the United States of America, Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan.

In its decision the tribunal will be guided by the highest motives of international policy, with a view to vindicating the solemn obligations of international undertakings and the validity of international morality. It will be its duty to fix the punishment which it considers should be imposed.

The Allied and Associated Powers will address a request to the Government of the Netherlands for the surrender to them of the ex-Emperor in order that he may be put on trial.

ARTICLE 228.

The German Government recognises the right of the Allied and Associated Powers to bring before military tribunals persons accused of having committed acts in violation of the laws and customs of war. Such persons shall, if found guilty, be sentenced to punishments laid down by law. This provision will apply notwithstanding any proceedings or prosecution before a tribunal in Germany or in the territory of her allies.

The German Government shall hand over to the Allied and Associated Powers, or to such one of them as shall so request, all persons accused of having committed an act in violation of the laws and customs of war, who are specified either by name or by the rank, office or employment which they held under the German

authorities.

ARTICLE 229.

Persons guilty of criminal acts against the nationals of one of the Allied and Associated Powers will be brought before the military tribunals of that Power.

Persons guilty of criminal acts against the nationals of more than one of the Allied and Associated Powers will be brought before military tribunals composed of members of the military tribunals of the Powers concerned.

In every case the accused will be entitled to name his own counsel.

ARTICLE 230.

The German Government undertakes to furnish all documents and information of every kind, the production of which may be considered necessary to ensure the full knowledge of the incriminating acts, the discovery of offenders and the just appreciation of responsibility.

ARTICLE 231.

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.

Breve chronology after 1919

28 Jun 1919 : Treaty of Versailles signed.

19 Feb 1920 : US Senate refuses to sign the Treaty of Versailles. (cf “ obligation ” in art 10)

17 Mar 1920 : Kapp Putsch (rebellion) in Germany, against the peace treaty, fails.

6 Apr 1920 : French troops invade Ruhr in Germany after the German govt had sent troops into the Rhineland to stop rioting.

8 Mar 1921 : French, British and Belgian troops invade the Ruhr to force Germany to agree to reparations.

11 Jan 1923 : French and Belgian troops invade the Ruhr to force Germany to pay reparations.

9 Apr 1924 : Dawes Plan: gives Germany longer to pay reparations, and grants huge loans to get the German economy going.

16 Oct 1925 : Locarno Pact: peace agreement between Fr., Br., Belgium, Italy & Germany.

8 Sep 1926 : Germany admitted to the League of Nations.

27 Aug 1928 : Kellogg-Briand Pact: 65 nations (inc. Fr/Br/USA/Ger) promise to abolish war.

7 Jun 1929 : The Young Plan reduces reparations.

9 Jul 1932 : Lausanne Agreement: USA, France and Britain suspend reparations payments.

http://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/4th-congress/versailles.htm

Fourth Congress of the Communist International

The Versailles Peace Treaty

5 December 1922

The World War ended with the downfall of three imperialist powers: Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia. Four exploiting Great Powers emerged from the war as victors: the United States, Britain, France and Japan.

The peace treaties, the crux of which is the Versailles peace treaty, are nothing other than an attempt to stabilise the world domination of these four victorious powers; politically and economically, by reducing the rest of the world to the level of a single colony exploited by them, and socially, by creating an international union of the bourgeoisie designed to strengthen bourgeois rule both over the proletariat of their own countries and over the victorious revolutionary proletariat of Russia. With this end in view, a whole series of small vassal states were set up around Russia and armed by the Entente in order to strangle Soviet Russia at the first convenient opportunity. The defeated nations were made to repay fully the losses suffered by the victorious powers during the war.

It is now blatantly clear that the assumptions on which the peace treaties were built were mistaken. The attempt to establish a new balance of power on a capitalist basis had proved unsuccessful. The last four years present a picture of continual vacillation, constant uncertainty, economic crises, unemployment and labour shortages, ministerial crises, party crises and international political crises.

By holding an endless series of conferences, the imperialist powers are trying to delay the disintegration of the world system founded on the notorious peace treaties, and to conceal the bankruptcy of the Versailles peace.

In Russia attempts to overthrow the dictatorship of the proletariat have proved unsuccessful. The proletariat throughout the capitalist world is all the more firm in its support for Soviet Russia. Even the leaders of the Amsterdam International have been forced to declare openly that the overthrow of proletarian power in Russia would be tantamount to a victory for world reaction over the entire proletariat.

Turkey, outpost of the growing revolution in the East, has taken up arms and successfully opposed the implementation of the peace treaty. One of the most vital parts of the peace treaty is being solemnly buried at the Lausanne conference.

The prolonged world economic crisis has shown that the economic conceptions of the Versailles peace treaty were profoundly wrong. Britain, the leader of European imperialism and extremely dependent on world trade, is not in a position to consolidate its economy without the restoration of Germany and Russia. The United States, the strongest imperialist power, has finally turned its back on the peace treaty and is trying to consolidate an independent policy of world-wide imperialism. To realise this aim, it has enlisted the support of important sections of the British Empire — Canada and Australia.

The oppressed British colonies, the basis of Britain's world power, are rebelling against their rulers: the entire Moslem world has been swept by open or clandestine revolt.

All the assumptions of the peace treaty have proved invalid, with a single exception: that the proletariat in the bourgeois countries has to bear the entire burden of the war and the Versailles treaty.

France

At first glance it might appear that, of all the victorious powers, France has gained the most. Besides the seizure of Alsace-Lorraine, the occupation of the left bank of the Rhine and the claim to countless billions of German reparations, it has in military terms become the strongest power on the European continent. With the help of its vassal states, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Romania, whose armies are under the

command and leadership of French generals, with the help of its own huge army, of its submarines and its airforce, France dominates the entire European continent; it is the watchdog and guardian of the Versailles peace treaty. However, its economy, diminishing population, enormous domestic and foreign debts and consequent economic dependence on Britain and America do not provide a firm enough basis for its insatiable imperialist appetite. British control of all the important naval strongholds, and the British and American oil monopoly, greatly limit its political power. The economic value of the iron ore gained by France as a result of the Versailles peace treaty is reduced by the fact that the coal vital for exploiting this wealth is in the Ruhr, which belongs to Germany. Hopes that German reparations would help to regulate France's shaky finances have proved illusory. All the financial experts are agreed that Germany cannot possibly pay the sums needed by France to revive its finances. The French bourgeoisie has only one option — to lower the living standards of the French proletariat to the German level. The hunger the German workers are suffering prefigures the poverty that threatens to overtake the French workers very soon. Once the complete bankruptcy of the Versailles peace treaty is apparent, the devaluation of the franc, which is being deliberately encouraged by certain sections of French heavy industry, will be used to force the French proletariat to pay all the costs of the war.

Britain

The World War gave Britain the opportunity to unite its colonial world empire, stretching from the Cape of Good Hope to Egypt, and from Arabia to India. Britain has kept possession of all the most important outlets to the oceans. By making concessions to the dominions, it is trying to maintain an Anglo-Saxon world empire.

However, despite the great ability of the British bourgeoisie to adapt itself, and despite its stubborn efforts to win back the world market, it has become clear that, in the conditions created by the Versailles peace treaty, Britain cannot flourish. Such a highly industrialised country as Britain cannot exist unless the economies of Germany and Russia are restored. Here the interests of Britain and France violently clash: Britain wants to sell its goods to Germany, but this is prevented by the Versailles peace treaty; France wants to squeeze huge sums out of Germany as compensation for war losses, but this threatens to destroy German purchasing power. Hence Britain favours a reduction of reparations, while France is carrying on an undercover war against Britain in the Near East to compel greater flexibility on the question of reparations. While the British proletariat, through the unemployment affecting millions of workers, is shouldering the burden of the war, the British bourgeoisie continues to make new deals with the French bourgeoisie — at the expense of Germany.

Central Europe and Germany

One of the main concerns of the Versailles peace is Central Europe — the new colony of the imperialist gangsters. Parcelled out into a countless number of small states, divided into a series of economically unviable provinces, Central Europe has lost all possibility of following an independent policy. These states have all become colonies of British and French capital. The Great Powers, according to the needs of their changing interests, incite them against each other. Czechoslovakia, torn away from an economic body that brought together 60 million people, is undergoing a prolonged economic crisis. Austria has become an unviable imitation of a state, hanging on to the appearance of an independent political existence only because of the mutual hostility of its neighbours. Poland, which was given huge territories with a non-Polish population, has become a distant outpost of France, a caricature of the French Empire. In all these countries the proletariat, as a result of the fall in living standards and high unemployment, is paying the costs of the war.

The most important issue in the Versailles peace treaty is, however, Germany. Disarmed, deprived of any opportunity to defend itself, it is completely at the mercy of the Great Powers. The German bourgeoisie tries to make common cause now with the British and now with the French bourgeoisie. It is striving, through increased exploitation of the German proletariat, to satisfy part of the French claims, and at the same time, by resorting to foreign help, to strengthen its rule over the German proletariat. But even the most intensive exploitation of the German proletariat — even the reduction of the German worker to the level of a kind of European coolie, even the sea of poverty into which, thanks to the Versailles peace treaty, the German proletariat has sunk — all this still does not make the payment of the reparations possible. Germany has therefore become a toy in the hands of Britain and France. The French bourgeoisie wants to decide the question by force — by occupying the Ruhr. Britain is absolutely opposed

to this. Only the intervention of the United States, economically the strongest power, could have gone some way towards conciliating the mutually conflicting interests of Britain, France and Germany.

The United States of America

However, the United States has long since refused to participate in implementing the Versailles peace, and was against ratifying the Versailles treaty. The United States, which emerged from the World War as the strongest power economically and politically, and as a major creditor of the European imperialist powers, shows no desire to help France out of its financial crisis by allocating substantial credits to Germany. American capital is steadily turning its back on the chaos in Europe and is trying, with great success, to build its own large colonial empire in Central and South America and in the Far East, and at the same time, by means of protective tariffs, to secure for its own ruling class the right to exploit the home market. Whilst leaving continental Europe to the mercy of fate, America nevertheless has to deal with the conflicting interests of Britain and Japan. By using its economic supremacy to build a strong navy, the United States has forced the other imperialist powers to sign the Washington agreement on disarmament. In doing this, it undermined one of the most important bases of the Versailles peace treaty — British world supremacy at sea — and so has removed any interest Britain had in preserving the alignment of powers envisaged by the Versailles treaty.

Japan and the Colonies

Japan, the youngest of the imperialist world powers, is also keeping out of the chaos in Europe created by the Versailles peace treaty. However, the transformation of the United States into a world power has seriously affected its interests. In Washington, Japan was forced to renounce its alliance with Britain; this removed yet another of the major pillars on which the division of the world that took place at Versailles was based. In addition, not only are the oppressed peoples rebelling against the rule of Britain and Japan, but the British dominions are seeking to safeguard their interests in the coming battle between the United States and Japan by establishing close links with the United States. The edifice of British imperialism is, in consequence, showing bigger and bigger cracks.

Towards A New World War

Owing to the conflicting interests of the imperialist Great Powers, the attempt to create a firm basis for their world rule has proved completely unsuccessful. The great edifice of the peace treaty lies in ruins. The Great Powers and their vassals are preparing for a new war. Militarism is stronger than ever. Although the bourgeoisie is panic-stricken and horrified at the thought of the new proletarian revolution that would result from the world war, the inner laws of the capitalist social order are inexorably leading to a new world conflict.

The Tasks of the Communist Parties

The Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals are trying to support the radical wing of the bourgeoisie, who represent mainly trade and banking capital, in their ineffectual fight for the reduction of reparations. On this, as on every question, they walk hand in hand with the bourgeoisie. The task of the Communist Parties, especially those in the victorious countries, is to explain to the masses that the Versailles peace treaty transfers all war costs to the proletariat in both the defeated and the victorious countries. They must make it clear that in every country the real victim of bourgeois peacemaking is the proletariat. Following on from this, the Communist Parties, above all those of Germany and France, must start a joint struggle against the Versailles peace treaty. The German Communist Party must emphasize the readiness of the German proletariat to help in any way possible the workers and peasants of Northern France to restore their ruined economy; at the same time, it must wage a sharp fight against its own bourgeoisie, which is ready to join the French bourgeoisie (Stinnes agreement [It is not clear what this refers to. In 1922, Stinnes did explore various schemes for a voluntary Franco-German iron and coal cartel, but nothing came of them.]) in sacrificing the German proletariat to a policy of meeting all obligations, and is even prepared to turn Germany into a colony of the French bourgeoisie, if this would fully secure its class interests. The French Communist Party must do all it can to fight the imperialist tendencies of its own bourgeoisie and any attempt to enrich the French bourgeoisie by increased exploitation of the German proletariat. It must fight for immediate withdrawal from the occupied left bank of the Rhine. It must fight against the seizure of the Ruhr, against the dismemberment of Germany and against French imperialism. It is no longer enough to oppose the idea of 'defence of the fatherland' in

France: the struggle against the Versailles treaty must now be taken up everywhere. The Czechoslovak and Polish Communist Parties, as well as the Communist Parties of other vassal countries subordinate to France, have a duty to combine the fight against their own bourgeoisies with the fight against French imperialism. Joint mass actions must show the proletariat that the attempt to implement the Versailles peace treaty will reduce the entire European proletariat to grinding poverty, and that opposition to this attempt is in the common interests of the proletariat of the whole world.

A German View of the Treaty of Versailles

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]