

An Unsettled Peace, 1919–1920

One need only refer to the Reconstruction period after the Civil War (Chapter 15) to establish that America's major wars have sometimes been followed by intense conflict. The period of crisis after the Great War was brief, characterized by a range of conflicts that together made for two years of "unsettled peace" (see text pp. 698–701).

The terms of the peace proved politically divisive, as the U.S. Senate refused—on two votes late in 1919 and on a final roll call early the next year—to ratify the Treaty of Versailles, which would have involved the United States in the League of Nations. Meanwhile, nativism and racialism flourished, and wartime repression of dissent carried over into the postwar Red Scare, which provided the backdrop for bitter labor-management strife during the shift from a wartime economy to a peacetime economy.

Document 22-12 contains the heart of President Woodrow Wilson's "Fourteen Points" speech dealing with war aims in January 1918. Document 22-13 reproduces select articles from the Treaty of Versailles. In Documents 22-14 and 22-15, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge and President Wilson state their differing positions on the League of Nations (see Article 10 of the Treaty of Versailles in Document 22-13). Document 22-16 reports on the postwar race riot in Chicago, and Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois writes on "Returning Soldiers" in Document 22-17.

22-12 Fourteen Points (1918)

Woodrow Wilson

President Wilson (1856–1924) set out his Fourteen Points as the basis for a lasting peace in an address before Congress on January 8, 1918 (see text pp. 694–698). The timing of his speech reflected his concern that V. I. Lenin's Bolsheviks, who had seized

power in Russia late in the previous year, were propagandizing a revolutionary ending of the war even as they were negotiating with the Germans to extricate Russia from that war, however harsh Germany's terms. Such a peace would free German forces to concentrate on the Western Front. Addressing war-weary Europe, Wilson sought to deal with the Bolsheviks, rally the Allies, and appeal to elements within the Central Powers.

Source: Woodrow Wilson, address to Congress, January 8, 1918; reprinted in *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, ed. Arthur S. Link et al. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 45:536–538. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

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I. Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings 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 agreement 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 cooperating 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 the interests of the populations concerned 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 freest cooperation of the other nations of the world in maintaining for her an unhampered and unembarrassed opportunity for the independent determination of her own political development and national policy and assure her of a secure and welcome into the society of free nations under institutions of her own choosing; and, more than a welcome, assure 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 prejudices, 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 peoples. No other single act will serve as this will serve to re-establish confidence among the nations in the laws which they themselves set and determined for the government of

their relations with one another. Without this healing act the whole structure and validity of international laws 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.

Part I. The Nations . . .

ARTICLE 10

The Members of the League shall serve as guarantors of the peace and existing covenants of the League. In case of a threat or danger of war upon the members of the League . . .

ARTICLE 11

Any war or threat of war, whether originating in the Member States or in any other part of the world, the Member States shall endeavor to avert by negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, or other peaceful means. If these means fail, they shall resort to such action as they think proper for the maintenance of the peace of the League.

It is also the duty of the Member States to see that the peace of the League is not endangered by any action which might lead to a general war, or to a war which would be likely to result in a general war.

Part III. B

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Questions

1. Which of the Fourteen Points concern specific nations or peoples? What guiding principle did Wilson advocate in determining their futures?

2. Of points I through V, which do you think was most important? Why?
3. What was the immediate importance of point VI and the symbolic importance of point VII?

22-13 Treaty of Versailles, Select Articles (1919)

The Allies were willing to base peace negotiations with Germany on President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points (Document 22-12), but British, French, and Italian leaders did not view the future of Europe and the world through Wilson's eyes. Thus, the Treaty of Versailles reflects the American president's view but also bears the stamp of the European heads of state. Wilson referred to Article 10 as the "heart" of the Covenant of the League of Nations and to Article 11 as his "favorite article in the treaty."

Source: Treaty of Peace between the Allied and Associated Powers and Germany, Signed at Versailles, June 28, 1919, in *The Treaties of Peace, 1919-1923* (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1924), 1:14, 32, 47, 59, 62, 83, 95, 100, 101, 111, 123.

Part I. The Covenant of 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.

ARTICLE 11

Any war or threat of war, whether immediately affecting any of the Members of the League or not, is hereby declared a matter of concern to the whole League, and the League shall take any action that may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of nations. In case any such emergency should arise the Secretary General shall on the request of any Member of the League forthwith summon a meeting of the Council.

It is also declared to be the friendly right of each Member of the League to bring to the attention of the Assembly or of the Council any circumstance whatever affecting international relations which threatens to disturb international peace or the good understanding between nations upon which peace depends. . . .

Part III. Boundaries of Germany . . .

SECTION III. LEFT BANK OF THE RHINE

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 manoeuvres 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. . . .

SECTION V. ALSACE-LORRAINE . . .

ARTICLE 51

The territories which were ceded to Germany in accordance with the Preliminaries of Peace signed at Versailles on February 26, 1871, and the Treaty of Frankfurt of May 10, 1871, are restored to French sovereignty as from the date of the Armistice of November 11, 1918.

The provisions of the Treaties establishing the delimitation of the frontiers before 1871 shall be restored.

ARTICLE 52

The German Government shall hand over without delay to the French Government all archives, registers, plans, titles and documents of every kind concerning the civil, military, financial, judicial or other administrations of the territories restored to French sovereignty. If any of these documents,

archives, registers, titles or plans have been misplaced, they will be restored by the German Government on the demand of the French Government. . . .

SECTION VII. CZECHO-SLOVAK STATE

ARTICLE 81

Germany, in conformity with the action already taken by the Allied and Associated Powers, recognises the complete independence of the Czecho-Slovak State which will include the autonomous territory of the Ruthenians to the south of the Carpathians. Germany hereby recognises the frontiers of this State as determined by the Principal Allied and Associated Powers and the other interested States. . . .

SECTION VIII. POLAND

ARTICLE 87

Germany, in conformity with the action already taken by the Allied and Associated Powers, recognises the complete independence of Poland. . . .

SECTION XIV. RUSSIA AND RUSSIAN STATES

ARTICLE 116

Germany acknowledges and agrees to respect as permanent and inalienable the independence of all the territories which were part of the former Russian Empire on August 1, 1914.

In accordance with the provisions of Article 259 of Part IX (Financial Clauses) and Article 292 of Part X (Economic Clauses) Germany accepts definitely the abrogation of the Brest-Litovsk Treaties and of all other treaties, conventions, and agreements entered into by her with the Maximalist Government in Russia.

The Allied and Associated Powers formally reserve the rights of Russia to obtain from Germany restitution and reparation based on the principles of the present Treaty. . . .

Part V. Military, Naval and Air Clauses . . .

SECTION I. MILITARY CLAUSES

CHAPTER I. EFFECTIVES AND CADRES OF THE GERMAN ARMY

ARTICLE 159

The German military forces shall be demobilised and reduced as prescribed hereinafter.

ARTICLE 160

(I) By a date which must not be later than March 31, 1920, the German Army must not comprise more than seven divisions of infantry and three divisions of cavalry.

After that date the total number of effectives in the Army of the States constituting Germany must not exceed one hundred thousand men, including officers and establishments of depots. The Army shall be devoted exclusively

to the maintenance of order within the territory and to the control of the frontiers. . . .

CHAPTER III. RECRUITING AND MILITARY TRAINING

ARTICLE 173

Universal compulsory military service shall be abolished in Germany.

The German Army may only be constituted and recruited by means of voluntary enlistment. . . .

ARTICLE 177

Educational establishments, the universities, societies of discharged soldiers, shooting or touring clubs and, generally speaking, associations of every description, whatever be the age of their members, must not occupy themselves with any military matters.

In particular they will be forbidden to instruct or exercise their members or to allow them to be instructed or exercised, in the profession or use of arms.

These societies, associations, educational establishments and universities must have no connection with the Ministries of War or any other military authority. . . .

SECTION III. AIR CLAUSES

ARTICLE 198

The armed forces of Germany must not include any military or naval air forces. . . .

Part VIII. Reparation

SECTION I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

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.

ARTICLE 232

The Allied and Associated Governments recognise 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.

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Questions

1. Compare and contrast Wilson's Fourteen Points (Document 22-12) with the terms of this peace treaty.
2. How did the treaty represent a compromise between Wilson and the European Allied leaders?

22-14 Speech Before the Senate (1919)

Henry Cabot Lodge

Senator Henry Cabot Lodge (1850–1924) spoke after the drafting of the League Covenant (“constitution”) and before President Wilson rejoined the Versailles Conference. He addressed an outgoing Senate still in Democratic hands.

When the Senate elected in 1918 convened later in 1919 to deal with the treaty, Republican control (49–47) of the body enabled Lodge to become majority leader and chair of the foreign-relations committee.

Source: Henry Cabot Lodge, Speech to the U.S. Senate, February 28, 1919, in Henry Cabot Lodge, *The Senate and the League of Nations* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925), 227–233.

Mr. President, all people, men and women alike, who are capable of connected thought abhor war and desire nothing so much as to make secure the future peace of the world. Everybody hates war. Everyone longs to make it impossible. We ought to lay aside once and for all the unfounded and really evil suggestion that because men differ as to the best method of securing the world's peace in the future, anyone is against permanent peace, if it can be obtained, among all the nations of mankind. . . . We all earnestly desire to advance toward the preservation of the world's peace, and difference in method makes no distinction in purpose. It is almost needless to say that the question now before us is so momentous that it transcends all party lines. . . . No question has ever confronted the United States Senate which equals in importance that which is involved in the league of nations intended to secure the future peace of the world. There should be no undue haste in considering it. My one desire is that not only the Senate, which is charged with responsibility, but that the press and the people of the country should investigate every proposal with the utmost thoroughness and weigh them all carefully before they make up their minds. If there is any proposition or any plan which will not bear, which will not court the most thorough and most public discussion, that fact makes it an object of suspicion at the very outset. . . .

In the first place, the terms of the league—the agreements which we make,—must be so plain and so explicit that no man can misunderstand them. . . . The Senate can take no action upon it, but it lies open before us for criticism and discussion. What is said in the Senate ought to be placed before the peace conference and published in Paris, so that

the foreign Governments may be informed as to the various views expressed here.

In this draft prepared for a constitution of a league of nations, which is now before the world, there is hardly a clause about the interpretation of which men do not already differ. As it stands there is serious danger that the very nations which sign the constitution of the league will quarrel about the meaning of the various articles before a twelve-month has passed. It seems to have been very hastily drafted, and the result is crudeness and looseness of expression, unintentional, I hope. There are certainly many doubtful passages and open questions obvious in the articles which can not be settled by individual inference, but which must be made so clear and so distinct that we may all understand the exact meaning of the instrument to which we are asked to set our hands. The language of these articles does not appear to me to have the precision and unmistakable character which a constitution, a treaty, or a law ought to present. The language only too frequently is not the language of laws or statutes. The article concerning mandatories, for example, contains an argument and a statement of existing conditions. Arguments and historical facts have no place in a statute or a treaty. Statutory and legal language must assert and command, not argue and describe. I press this point because there is nothing so vital to the peace of the world as the sanctity of treaties. The suggestion that we can safely sign because we can always violate or abrogate is fatal not only to any league but to peace itself. You can not found world peace upon the cynical “scrap of paper” doctrine so dear to Germany. To whatever instrument the United States sets its hand

it must carry out the provisions of that instrument to the last jot and tittle, and observe it absolutely both in letter and in spirit. If this is not done the instrument will become a source of controversy instead of agreement, of dissension instead of harmony. This is all the more essential because it is evident, although not expressly stated, that this league is intended to be indissoluble, for there is no provision for its termination or for the withdrawal of any signatory. We are left to infer that any nation withdrawing from the league exposes itself to penalties and probably to war. Therefore, before we ratify, the terms and language in which the terms are stated must be exact and as precise, as free from any possibility of conflicting interpretations, as it is possible to make them.

The explanation or interpretation of any of these doubtful passages is not sufficient if made by one man, whether that man be the President of the United States, or a Senator, or anyone else. These questions and doubts must be answered and removed by the instrument itself.

It is to be remembered that if there is any dispute about the terms of this constitution there is no court provided that I can find to pass upon differences of opinion as to the terms of the constitution itself. There is no court to fulfill the function which our Supreme Court fulfills. There is provision for tribunals to decide questions submitted for arbitration, but there is no authority to decide differing interpretations as to the terms of the instrument itself.

What I have just said indicates the vast importance of the form and the manner in which the agreements which we are to sign shall be stated. I now come to questions of substance, which seem to me to demand the most careful thought of the entire American people, and particularly of those charged with the responsibility of ratification. We abandon entirely by the proposed constitution the policy laid down by Washington in his Farewell Address and the Monroe doctrine. It is worse than idle, it is not honest, to evade or deny this fact, and every fairminded supporter of this draft plan for a league admits it. I know that some of the ardent advocates of the plan submitted to us regard any suggestion of the importance of the Washington policy as foolish and irrelevant. Perhaps it is. Perhaps the time has come when the policies of Washington should be abandoned; but if we are to cast them aside I think that at least it should be done respectfully and with a sense of gratitude to the great man who formulated them. For nearly a century and a quarter the policies laid down in the Farewell Address have been followed and adhered to by the Government of the United States and by the American people. I doubt if any purely political declaration has ever been observed by any people for so long a time. The principles of the Farewell Address in regard to our foreign relations have been sustained and acted upon by the American people down to the present moment. Washington declared against permanent alliances. He did not close the door on temporary alliances. He did not close the door on temporary alliances for particular purposes. Our entry in the great war just closed was entirely in accord with and violated in no respect the policy laid down by Washington. When we went to war with Germany we made

no treaties with the nations engaged in the war against the German Government. The President was so careful in this direction that he did not permit himself ever to refer to the nations by whose side we fought as "allies," but always as "nations associated with us in the war." The attitude recommended by Washington was scrupulously maintained even under the pressure of the great conflict. Now, in the twinkling of an eye, while passion and emotion reign, the Washington policy is to be entirely laid aside and we are to enter upon a permanent and indissoluble alliance. That which we refuse to do in war we are to do in peace, deliberately, coolly, and with no war exigency. Let us not overlook the profound gravity of this step.

Washington was not only a very great man but he was also a very wise man. He looked far into the future and he never omitted human nature from his calculations. He knew well that human nature had not changed fundamentally since mankind had a history. Moreover, he was destitute of any personal ambitions to a degree never equaled by any other very great man known to us. In all the vital questions with which he dealt it was not merely that he thought of his country first and never thought of himself at all. He was so great a man that the fact that this country had produced him was enough of itself to justify the Revolution and our existence as a Nation. Do not think that I overstate this in the fondness of patriotism and with the partiality of one of his countrymen. The opinion I have expressed is the opinion of the world. . . .

That was the opinion of mankind then, and it is the opinion of mankind to-day, when his statue has been erected in Paris and is about to be erected in London. If we throw aside the political testament of such a man, which has been of living force down to the present instant, because altered circumstances demand it, it is a subject for deep regret and not for rejoicing. . . .

But if we put aside forever the Washington policy in regard to our foreign relations we must always remember that it carries with it the corollary known as the Monroe doctrine. Under the terms of this league draft reported by the committee to the peace conference the Monroe doctrine disappears. It has been our cherished guide and guard for nearly a century. The Monroe doctrine is based on the principle of self-preservation. To say that it is a question of protecting the boundaries, the political integrity, or the American States, is not to state the Monroe doctrine. . . . The real essence of that doctrine is that American questions shall be settled by Americans alone; that the Americas shall be separated from Europe and from the interference of Europe in purely American questions. That is the vital principle of the doctrine.

I have seen it said that the Monroe doctrine is preserved under article 10 [calling for a collective security agreement among League members]; that we do not abandon the Monroe doctrine, we merely extend it to all the world. How anyone can say this passes my comprehension. The Monroe doctrine exists solely for the protection of the American Hemisphere, and to that hemisphere it was limited. If you extend it to all the world, it ceases to exist, because it rests on

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nothing but the differentiation of the American Hemisphere from the rest of the world. Under this draft of the constitution of the league of nations, American questions and European questions and Asian and African questions are all alike put within the control and jurisdiction of the league. Europe will have the right to take part in the settlement of all American questions, and we, of course, shall have the right to share in the settlement of all questions in Europe and Asia and Africa. Europe and Asia are to take part in policing the American continent and the Panama Canal, and in return we are to have, by way of compensation, the right to police the Balkans and Asia Minor when we are asked to do so. Perhaps the time has come when it is necessary to do this, but it

is a very grave step, and I wish now merely to point out that the American people ought never to abandon the Washington policy and the Monroe doctrine without being perfectly certain that they earnestly wish to do so. Standing always firmly by these great policies, we have thriven and prospered and have done more to preserve the world's peace than any nation, league, or alliance which ever existed. For this reason I ask the press and the public and, of course, the Senate to consider well the gravity of this proposition before it takes the heavy responsibility of finally casting aside these policies which we have adhered to for a century and more and under which we have greatly served the cause of peace both at home and abroad.

Questions

1. What aspect of the draft of the constitution for the League of Nations disturbed Lodge?
 2. Why did he mention George Washington and other founders?
 3. What was the supposed threat to the Monroe Doctrine?
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