Modern European History

Unit 7 – Nation-Building and War

Excerpts of Treaty of Versailles

What do you believe would be the most important postwar goals for France, Germany, and Great Britain, respectively? Identify at least 3 items for each country, ranked from most important to least important. (For example, France might want Germany to pay for the war.) Star any common goals.

France

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Read Articles 42-50 of the treaty:

ARTICLE 42.

Germany is forbidden to maintain or construct any fortifications either on the left bank of the Rhine or on the right bank to the west of a line drawn 50 kilometres to the East of the Rhine.

ARTICLE 43

In the area defined above the maintenance and the assembly of armed forces, either permanently or temporarily, and military maneuvers of any kind, as well as the upkeep of all permanent works for mobilization, are in the same way forbidden.

ARTICLE 44

In case Germany violates in any manner whatever the provisions of Articles 42 and 43, she shall be regarded as committing a hostile act against the Powers signatory of the present Treaty and as calculated to disturb the peace of the world.

ARTICLE 45

As compensation for the destruction of the coal-mines in the north of France and as part payment towards the total reparation due from Germany for the damage resulting from the war, Germany cedes to France in full and absolute possession, with exclusive rights of exploitation, unencumbered and free from all debts and charges of any kind, the coal-mines situated in the Saar Basin as defined in Article 48.

ARTICLE 46.

In order to assure the rights and welfare of the population and to guarantee to France complete freedom in working the mines, Germany agrees to the provisions of Chapters I and II of the Annex hereto.

ARTICLE 47.

In order to make in due time permanent provision for the government of the Saar Basin in accordance with the wishes of the populations, France and Germany agree to the provisions of Chapter III of the Annex hereto.

ARTICLE 48.

The boundaries of the territory of the Saar Basin, as dealt with in the present stipulations, will be fixed as follows:

On the south and south-west: by the frontier of France as fixed by the present Treaty. On the north-west and north: by a line following the northern administrative boundary of the Kreis of Merzig from the point where it leaves the French frontier to the point where it meets the administrative boundary separating the commune of Saarholzbach from the commune of Britten; following this communal boundary southwards and reaching the administrative boundary of the canton of Merzig so as to include in the territory of the Saar Basin the canton of Mettlach, with the exception of the commune of Britten; following successively the northern boundaries of the cantons of Merzig and Haustedt, which are incorporated in the aforesaid Saar Basin, then successively the administrative boundaries separating the Kreise of Sarrelouis, Ottweiler, and Saint-Wendel from the Kreise of Merzig, Treves (Trier), and the Principality of Birkenfeld as far as a point situated about 500 metres north of the village of Furschweiler (viz., the highest point of the Metzelberg). On the north-east and east: from the last point defined above to a point about 3 1/2 kilometres east- north-east of Saint-Wendel: a line to be fixed on the ground passing east of Furschweiler, west of Roschberg, east of points 418, 329 (south of Roschberg) west of Leitersweiler, north-east of point 464, and following the line of the crest southwards to its junction with the administrative boundary of the Kreis of Kusel thence in a southerly direction the boundary of the Kreis of Kusel, then the boundary of the Kreis of Homburg towards the south-south- east to a point situated about 1000 metres west of Dunzweiler; thence to a point about 1 kilometre south of Hornbach- a line to be fixed on the ground passing through point 424 (about 1000 metres south-east of Dunzweiler), point 363 (Fuchs-Berg), point 322 (south-west of Waldmohr), then east of Jagersburg and Erbach, then encircling Homburg, passing through the points 361 (about 2-1/2 kilometres north-east by east of that town), 342 (about 2 kilometres south-east of that town), 347 (Schreiners-Berg), 356, 350 (about 1-1/2 kilometres south-east of Schwarzenbach), then passing east of Einod, south-east of points 322 and 333, about 2 kilometres east of Webenheim, about 2 kilometres east of Mimbach, passing east of the plateau which is traversed by the road from Mimbach to Bockweiler (so as to include this road in the territory of the Saar Basin), passing immediately north of the junction of the roads from Bockweiler and Altheim situated about 2 kilometres north of Altheim, then passing south of Ringweilerhof and north of point 322, rejoining the frontier of France at the angle which it makes about 1 kilometre south of Hornbach (see Map No. 2 scale 1/100,000 annexed to the present treaty).

A Commission composed of five members, one appointed by France, one by Germany, and three by the Council of the League of Nations, which will select nationals of other Powers, will be constituted within fifteen days from the coming into force of the present Treaty, to trace on the spot the frontier line described above.

In those parts of the preceding line which do not coincide with administrative boundaries, the Commission will endeavour to keep to the line indicated, while taking into consideration, so far as is possible, local economic interests and existing communal boundaries. The decisions of this Commission will be taken by a majority, and will be binding on the parties concerned.

ARTICLE 49.

Germany renounces in favour of the League of Nations, in the capacity of trustee, the government of the territory defined above.

At the end of fifteen years from the coming into force of the present Treaty the inhabitants of the said territory shall be called upon to indicate the sovereignty under which they desire to be placed.

ARTICLE 50.

The stipulations under which the cession of the mines in the Saar Basin shall be carried out, together with the measures intended to guarantee the rights and the well-being of the inhabitants and the government of the territory, as well as the conditions in accordance with which the plebiscite herein before provided for is to be made, are laid down in the Annex hereto. This Annex shall be considered as an integral part of the present Treaty, and Germany declares her adherence to it.

Questions:

1. Why were these clauses probably inserted?

2. What benefits did these clauses give France?

3. Was it reasonable to establish the demilitarized Rhineland buffer zone? Why?

4. How would the terms regarding the Saar Basin affect the German economy?

5. How would Germany probably react to these terms?

6. What were the terms pertaining to Germany's military?

7. What sovereign powers did Germany lose?

8. How might these clauses have satisfied France?

9. Is it reasonable, in general, to disarm a former enemy belligerent? Why?