WOODROW WILSON IN THE COUNCIL OF FOUR:
A RE-EVALUATION

Thesis

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

Dora M. Brown, B. A.
Denton, Texas
January, 1965
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INTRODUCTION

When the delegations representing the Principal Allied and Associated Powers gathered at Paris in January, 1919, to create the treaty of peace to end World War I, four men were recognized as leaders—United States' President Woodrow Wilson, British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, French Premier Georges Clemenceau, and Italian Prime Minister Vittorio Orlando. These leaders realized that little could be accomplished in meetings of all the delegates. Thus, without a mandate to do so, the four heads of state, their foreign ministers, and two Japanese delegates began meeting in what became known as the Council of Ten. After a while this group became unwieldy as more advisors joined it, and little was accomplished.

Wilson, a devoted practitioner of the secret interview, suggested that Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and Orlando join him in private conferences to arrange the terms of the treaty. The Japanese delegates were invited to meetings when the interests of Japan were involved. The American President believed that meetings of only four men, in secret session, would achieve results much more quickly than had been possible in the larger group. If outsiders knew little about the negotiations, there would be less
criticism and interference. Again, the Peace Conference never delegated treaty-making authority to its leaders.¹

Beginning on March 25, 1919, the Council of Four met in secret sessions twice daily, usually at Wilson's house. Only a translator, Paul Mantoux, and two secretaries, Sir Maurice Hankey and Count Luigi Aldrovandi, were allowed to be present. There was no formal agenda and no voting. Instead, the Four discussed whatever matters arose and agreed informally on solutions. When a complicated or unpleasant problem was presented, discussions either were postponed or were allowed to go on for days or weeks without solution. Occasionally interested suppliants or experts in finance, economics, or military matters were called in to express their views. These people usually withdrew before the Council reached their decisions. None of these visitors were allowed to become permanent members of the Council.

The commissions established at the beginning of the peace conference sent reports to the Four which were often accepted by the Council for inclusion in the treaty. On other occasions, the members debated the reports bitterly, point-by-point, finally discarding them entirely. Then they had to find a new approach to the problem with little help from the experts.

¹Robert Lansing, *The Peace Negotiations, a Personal Narrative*, (Boston, 1921), pp. 213-222.
Historians have long believed that Clemenceau, the titular head of the Conference, was a grasping, fear-racked old man who dominated the meetings, for the extravagant French claims against Germany had been publicized. Wilson, it was thought, struggled valiantly against the French Premier to maintain the principles of the Fourteen Points. Lloyd George and Orlando were only interested in getting what they could for their countries at the expense of Germany. These beliefs persisted because of the secrecy of the meetings. Most of the publicity given the negotiations came directly from Wilson. Each evening he met with Ray Stannard Baker, an American journalist, and decided what news was to be released. As a result, only Wilson's views were officially communicated to the world.  

Examination of Lloyd George's Memoirs of the Peace Conference and the recently published minutes of the Council meetings, however, reveals that this concept is almost entirely false. Indeed, Orlando took little part in the discussions, for he spoke only on matters which concerned Italy. On the other hand, Clemenceau and Lloyd George realized that they had to maintain rapport with Wilson, for they thought that the United States would play a vital role.


3David Lloyd George, Memoirs of the Peace Conference (New Haven, 1939).
in world affairs in the future. The French leader was very willing to compromise in order to accommodate the American President. Again and again he yielded on points which he considered important in order that harmony could be attained. Lloyd George, probably the most able diplomat in the group, tried to find solutions which would satisfy both Wilson's principles and the commitments of the others.

It was Woodrow Wilson, then, who played the dominant role in the Council of Four. With his dedication to the vague, often contradictory Fourteen Points, and with the power of the office of President of the United States supporting him, he determined the very nature of the treaty. Wilson's use, and misuse, of his influence over his colleagues makes him responsible for much of the final form of the Treaty of Versailles.
CHAPTER I

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WAR

While the Council of Four was settling matters of reparations and frontiers to secure peace, they were also concerned with punishing those responsible for precipitating the war and for violating the laws of war. Although the Four spent comparatively little time working on the problem, Wilson's role in the negotiations is quite revealing. His attitude toward these questions exemplified his general approach to most problems.

The need to ascertain responsibility for the war was first introduced in the Council by Lloyd George on April 2. He reported that the Commission on Responsibilities had decided that all those guilty of war crimes should be punished. A clause in the treaty should require Germany to recognize the Allies' right to judge. The aggressors would then deliver the accused persons along with the documents relating to their crimes. A court of justice representing all the belligerents would be established to hear cases and pronounce condemnations. By trying the culprits, the Allies would reduce the danger of war in the future.

In a dialogue with Lloyd George, Wilson explained that the American experts opposed the commission's plan. He believed
that by renouncing the right to prosecute the authors of the war, rapprochement would be made easier. Furthermore, establishing a court which represented only the Allies was unjust, for the complainant would also judge. It was dangerous to begin passing judgment on enemies when the court represented the injured parties. In the future, suppose that only two nations went to war. Could the victor judge the vanquished?

Referring to the proposal that the Kaiser be tried, Wilson thought that it would be difficult to determine his role. How could the tribunal decide whether William II really caused the war or signed the order with true regret? The responsibility for the crime of starting the war was collective. It would be unfair to select a few individuals to receive the blame when many were responsible. The best course would be to leave the guilty ones to be judged and condemned by history.

Turning to the problem of criminal acts committed during the war, Wilson said that some of these crimes should be tried in the countries in which they occurred. These trials were not such that an international tribunal was necessary. Although these crimes were abhorrent to him, Wilson wanted the Council to act in a manner which satisfied their consciences.1

After Wilson's sermon, no decision was reached. The matter was dropped for a week until Lloyd George asked that another report be discussed. The commission recommended two categories of crimes—criminal acts and general orders contrary to the rights of men.

Wilson reminded the Council that he and United States Secretary of State Robert Lansing, who served as Chairman of the commission, favored instituting courts martial in each state to handle cases. The other members still favored an international tribunal. During the discussion Wilson began to waver. For no apparent reason, Wilson set aside his principles and became interested in the details of the trials. He asked how the tribunal would be composed. He did not approve the plan to have representatives of the highest court of each Allied nation act as judges because this group would be too large. Then he wondered whether decisions should be unanimous. Having in effect approved the idea of a tribunal, Wilson made some suggestions of his own. He thought that a military court using known procedures should try cases involving violations of recognized laws of war. The problem of responsibility of the Kaiser had to be handled differently, for the role of a head of state in causing a war was an unexplored domain.

As the discussion continued, Wilson asked if the Council had the right to order the Dutch government to surrender the Kaiser. He was satisfied by Lloyd George's reply that the
Allies could keep Holland out of the League of Nations if she refused to co-operate. 2

On the following day Wilson read a report on responsibilities which incorporated his suggestion that military courts try cases involving violations of the laws of war. In addition the report stipulated that if the crime had been committed in only one country, the case would be judged by the tribunal of that nation alone. If the crime were against citizens of several states, each of those nations would be represented on the tribunal.

Regarding the trial of the Kaiser, Holland would be required to deliver him to be judged by a special tribunal of five judges representing the five Powers. The crime for which William II was to be tried was not defined as a violation of the criminal law, but as an act against international morality and the sanctity of treaties. The penalty to be pronounced would be made at the discretion of the court which would be inspired by the highest principles of international politics. 3

After this basis for the trials was accepted, the Four turned to other matters. Only after the Germans had received the treaty did the Council return to the problem of trying

2Council of Four, April 8, 1919, ibid., pp. 183-194.
3Council of Four, April 9, 1919, ibid., pp. 195-196.
war criminals. On June 21 Lansing sent a note to the Four to remind them that the Allies had only one month after the signing of the treaty in which to prepare and deliver to Germany a list of accused persons to be handed over to justice. This length of time, he believed, was inadequate for preparing their demands. Wilson agreed that one month was not enough time. However, he commented that it was too late to change their mistake.4

A few days later Wilson decided that the Council should demand that Holland surrender the Kaiser immediately. He wanted to make this inhospitable act on the part of the Dutch government as easy as possible. As chairman of the Commission on Responsibilities, Lansing was asked to draft the request.5 In the meantime, Wilson changed his mind, for such a demand could not be made before the treaty was signed. The Council agreed to hold Lansing's note until the proper moment. Instead of asking that the Kaiser be surrendered, the Four requested that the Dutch government insist that William II not leave Holland.6

On June 28 the Council received a letter from Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg, former Imperial Chancellor of the German

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Empire, stating that any responsibility for precipitating the war was his rather than the Kaiser's. Wilson pointed out that Bethmann-Hollweg was not on the list of persons to be tried, for he had not violated the laws of war. Only the Kaiser would be tried in the other category, violations of international morality and the sanctity of treaties. Wilson believed that the ex-Chancellor was acting on the theory that under the German constitution the chancellor was responsible for all governmental activities. However, the correct interpretation was that the responsibility was the Kaiser's alone. The Council agreed to notify Bethmann-Hollweg of its opinion that he was not to be tried. The Council adjourned without taking further action concerning the trials.

Wilson's role in discussions concerning responsibilities can be traced in a descending line. He began by speaking eloquently in favor of renouncing the right to try war criminals, for he believed that guilt was not limited to a few men. He was not even convinced of the Kaiser's guilt. Suddenly he stopped speaking of noble sentiments and became concerned with the details of the tribunal. Having accepted the idea of an international tribunal, he made suggestions of his own. By the end of the conference, Wilson was engrossed in plans for trying the Kaiser. He was determined that William II, and no other, should be brought to a speedy

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trial for crimes against all humanity. Wilson had abandoned his lofty, humanitarian ideals and had become concerned with the mundane details of trying the accused.  

8 This interpretation differs from the traditional view as found in Walworth, II, 306-307. See concluding chapter.
CHAPTER II

REPARATIONS

One of the first problems the Council of Four confronted was reparations. All of the members of the Reparations Commission agreed that Germany should pay for having started the war. Obviously, she could not pay the entire cost of the war, or even for all the damages. The experts agreed that Germany should pay for destruction of civilian property. Unfortunately, they could not agree on the amount Germany would be able to pay, the length of time she should have in which to pay it, the method of payment, how the receipts would be divided among the Allies, or precisely what parts of the war costs Germany would be responsible for. In addition to these financial arrangements, there was the problem of revitalizing Europe's economy by the issuance of German bonds and currency. Since the commission was unable to reach agreement, the task fell to the Council of Four.

Much of the friction in these negotiations resulted from the widely divergent opinions of the members of the Council. Both Clemenceau and Lloyd George had promised their constituents that Germany would pay for having precipitated the war. Each wanted to extract as much from Germany as possible. The French Premier was especially adamant in his demands. On the
other hand, the United States was not in a position to make a reparation claim, for American civilians had suffered little damages. Although Wilson agreed that the Allies were entitled to reparations, he insisted that the claims be just. Throughout the discussions, Wilson pictured himself as the disinterested arbiter, dispensing justice. Such a pose did not endear him to his colleagues.

At the first meeting of the Council on March 25, Wilson announced that he wanted to determine the capacity of Germany to pay. He thought that the total liability should be such that Germany could meet it in one generation. That amount would be from $25,000,000,000 to $35,000,000,000. Next the Council must decide how much would be paid each year, and what proportion of the payments would be in paper marks. The President did not understand the complications of financial arrangements, for he believed that the entire matter could be resolved quickly.

The other Council members did not believe that the problems of reparations could be solved so easily after the commission had haggled for months over these same points. First, there was the difficulty of determining the German capacity to pay. The experts could not agree on the total.¹ Now the Council would have to sift the same facts and arrive at a figure.

When the French expert Louis Loucheur explained to the Council that he believed that Germany could pay $50,000,000,000, Wilson countered that this amount was the national capitalization of France in 1908. How could Germany ever pay such an amount. The Weimar government had no credit. The people were disorganized and demoralized. The Allies had to make reasonable demands and explain their position to the world. It would be impossible to get what France was demanding without flattening Germany for thirty-five years.  

In an effort to appease his colleague, Clemenceau suggested that Germany's total liability not be listed. Only the amount of each payment would be placed in the treaty. Wilson vigorously opposed the plan to avoid naming the extent of German liability. Such a move, he thought, was bad for public opinion. Germany would be asked to sign a blank check.  

In the afternoon of March 26 a bitter argument raged between Lloyd George and Loucheur, the greediest of the French experts. France's claim had risen to over 80,000,000,000 francs, a sum the British Prime Minister branded preposterous. Lloyd George was determined that his own proposal be accepted. He wanted to name a moderate sum to be paid by Germany and divided so that France got 50 per cent, Britain got 30 per cent, and

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3 Ibid., pp. 29-31.
the other Allies shared the remaining 20 per cent. Although the American expert Norman Davis favored the British plan, Wilson made no move to lend his support. Instead, he sat through the meeting in silence. Unable to understand the finer points of finance, Wilson let his expert do the talking. Indeed, when a good solution was offered, he did not recognize its worth.4

As the discussions progressed, the French representatives returned to the suggestion that the total sum be omitted from the treaty. Lloyd George and his advisor, J. M. Keynes, were willing to consider this proposal as a means for achieving their own goal concerning the division of receipts. Wilson still opposed the French scheme.5

A few days later the American President made a proposal of his own. He recommended that Germany be allowed to repair damaged buildings in France and Belgium. In this way, the amount of money Germany would have to pay would be reduced considerably. Both Lloyd George and Clemenceau approved the plan. Indeed, the Frenchman wanted to extend the program to include railroads and agriculture.6

Wilson soon returned to his plea that Germany be told exactly how much she would have to pay. To simplify matters,

4Ibid., pp. 32-40.
6Council of Four, March 31, 1919, ibid., p. 106.
he suggested that the experts make a list of categories of reparations. When each belligerent had determined the amount Germany owed for each type of damage, the total costs could be calculated.

During the discussion, Wilson received a message from Davis informing him that the experts had arrived at an agreement on the general lines of the reparations settlement. Among other things, a permanent commission would be established to determine the capacity of Germany to pay and to fix the amount of the annual payments. The final figure would be declared on May 1, 1921. Moments before, Wilson had been urging immediate adoption of a sum. Now he said nothing. Germany's total liability was omitted from the treaty because Wilson no longer continued his opposition. He accepted the report of the Reparations Commission without comment. Wilson had lost interest in the matter and was willing to accept any solution, regardless of justice.

With that problem settled, the Council turned to another difficulty. Although reparations were to be paid for damages suffered by civilians, the British proposed the inclusion of Allied pensions and separation allowances in the reparations bill. Since Britain would receive a small per cent of the total amount, her share would be increased greatly if these additional costs were included.

7Council of Four, April 1, 1919, ibid., pp. 109, 113.
Since these allowances cost almost as much as the amount of civilian damages, the inclusion of these extra claims would double the cost of reparations. Although France stood to gain less than Britain if pensions were included, Clemenceau supported Lloyd George. Wilson and the American experts opposed such a move, for those claims were outside the realm of damages, as the term had been interpreted.

When lengthy discussion failed to impress the American, Lloyd George asked General Jan Smuts of South Africa to write a note to Wilson on the subject of pensions. The general made no new proposals, but only expressed his opinion, which coincided with that of Lloyd George. Upon receiving the note from Smuts, Wilson reversed his position and agreed that pensions and separation allowances should be included in the reparations bill. Wilson was willing to risk doubling the cost of reparations because one man whom he admired had asked him to do so. The advice of the American experts counted for less than one brief note. Although Wilson claimed to be a man of high principle, he would forego his beliefs when the right person asked him to do so.

8Philip Mason Burnett, Reparations at the Paris Peace Conference (New York, 1940), I, 64.
9Smuts to Wilson, March 31, 1919, Burnett, II, 773-775.
With the matter of pensions and separation allowances settled, the Council began the work of deciding on the length of time in which Germany would be allowed to discharge her obligation. Since Wilson was ill and unable to attend meetings for several days, he sent his confidant, Colonel Edward M. House, to the Council. House was not well informed, for he fumbled for ideas and grasped at solutions in order to reach settlements. He had little real authority, for Wilson insisted on being consulted before his representative approved any plan.\(^\text{11}\)

Wilson favored a scheme whereby Germany would pay for only thirty years. The total estimate would be made on that basis. Whatever was left unpaid at the end of that time would be written off as a loss. With this idea in mind he had agreed to include Allied claims for pensions, because the amount actually paid would not be increased. If the period of time were limited and the annual payment fixed, Germany would have a ray of hope that she could eventually free herself of debt.

Although the French expert L. L. Klotz agreed with this plan, Lloyd George opposed it. The Prime Minister believed that Germany should try to pay in thirty years. If such a schedule were impossible, she would continue to make payments until her obligation was fulfilled.

In the early discussions on April 5, House argued for a thirty-year limit on payments. Anxious to reach some sort

of settlement, he soon agreed that if the debt were not paid on schedule, Germany would continue to pay. Finally, he suggested that the clause be drafted so that there was no mention of the thirty-year limit.\textsuperscript{12} During the afternoon meeting Clemenceau read a statement of his position. Both House and Davis thought that it was close enough to the American position to serve as a basis of agreement.\textsuperscript{13}

The Council continued to negotiate the reparations settlement for several days without reaching a solution. Finally the Four requested that Keynes, Loucheur, and T. W. Lamont, an American financial expert, draft a new set of clauses. After further discussion, the Council accepted the proposal that the thirty-year limit could be extended if Germany did not pay all of her debt. Since he had not been authorized to make such an arrangement, House reserved his vote until he could speak with Wilson. While House was conferring with the President, the Council adopted the remainder of the draft articles. When that was done, the United States had no representative at the meeting except Davis, who had no policy-making power.\textsuperscript{14}

When Wilson returned to the meetings on April 10, he presumably was informed of the proceedings during his absence.

\textsuperscript{12}Council of Four, April 5, 1919, PRUS, V, 21-30.

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., pp. 33-34.

\textsuperscript{14}Council of Four, April 7, 1919, ibid., pp. 44-48.
If he disapproved of the Council's actions, he made no complaint. Had he wished to make alterations or re-open negotiations, he surely could have done so, for the United States delegate had never approved the arrangement. However, Wilson made no comment on past events. He wanted, instead, to continue work on the unresolved questions.\textsuperscript{15} Thus, the extremely important arrangement of reparations was greatly changed because Wilson was not concerned enough to insist on revision.

The problem of revitalizing the economic life of Europe was closely tied to the reparations negotiations. The Council had to consider the matter of a German bond issue because the experts were again unable to agree on the basis for the plan.

The French proposed that when the treaty was signed, Germany would hand over bonds for 6,000,000,000 pounds ($36,000,000,000). These bonds would not be distributed, but would be held by the Inter-Allied Commission as collateral. Allied nations would be allowed to raise credit on the bonds even though they could not be sold. This credit system would be used for two years. After that time the bonds would be distributed.

Wilson agreed that a bond issue was necessary and that the Reparations Commission should be empowered to determine the total amount to be issued by the German government. He insisted

\textsuperscript{15}Council of Four, April 10, 1919, \textit{ibid.}, pp. 71-73.
that the experts should reach a unanimous decision within two weeks. Lloyd George and Clemenceau, arguing in favor of a majority decision, replied that a large group would not be able to come to complete agreement in only two weeks. In addition to settling the amount, they had to decide on what proportion of the issue would be in paper marks.

In reply to his colleagues' protests, Wilson delivered a lecture on the necessity for unanimous consent. Most of the borrowing, he said, would have to be done in the United States. If the issue were extravagant, world credit would be upset. Bankers would not lend on depreciated currency. Thus, it would be unwise for the United States to participate at all if the questions were to be decided by majority vote. Since the commission's initial steps would be critical, the United States could not afford to be outvoted. If decisions were made over American opposition, the United States would issue a minority report which would destroy the whole scheme of credit. Therefore, if it were to be successful, the plan had to have American approval.16 The commission finally proposed an acceptable compromise so that voting would be by majority except in cases involving canceling part of the enemy debt or determining the amount and conditions of bonds to be executed by Germany. In such cases, approval would have to be by unanimous consent.17

16Ibid., pp. 73-79.
17Burnett, I, 81-82; Outline for the Constitution of the Commission, undated, ibid., pp. 903-905.
When the commission met to determine the amount of bonds to be issued, Lamont pointed out to the experts that Wilson wanted a conservative issue, for the bonds would then be more stable.18

On April 12, the Reparations Commission reported to the Council that the issue of $10,000,000,000 worth of paper marks and $15,000,000,000 in bonds would not be excessive. This arrangement would establish a balance so that the Germans would not have to issue such an amount of bonds or paper currency that one or both would become worthless. By limiting both issues and insisting that Germany recognize the currency as part of her debt, the Allies would have a guarantee of $25,000,000,000 in reparations.

Only two days earlier Wilson had expressed his determination to examine closely every proposal concerning currency in order to protect American and world economy. When the new proposal was made to the Council, Wilson had no comments about it. There was no indication in the minutes that he had any opinion at all.19 The proposal was later altered by the experts, accepted by the Council, and incorporated in the treaty.20

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18Minutes of the Experts, April 10, 1919, ibid., pp. 898-903.
19Council of Four, April 12, 1919, Mântoux, I, 235-236.
20Burnett, I, 82-83; Part VIII of the Final Treaty with Germany, June 28, 1919, Mântoux, II, 225-226.
From mid-April until early May, the Four discussed the financial arrangements on several occasions. They managed to settle matters of Reparations Commission procedure, forms of payments, and customs without generating much heat. Conversations were merely amiable, for there was less of the stubbornness which had been so apparent in the earlier sessions. After the struggle to divide the loot was resolved, the problems of procedure were simpler to arrange.21 After the reparations settlements were reached, Wilson registered no complaints.

It was not until May 21, two weeks after the treaty had been presented to the Germans, that Wilson expressed his view of the reparations clauses. By that time, his suggestions were too late. He claimed that he and the American experts had stated frequently that the scheme of reparations would yield little. Although he favored a plan for the Allies to receive reparations, he believed that in ten years the world would realize that nothing had been gained from the treaty. This realization would cause a reaction in Germany's favor.22 After making such a sweeping indictment, Wilson proposed no solution. He had satisfied his conscience by making a token protest. No more was required of his principles. The Council did not change the reparations clauses.

21 Council of Four, April 23, 1919, FRUS, VI, 155-201; Council of Four, April 25, 1919, ibid., pp. 229-234.
22 Council of Four, May 21, 1919, ibid., pp. 801-802.
Thus, Wilson's desire that the reparations clauses be fair to Germany was reflected in his original proposals. He had insisted that Germany's capacity to pay be determined and her total liability be included in the treaty. When his method was not accepted, he refused to lend support to Lloyd George's moderate proposal. As a result, the British eventually yielded to the French demands that the sum be set at a later date. Had Wilson been more willing to compromise, the British proposal might have been accepted.

Still determined to keep the total reparations bill at a just level, Wilson refused to allow the inclusion of pensions and separation allowances. His reasoning was sound, for these costs could hardly be justified as damage to civilian property. Yet, when General Smuts asked him to change his mind, Wilson complied. Contrary to the advice of his experts, he decided to include the cost of pensions in the reparations bill.

After having yielded on two points, Wilson still thought that he would be able to limit the actual liability. If Germany were to pay for only thirty years and if the rate of payment were fixed, the total could be kept within reason. Unfortunately, Colonel House, not fully understanding Wilson's position, conceded to the British and agreed that the thirty year period could be extended if Germany failed to make payments on schedule. Wilson did not protest this agreement.

Having capitulated on three major points, the President took a firm stand on a rather minor detail. When his plans
for the Reparations Commission were not readily accepted, Wilson petulantly delivered a lecture on basic economics to the Council and threatened to wreck the commission if his scheme were not accepted. As a result, the experts reached a compromise solution so that Wilson's proposal was utilized.

Thus, during the financial negotiations, Wilson's attitude was ambivalent, for he really did not understand the detailed discussions. As a result, on important points involving German liability, he spoke of justice, but settled for an unjust arrangement. Yet, he was willing to destroy the reparations program in order to win a small point. Finally, after it was too late to make basic changes, Wilson expressed the opinion that the whole plan was unsatisfactory.

Had Wilson been more willing to fight for his original plans and less concerned with settling petty details, the reparations clauses would have had a very different form.23

23This evaluation differs from the traditional view as found in Walworth, II, 308-317. A comparison of views will be found in the concluding chapter.
CHAPTER III

THE ITALIAN CLAIMS

The Council of Four spent more time on the Italian claims than on any other topic, and with poorer results. The problem should not have been taken up in the discussions of the German treaty, for Italy’s territorial claims were against Austria rather than Germany. However, when Orlando insisted that Italian claims be discussed, the Council complied. The resulting stalemate was caused by the unyielding attitudes of Wilson and Orlando. Although Lloyd George tried to find an acceptable settlement, neither the American nor the Italian representative would compromise. While Wilson had his principles to rely on, Orlando had a treaty to support his claims.

When the war began, Italy had declared her neutrality and negotiated for the best reward for her services. Because the Allies feared a disaster if Italy joined the Central Powers, they were willing to pay a high price for her support. On April 26, 1915, with Britain, France, and Russia, Italy signed the Treaty of London, which was the basis for her entry into the war. Among the concessions were the Trentino region to the north, and Dalmatia and the islands in the Adriatic Sea.¹

¹Rene Albrecht-Carris, Italy at the Paris Peace Conference (New York, 1938), pp. 29-32, 334-335.
At the peace conference when Orlando insisted that the terms of the treaty be fulfilled, Lloyd George and Clemenceau were bound to comply. On the other hand, since the United States had not been party to the treaty, Wilson, believing that the terms were unjust, refused to accept the war-time treaty as a basis for the peace settlement. His stand caused difficulties for the other representatives. While Lloyd George and Clemenceau were obliged to fulfill the treaty with Italy, they realized that they must maintain cordial relations with Wilson. These two conditions were almost mutually exclusive.

To further complicate matters, Wilson accepted one of the terms on January 30, 1919, when he agreed that Italy should be given Trentino, including 240,000 German-speaking people. In return, the Italians announced their support to the League of Nations. Wilson refused to accept the remainder of the terms.\(^2\) When the Council of Four began its private meetings, Orlando insisted that the city of Fiume and the surrounding area be given to Italy although it was not promised to her in the Treaty of London. This area had been autonomous under the Austro-Hungarian Empire and had been reserved by the Allies for Croatia. However, the war had brought on the collapse of the Empire. Thus, the plan to give Italy protection against a large nation was no longer necessary, for the Empire had been

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 104.
replaced by new, weak nations, one of whom was Yugoslavia.
This new state was composed of Slavenes, Serbs, and Croats of
the old Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Allies planned to give
Fiume to Yugoslavia, for that nation had absorbed the Croats.
Thus Italy did not need the area promised her; nor did she have
a valid claim to Fiume. Yet, the Italians insisted on the ful-
fillment of the treaty plus the additional concession.

On April 3 Orlando justified the Italian claim to Fiume
on the ground that only Italy would be able to protect all
of the ethnic groups in Fiume. The Yugoslavs, he said, would
not protect the minorities in the city.

Wilson replied that he had sent an envoy to Fiume to
study public opinion. Most of the people wanted to establish
a free city in the former autonomous zone. Fiume would serve
as a port for all of southern Europe, rather than for only
Italy or Yugoslavia. The President did not reveal the name
of his envoy nor the date of the trip, and he had no written
report to confirm his statements.²

Several days later Orlando demanded that the principles
of the Italian settlement be fixed before the treaty was
presented to the Germans. The negotiations would take only a
few days, he believed. Wilson replied that the Council could
not afford to spend time working out the Italian claims when
the Germans would soon arrive. Instead, the Four should use

²Council of Four, April 3, 1919, Paul Mantoux, Les De-
the period between the presentation of the treaty and its acceptance to discuss the Italian claims because the matter did not relate to the German treaty. To mollify Italian public opinion, Wilson offered to announce, when the Germans were summoned to Paris, that the Four were working actively on the Italian problem and would soon arrive at a solution.

When Orlando opposed that arrangement, Wilson agreed to announce that the Council had arrived at a settlement of German questions but had decided to delay calling the Germans in order that the Italian claims could be discussed. Although Lloyd George objected to postponing the meeting with the Germans, Orlando accepted the plan. Thus, peace with Germany was delayed for a discussion of unrelated claims because Wilson did not insist that the Italian question should be postponed. He probably assumed that Orlando was correct in estimating that the negotiations would last only a few days, for he did not expect to encounter stubbornness equal to his own.

At the end of the meeting, Wilson proposed that he and Orlando spend the next day discussing the Italian problem since the other delegates were willing to accept whatever solution the Italian and American could agree on. The negotiations were stormy. Wilson handed Orlando a list of his own conclusions, along with a request that it be presented to the Council of Four, April 13, 1919, *ibid.*, pp. 237-245.
Italian Parliament. Orlando examined the proposals and declared that they did not provide a basis for discussion.5

On April 19 Orlando re-stated his case for Fiume, Dalmatia, and the Adriatic Islands. Replying that the Italian plan was militaristic and detrimental to world peace, Wilson delivered a sermon to the Council on the new order which was being created from the old. Since the Great Powers would not be masters of Europe, it would not be in Italy's best interest to own Fiume and Dalmatia. He was privileged to help Europe create a new order. If he succeeded, he would bring all the resources of his people to assist in the task. Fiume had only a small island of Italian population. If it were incorporated into Italy, an undesirable precedent would be set so that a small community in one country could be put into another country. A free city would be the best solution. He might have to state his objections to the world, because he would not draw the United States into agreements contrary to those principles which had brought them into the war. Wilson asked the Italians to reflect calmly and not leave the conference as they had intimated.6 However, he made no proposals of his own.

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On the following day, Orlando predicted that if Italy did not get Fiume, there would be an anti-American reaction, and he would break the alliance by leaving the conference. Shocked by the threat, Wilson retorted that the United States had entered the war to defend a set of principles which had been hailed by the whole world. The peace conference must now express the views of the entire world rather than the desires of one small group. Italy was trying to make nations not bound by the Treaty of London adhere to it. Since Italy was no longer threatened by Austria-Hungary, her claims were pointless. The Italian should not take the attitude that they would refuse to enter the new order because they would not renew the old one. Above all, they must not turn their backs on the Allies. To reach a compromise, he asked that Italy consider handing Fiume over to the Yugoslavs and let the Council decide on the terms of the Treaty of London. Perhaps the island of Lissa could be given to Italy, but the other islands could not. He added that Orlando and his Foreign Minister, Baron Sidney Sonnino, were in a tragic position, and he admired their steadfastness.

To find a solution, Lloyd George suggested that the signatories of the Treaty of London meet to consider the proposals.\(^7\) At that meeting on April 21, both the British and

\(^7\)Council of Four; April 20, 1919, *ibid.*, pp. 95-101.
French delegates tried to persuade the Italians to concede. Lloyd George pointed out that Europe needed American credit to revitalize its economy. Wilson had been more liberal than they had expected in the financial arrangements, and a concession now by Italy would help to continue the harmony. He recommended a compromise so that Italy would receive some of the Adriatic islands, but not Fiume. Orlando refused to discuss it. Finally, both Clemenceau and Lloyd George concluded that if Italy insisted on the Treaty of London, they would be bound by their word.8

That afternoon Clemenceau and Lloyd George met with Wilson to report on the discussion. The President was opposed to the British compromise, for if Italy controlled the Adriatic islands, especially those near Fiume, she would constantly cause trouble. Nor did he like Clemenceau's idea that Italy could be pacified with a mandate in Anatolia. He thought that such a solution amounted to paying Italy for something she had no right to. The best plan would be for Orlando to go before Parliament and ask for instructions. Although he advised Orlando to consult Parliament, Wilson never considered resolving any problem by consulting the American Congress.

8Council of Four, April 21, 1919, Mantoux, I, 300-306.
Lloyd George realized that returning to Italy empty-handed and seeking instructions would be a surrender for Orlando. In the hope that the Italians were in a more receptive mood, he sent Hankey to ask if they would negotiate on the basis of that morning's proposal. Again they refused.

Toward the end of the meeting, Wilson mentioned his intention of publishing a prepared statement on the Italian question. Both Clemenceau and Lloyd George objected on the ground that such a statement assumed that Italy had closed the door on an agreement. Then it would be even more difficult for her to recede from her position. Wilson agreed to withhold the memorandum from the press.9

On the following day Lloyd George reported the results of another private conversation with Orlando. The Italian planned to write a letter saying that unless his claims were granted, Italy would not be present when the Germans came to Paris. Lloyd George told him that if Italy were not present, she would not be able to make her reparation claim. He added that Britain and France would stand by the Treaty of London, but, if that meant that the peace treaty would be signed without the United States, the results would be disastrous. He mentioned that Wilson wanted to put his case to the world, and once that was done, the American could not change his stand. Should Italy consider making Fiume a free

city, Wilson might be willing to give Italy some of the Adriatic Islands. Orlando changed the subject and began talking about Zara and Sebenico, two cities on the Dalmatian coast.

Hearing this report, Wilson retorted that Italy would never get those cities. When Lloyd George proposed that they be made free cities for three years, and then a plebiscite would determine their future, Wilson replied that such a plan would only cause unrest. The Slavs would try to crowd the cities and prejudice the plebiscite.

Wilson's real desire was to publish his statement to the Italian people. He admitted that there would be an adverse reaction at first, but then people would realize that the best course was to go along with the treaty. They would want to maintain their friendship with the United States.

Again Lloyd George stalled the President by suggesting that Orlando be asked to discuss the plan to make Zara and Sebenico free cities under the League of Nations, with no definite provision for a plebiscite, as Wilson had wished. Fiume and the surrounding territory would be a free city, and the strategically important islands would be ceded to Italy.10

On the following day the Italians sent their own proposal to the Council. Fiume and the islands, except Pago, were to go to Italy. Zara and Sebenico would be put under the League Council of Four, April 22, 1919, ibid., pp. 135-137.
of Nations with Italy as mandatory power. The Council agreed that these proposals could not serve as the basis for negotiations.

On April 23 Wilson announced that he had forwarded an appeal to the people of Italy to Orlando. He realized that the situation was difficult, for the Allies might divide over the issue. There was also the possibility that the Slavs would be alienated and turn to Bolshevism. Nonetheless, he had to tell the world of his views. He was willing to risk chaos in Europe in order to inform the world of his position on the Italian question, a high price to pay for principle. To indicate that the Three were in Harmony, Lloyd George and Clemenceau decided to send a joint memorandum to the Italian delegates.\textsuperscript{11}

The next morning Lloyd George reported that the Italian was planning to reply to Wilson's memorandum, intending that the two could be published together. He promised that his reply would be moderate and would leave the door open for further negotiation, for he would not commit the Italians on the Fiume claim. He had planned to return to Rome, but would stay if the others requested him to do so. The Council agreed to invite Orlando to the afternoon meeting.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{11}Council of Four, April 23, 1919, \textit{ibid.}, pp. 149-151.

\textsuperscript{12}Council of Four, April 24, 1919, \textit{ibid.}, pp. 202-203.
On that day Wilson's manifesto was published. The appeal was not a strongly worded document, for the President simply asked the Italian people to subscribe to the new order, especially the plans outlined in the Fourteen Points. He urged the Italians to accept the solutions he had proposed for Dalmatia and Fiume. Finally, he restated the American intention to adhere to the principles of which he spoke.

When Orlando arrived at the meeting, he informed his colleagues that the situation was serious. Publication of Wilson's appeal had put the Prime Minister's authority in doubt. Hence he had to consult Parliament. His return to Rome had nothing to do with the territorial questions, and there was no rupture of negotiations.

Wilson assured Orlando that he had not intended to go behind his back. His only intention had been to clear up a false impression in the press concerning his attitude. However, Wilson had blundered badly, for his appeal had indicated that there was a division among the Council. Although the President's plan had been to dispel the belief that he stood alone against Orlando, Clemenceau, and Lloyd George, he had questioned the authority of the Italian Prime Minister over his constituents.13 Believing that he spoke for the whole world, Wilson simply bypassed Orlando whose greed he regarded as an obstruction to peace.

13 Albrecht-Carris, pp. 141-144, 498-500.
The Italian again pleaded that a compromise be made immediately so that he could present it to Parliament for approval. Wilson insisted on the reverse, that Orlando get approval from Parliament to reach a compromise.\(^\text{14}\) As he left the meeting, the Italian was given a copy of the letter from Clemenceau and Lloyd George. That night Orlando left for Rome. Two days later the remainder of the Italian delegation also departed.\(^\text{15}\)

A point of disagreement among the Three arose over the note from Lloyd George and Clemenceau, for it had not been published. Wilson had understood that it would be sent to the press soon after it was published. Now the Council gave the impression that the United States stood alone against her Allies. The Italian press was harsh in its condemnation of Wilson's action, and most European papers too thought the action was unwise.\(^\text{16}\)

Lloyd George feared that publishing the note would give Italy an excuse not to return to the conference. Orlando could say that Wilson drove him away and Clemenceau and Lloyd George kept him from coming back. Wilson countered that the world should be reassured that the Allies would make a just settlement for Fiume. American public opinion, he claimed,

\(^\text{14}\) Council of Four, April 24, 1919, \textit{FRUS}, V, 220-228.

\(^\text{15}\) Hankey, pp. 130-131.

\(^\text{16}\) Albrecht-Carrie, pp. 147-149.
was intensely interested, and that was more important than Italian opinion. When the Council showed that the Italians were in an impossible position, they would co-operate. Otherwise, they would go on scheming about Fiume, and the Allies would have to continue working under the difficulty of not knowing whether Italy was in the conference or not. When the Franco-British note was published, the Italians would accept the realities of their position and return to the conference. The Italians had been party to the armistice, the preliminary peace, and discussions of the peace. Now they had withdrawn from negotiating the German treaty on a matter that had nothing to do with those discussions. During the afternoon meeting on May 2, the Council decided to alter the treaty to exclude Italy by making minor alterations of phrasing.17

Lloyd George acknowledged on the following day that Britain was in danger of quarreling with either the United States or Italy. A split with the former was more serious, for he feared that Germany would not sign the treaty if Britain and the United States quarreled. For that reason he feared the return of the Italians, for while they were away, the Three were able to work in harmony.

Again Wilson urged Lloyd George and Clemenceau to publish their note to Orlando to assure the world that the United

States, Britain, and France stood together. Lloyd George stated frankly that the Italian matter had to be handled carefully, because there was a feeling in Britain that the United States was bullying Europe.

Wilson spoke again about his dedication to the principles which had inspired the peace. He was not a bully, for the Italians were trying to coerce other parties to be bound by the Treaty of London when they were bound by conscience. The President was only defending his scruples against the onslaught of Italian greed. After the discussion, Wilson stopped pressuring his colleagues to publish their note. At last he accepted their belief that his diplomatic faux pas would not be corrected by forcing Lloyd George and Clemenceau to do likewise.

In another effort to bring about reconciliation among the Allies, Lloyd George spoke with the Marquis Imperiali, an Italian representative in Paris who had been in communication with Orlando. The British Prime Minister impressed on the Marquis that Italy would not get Fiume and that peace would not be delayed by the Italian demands.

On May 6 the Council received a message from the marquis that the Italian delegation was returning but would not arrive

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18Council of Four, May 3, 1919, ibid., pp. 426-430.
19Ibid., pp. 452-459.
before noon on the seventh. Since they wanted to establish contact with the Allies before the presentation of the treaty, they asked for a twenty-four hour postponement of the meeting with the Germans. Wilson replied, and his colleagues agreed, that they could not change the meeting date. The Italians were responsible for the delay in their return. The treaty would be presented as planned. When the Council met on the morning of May 7, Orlando was present. He had realized that Italian chances were better in the conference than out of it.

After the presentation of the treaty, the Council returned to the Italian claims. Negotiations were unpleasant, for the Americans and Italians were still adamant but some progress was made. Often Orlando was not present at the meetings. Lloyd George was desperately seeking a compromise, but neither side was very co-operative.

On May 15, while Orlando was absent, Wilson proposed a plebiscite in any area the Italians claimed. Any part declaring for Italy would come under her sovereignty. The Adriatic island of Cherso would be Yugoslav so that Italy could not use it as a base for strangling the port of Fiume. The islands to the south which were ethnologically Italian would go to her. A plebiscite would be held in Fiume on the

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20Council of Four, May 6, 1919, ibid., pp. 484-485.
21Council of Four, May 7, 1919, ibid., p. 496.
understanding that if the citizens decided to become Italian, Italy would first have to build an efficient port for Yugoslavia at Buccari, to the south of Fiume. Also, if Italy were able to get Fiume by plebiscite, the Treaty of London would no longer bind Britain and France. Italy would have to renounce her claims to Dalmatia.  

The British Prime Minister met with Orlando again on May 18 and reported the results to the Council on the following day. The Italian had insisted that his government be given a mandate in Anatolia, which Lloyd George refused. Then Orlando admitted that he cared nothing for the claims in Asia Minor if he could have Fiume. Wilson commented that he would like to warn the Italians that it was not in their interest to destroy their friendship with the United States. The Americans agreed that Italy could have any disputed territory that voted in her favor. If Orlando declined this offer, he was not negotiating in good faith. Wilson could not understand that Orlando had to have a victory at Paris for the benefit of Italian morale and so that he could remain in office.

By May 26 there was still no solution. Orlando traced the history of their discussions, emphasizing that he had to insist

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22Council of Four, May 13, 1919, ibid., pp. 579-582.
on the Treaty of London if no other arrangement could be made. He agreed that the treaty was undesirable, but it was all that he had. In reply Wilson preached a long sermon, reminding the Council that the Treaty of London had been created in circumstances that no longer existed. There had been a partnership of a few nations opposed to another small group of nations. Since Britain and France wanted Italy to join them, the treaty had been drawn up. Slowly the world came to realize that something was cutting at the roots of individual liberty and action. There was a common impulse to unite against the Central Empires. Many peoples came into the war uninterested in territorial gains, wanting only to free the world from a terrible threat. When the armistice was reached, his principles were the basis. They served as the cornerstone of the peace. Now they were spreading to the whole world. Next came the League of Nations as a practical institution, no longer a dream. In the conference these principles were being applied. They had nothing to do with the old order of European politics when the strong powers dictated to the weak ones. Britain and France could not hand over to Italy peoples who were weak. Thus, if Italy insisted on the Treaty of London, she would strike at the heart of the new system. The United States could not accept a treaty which embodied these claims. However, he would agree on a plebiscite in any of the disputed areas. In short, Wilson believed that
Orlando was guided by greed while he was guided by principles which were noble and just. The negotiations were another contest between good and evil.

Orlando disagreed with Wilson's hypothesis that the Treaty of London was unjust. If it were not accepted, another solution would have to be found. He would not accept a plebiscite because that would prolong the uncertainty for Italy. Also, parts of the area would not vote for Italy since the majority was Slav. Orlando regretted the difficulty the treaty caused the United States, but it was all that he had. Furthermore, Wilson had agreed to assign over 1,700,000 Germans to Poland. Not half that many aliens would come into Italy if all the claims were met. The President allowed that accusation to pass without a denial or explanation. 24

Several days later Lloyd George met with Orlando and House to discuss a new proposal drawn up by French expert Andre Tardieu. In that plan, Fiume would be an independent state, under the League of Nations, governed by a five-member commission (two Italians, one citizen of Fiume, one Yugoslav, and one representative of the League). There would be a free port, no military service, and no taxes except local levies. After fifteen years a plebiscite would decide sovereignty. Furthermore, all of Dalmatia would go to Yugoslavia except

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24 Council of Four, May 26, 1919, FRUS, VI, 47-53.
for Zara and Sebenico. Those cities would be neutralized. The islands mentioned in the Treaty of London would go to Italy, except for Pago and Veglia.

Lloyd George reported that Wilson had two main comments. He wanted the Fiume representative on the commission to be elected from the whole state, rather than from the city, to insure the election of a Slav. Since Yugoslavia would never agree to give all but two islands to Italy, the President thought that Italy should keep only a few islands which were important to her defense.

The British delegate thought that Wilson was anxious to reach a settlement, and, if it were reasonable, he would recommend it to the Yugoslavs. He emphasized that Zara and Sebenico were to be free cities under the League and would not be given to Italy. Finally, Lloyd George urged Orlando to insist on as few islands as possible so that Wilson would be satisfied.25

That afternoon in a conciliatory speech Wilson recognized that Italy had renounced much of her claim. He urged Orlando to relinquish most of the islands as well. The Italian was willing to accept Tardieu's proposal and Wilson's requests concerning the composition of the Commission and the relinquishing of three large islands in the North Adriatic.

He would not say that further renunciations were impossible, but it would be extremely difficult for him to give up all of the islands, as Wilson had asked. The President believed that they now had the basis for a friendly settlement.  

Although agreement had seemed near, by June 6 negotiations were stalemated again. Orlando notified the Council that Italy wanted to advise on the boundaries of Fiume, which, Wilson said, were already settled. Then the President recommended that Sebenico be given to Yugoslavia and Zara become a free city as planned. Lloyd George argued on behalf of Italy because, if no settlement were reached when Orlando returned home the following week, he probably would not remain in office. Wilson, unable to resist forcing Orlando to surrender once more, insisted on his last-minute revisions.

On the following day, Wilson presented Orlando with another set of proposals along the lines of Tardieu's plan, but more detailed. Most of the islands would go to Yugoslavia, and they could not be fortified. Zara was to be a free city under the League, but Italy would handle her foreign affairs. A plebiscite would determine the sovereignty of Fiume in five years instead of fifteen years as they had planned. Nothing was said about Sebenico. Thus, in exchange for an advisory position in Zara, Wilson wanted to shorten the time when Fiume

\[26\text{Ibid., pp. 90-92.}\]

\[27\text{Council of Four, June 6, 1919, ibid., pp. 210-215.}\]
would decide its sovereignty. Since he had agreed on a fifteen-year time period in other plebiscites, his insistence on five years in this case must be interpreted as harassment, for Italy had only accepted the idea of the vote under pressure.

After making these proposals, Wilson reminded Orlando that he had scruples about a half-way settlement and opposed transferring people to a new sovereignty without their consent. Finding the United States in opposition to Britain and France, he had made these recommendations to avoid an impasse. He could go no further. Orlando promised to study the proposals carefully, for it would be difficult for Italy to sacrifice more.28

On June 12 Orlando reported that two of his ministers had resigned. Fearing that there would be trouble from the Socialists, he would have to return to Rome soon.29 On June 21 Clemenceau reported to the Three that a new government was being formed in Italy.30 Although Prime Minister Orlando had left office, Sennino, the Foreign Minister continued to represent Italy in the Council.

The Italians further jeopardized their position by occupying Fiume and administering it in the name of the King

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28Council of Four, June 7, 1919, ibid., pp. 244-245, 249-251.
29Council of Four, June 12, 1919, ibid., p. 355.
of Italy. The area was in a state of war. Wilson commented that the Italian troops were in Fiume on the pretext that the armistice allowed them to advance to restore order. Although he opposed the Italian intervention, he suggested no means for removing the troops.31

Finally, the Council discussed the attitude to take regarding the new Italian delegation. By that time Wilson wanted to insist on the evacuation of Fiume although he had no specific plans for accomplishing that feat. The best approach, he believed, was for their representatives to inform the Italians of the Council's position.32 Apparently Fiume's free-city status was not so important as Wilson had maintained, for he was not prepared to enforce an evacuation order.

Later that day the Three approved and signed a statement to be sent to the new Italian delegates outlining the causes of friction and urging co-operation. Only Lloyd George and Clemenceau signed it, for Wilson wanted to send a letter of his own.33 That meeting was held at Versailles after the treaty with Germany was signed. Then Wilson, Lloyd George, and Clemenceau parted forever without having settled the Italian claims.

31 Council of Four, June 26, 1919, ibid., p. 714.
32 Council of Four, June 28, 1919, ibid., pp. 738-739.
33 Ibid., pp. 759-762.
Wilson's conduct while negotiating the Italian claims was an example of diplomacy at its worst. Believing himself impartial, he set about to resolve the problems. Agreeing to discuss the Italian problems while the German treaty was under consideration was his first major mistake. Although he stated that those claims were against Austria rather than Germany, he was readily convinced to open negotiations when Italy requested it. As a result the Council wasted much time arguing over a matter which should have been postponed.

Another error was Wilson's disdain for the Treaty of London, for he acted as though the settlement was immoral and unjust, although it was not any worse than other treaties of its type. Had he been more willing to use the treaty as a basis of negotiation and less concerned with reminding the other parties of its failings, the Italians would have more readily agreed to alterations.

Whenever one of the representatives proposed a solution or when Wilson made a suggestion, it was always followed by a sermon. Regardless of the topic under discussion, the President managed to interject a reminder of his high principles and the new order he was creating for the world. Anyone who disagreed with him was obstructing the cause of right and justice. His colleagues were generally pictured as grasping and backward looking. When the lecture was completed, Wilson rarely had any solid proposals. His speeches were not followed by action.
Having annoyed his colleagues with his endless sermons, the President proceeded to his worst blunder—issuing an appeal to the Italian people over the head of their Prime Minister. Although negotiations had not gone well up to that point, after Wilson's manifesto was published, there was little chance of a harmonious settlement. Orlando's authority had been questioned among his own people and he had no choice but to leave Paris and return home. The subsequent fall of his Cabinet cannot be written off as coincidence.

When Wilson realized that his letter to the Italian people had not been well received, he wanted to compound the difficulty by having Lloyd George and Clemenceau publish a similar document. Although the French and British representatives had carefully informed Orlando of their stand, Wilson was dissatisfied. He believed that the only way to correct his error was to have his colleagues commit a similar one.

After Orlando left, the other delegates did not urge him to return. Clemenceau and Lloyd George realised that they had to maintain friendly relations with Wilson while they were bound by treaty to support the Italian claims. They were more at ease with Orlando gone. Wilson was pleased that the Italians had departed, for he considered them obstructionists.

Having no other choice, the Italians returned to the Conference to make their claim against Germany and to find a solution to their claim. They still were unwilling to capitulate,
but were more reasonable than before. Wilson also seemed more willing to compromise than he had been earlier. The Italians agreed to accept Tardieu's proposal with Wilson's additions. Then they asked to advise on the boundaries of Fiume in order to make the agreement more palatable. Again Wilson erred. Instead of arranging for the Italians to express their opinions, he announced that the matter was already settled. Next he added other conditions to the proposals until the Italians could not accept the plan. Lloyd George, who had been most careful to appease the American, protested Wilson's sudden decision to insist that the Italians make a further surrender. Orlando, unable to return home with a favorable settlement, fell from office. Thus, a compromise settlement, fair to all sides, would have been accepted had Wilson not decided to alter the proposals.

The Italian claim to the territory in the Treaty of London plus Fiume was by no means a just demand. However, if Wilson had negotiated on the basis of these claims rather than bullying and lecturing, an honorable solution could have been found. One of the most difficult parts of an analysis of Wilson's role in the Council of Four is to determine the cause of the hostility between the President and Orlando. Lloyd George claimed that Wilson disliked the Italians, not because of any personal characteristics, but because he thought that the Italian went to war to appropriate territory to which
they had no valid claim. The Italians were only interested in sharing the spoils and cared nothing about the other terms of the peace. Because of his concern for principle rather than practicality, Wilson could not tolerate anyone who looked on war as an opportunity for enrichment.34 Lloyd George's analysis of Wilson's attitude is probably correct. His view explains Wilson's determination that a moral settlement be reached and his insistence that the Treaty of London was unjust. Believing that the Italian delegates were greedily unmindful of the world's need for justice, Wilson felt compelled to lecture, reprimand, and bully the Italians to accept his own brand of honor and justice.35

34Lloyd George, II, 541.

35These conclusions differ from the traditional view of the Italian negotiations as found in Walworth, II, 308-313, 317. See concluding chapter.
CHAPTER IV

THE CHINESE QUESTION

During the Italian negotiations Wilson made no attempt to treat the Italians well or respect their claims against an enemy state. However, in the discussions with Japan concerning her claims in China, an Allied nation, the President made many concessions. The President's attitude seems inexplicable until it is understood that he was greatly concerned that Japan would not support the League of Nations. In order to persuade the Japanese to join, he was willing to compromise his principles. On the other hand, since Italy was committed to the League, there was no need to cajole her.¹

As in the Italian negotiations, the problems of Japan and China were complicated by a series of agreements which involved all members of the Council except Wilson. Germany had forced concessions and a ninety-nine year lease from China in 1898 so that the Shantung Province was almost under German sovereignty. China was too weak to resist the aggressor. In August, 1914, when the war began, Japan demanded that Germany deliver her leased area in Shantung to the Japanese government. Their intent was to return it to China. When Germany refused

to comply, Japanese troops took possession of the leased area. A few months later the Japanese said that restoration would come sometime in the future, denying that such had been promised previously. Thus, Japan had taken the German holdings in Shantung by force and intended to keep what she had.

In January, 1915, the new leaseholders presented China with the Twenty-One Demands in which China agreed to transfer her rights from Germany to Japan, to legalize the occupation by treaty. China still did not have the strength to ward off encroachments. Next, China severed her relations with Germany and declared war. In so doing, she renounced all treaties, conventions, and agreements which the Germans had forced on her, intending to reserve sovereignty over the leased areas.

Finally, on September 24, 1918, Japan forced China to accept another agreement concerning the right of occupation and a concession on the railroads. A complication for the Allies arose because in 1917, before China entered the war, Britain, France, and Italy agreed to support Japan at the peace conference. When the meetings began, the conference was faced with the need to settle differences between two Allies. Although Japan was willing to give up the sovereignty of Shantung, for such control had little worth, she insisted on retaining economic rights.²

²Robert Lansing, The Peace Negotiations, a Personal Narrative (Boston, 1921), pp. 243-255.
Since one of the Five Principle Powers was directly involved and three others indirectly, the Council itself had to resolve the issues. When the problem was first discussed, Wilson noted that China's interest in removing the foreign concessions in Shantung was not only economic, but was connected with her history and religion. His sympathy, he insisted, was with China. However, he was pleased to learn that the Japanese were not asking for additional concessions and had agreed to surrender some territory. 3

When the Chinese question arose again a few days later, Lloyd George pointed out that the Four did not need to settle it for inclusion in the German treaty. Shantung would be handled the same as the other German concessions. The powers would take them from Germany and decide what to do with them after the treaty was signed. Although Wilson agreed with the Prime Minister, he believed that it would be useful to have a serious talk with the Japanese. 4 At that same time there was danger that Italy would leave the conference. Wilson did not want to lose Japan also for the treaty would soon be presented to the Germans. If two of the five powers were absent, the Germans would be able to exploit the dissonance among the Allies. 5 Thus began a series of negotiations which need not

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3 Council of Four, April 15, 1919, Mantoux, I, 249.
4 Council of Four, April 18, 1919, ibid., pp. 273-274.
have occurred, and with results that were inconsistent with Wilson's principles and the Council's earlier decisions.

To set the stage for a harmonious arrangement, Wilson suggested that the Four renounce their spheres of influence in China. Since the maintenance of those zones was not of great importance, the Allies would lose little, but would help to establish peace in the Far East by restoring China's integrity. Wilson did not mention that Americans had very few economic interests in China while the other Allies had vast spheres of influence. Thus, the President's attitude was actually hypocritical.

On April 21 Wilson discussed the Shantung question with the Japanese representatives. He suggested that all claims in the Pacific should be ceded to the Allies as trustees. Although he had already promised that Japan could have a mandate in the north Pacific, he wanted a definite treaty concerning Shantung. The Japanese objected to Wilson's scheme. They agreed to return Shantung to China if they could keep a residential section, a free port, and some of the railroad concessions. In addition, they insisted that Germany turn her interests in Shantung over to the Japanese, and that the Powers trust Japan to fulfill her bargain with China.

When Lloyd George heard Wilson's report, he suggested that the League of Nations handle the ceding as planned for
the remainder of the German possessions. He opposed allowing the special position to Japan, for she had gotten these concessions through the Allied triumph in the West. She was not entitled to special favors. The President replied that the Japanese were too proud to turn their claims over to the League. Also, the Four could not challenge the good faith of Japan, for it was in her interest to be friendly with the Chinese since there was much wealth in China. Hence, Wilson proposed granting special privileges to the Japanese over the protests of his colleagues.⁶

The Japanese delegate met with the Council on April 22 to discuss the history of the Chinese question and emphasize Japan's readiness to return Shantung to China. In the discussion Lloyd George said that he would stand by Britain's agreement to support the Japanese claims. However, he did not want to put these allocations in the treaty because that was not the procedure used for other German territories.⁷

When the Council conferred with the Chinese delegation, Wilson told them that Britain and France had promised to support Japan's claims. He had urged the Japanese to settle the problem of Shantung by putting it in the hands of the Allies, but they would not agree. He did not mention that


⁷Council of Four, April 22, 1919, ibid., pp. 123-132.
he had justified as "pride" the Japanese unwillingness to cede her claims to the League.

Furthermore, he proposed that all nations renounce the special rights that they had acquired in China without mentioning that the United States had little to renounce. The Japanese had agreed to withdraw civil administrations and to keep troops only at the terminals of the railroad. The maintenance of Japanese troops in China had worried Wilson during earlier negotiations, but now he was willing to compromise and allow them to be kept in restricted areas.8

On April 28 the President declared repeatedly that Japan was to have only economic rights in China; they would not be allowed to have military forces in Shantung. The United States opposed Japanese oppression, and he would not abandon China. Since the Japanese delegates were not at the meeting, Wilson was free to express his true beliefs concerning Shantung. Only one week before, he had explained to the Chinese that Japan would keep troops at the railroad.9

When the Japanese delegates returned to the Council on April 29, Wilson opposed Japanese policing of the railroad. In search of a solution, Lloyd George recommended that the directors of the railroad control the policing as was done

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8 Council of Four, April 21, 1919, ibid., pp. 109-111; Council of Four, April 22, 1919, ibid., pp. 138-148.

9 Council of Four, April 28, 1919, ibid., pp. 316-318.
in Britain. Wilson could not agree to the arrangement because American public opinion did not approve the transfer of the concession. Although he was trying to see all views and find a way out, he could not possibly justify such an arrangement to his people. Although the matter of Japanese police in China was a minor matter, it had unfortunate implications both in China and the United States. Even to allow Chinese police under the direction of Japanese instructors would extend the German rights. Finally Wilson and British Foreign Secretary A. J. Balfour made substantially the same proposals—that Japan surrender to China all rights of sovereignty, keeping only the economic concession on the railroad, and establishing a settlement in the area of Singtau. The directors of the railroad would use the special police force only to insure security. Thus, during the meeting Wilson capitulated on the question of policing the railroads in order to appease the Japanese. The Italians had left the conference, and he feared that the Japanese would do likewise unless their claims were granted. 10

When the Council met on the following day, the Japanese declared that they would accept the proposals for inclusion in the treaty. If China refused to co-operate, the Japanese would have to fall back on their rights in the agreement of 1918. Having granted most of the Japanese requests, Wilson

10 Council of Four, April 29, 1919, ibid., pp. 327-335.
then insisted that he could not recognize the validity of any of the previous agreements with the Chinese. The proper way to resolve differences would be in the League of Nations. However, he did not foresee that the Chinese would break the agreement. Indeed, since China had been too weak to fend off aggressors before the war, there was no reason to believe that her strength had increased. Japan could have her way in Shantung.

The Chinese representatives were dissatisfied with the settlement but were unable to do much about it. In the following weeks, they asked Council for the text of the clauses concerning China and for copies of the minutes. When approving these minor requests, Wilson wished that the Four could do something for China since she was not coming out well in the treaty. His lofty principles had collided with the need to cajole Japan into the League of Nations, and the principles were sacrificed. However, he made no proposal to improve China's lot. Again, a token protest soothed his conscience.

As the conference drew to a close, the Four learned that China would sign the treaty under protest, hoping to satisfy public opinion and stir up interest among the Allies in revising

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12 Council of Four, May 3, 1919, ibid., pp. 460-461; Council of Four, May 14, 1919, ibid., p. 607; Council of Four, May 28, 1919, FRUS, VI, 89-90.
the clauses relating to Shantung. They had no other way to bring their dissatisfaction to the attention of the world, for the Council favored the Japanese position. Despite the President's intention to side with China in the dispute, he was, in fact, pro-Japanese. First, he insisted that the concessions in Shantung should be turned over to the Allies to be allocated after the treaty went into effect. When the Japanese refused to comply, Wilson said it was because of their pride. He did not insist that the Shantung arrangement be omitted from the treaty although no other acquisitions were included.

He stated repeatedly that Japan should not have the right to keep troops in China or even police the railroad. Eventually he was persuaded that Chinese police supervised by Japanese instructors would be safe enough. In addition, there would be troops at the railroad terminals.

Wilson spoke regularly of maintaining Chinese integrity and opposing Japanese oppression. When he met with the Chinese delegates, he intimated that Britain and France were forcing him to agree to Japan's claims because of their own commitments. He gave the impression that he alone was defending China's welfare. However, Wilson was willing to give Japan special economic privileges in China, an Ally. He sacrificed his

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13 Council of Four, June 25, 1919, ibid., pp. 674-675; Council of Four, June 26, 1919, ibid., p. 710.
principles readily so that Japan would be induced to join the League of Nations. Wilson was convinced that Japan would reject the League if any of the claims in China were refused. He also believed that peace in the East depended on Japanese membership in the League, although his fears were probably exaggerated. In addition, the Shantung question came before the Council at the critical moment when Italy's position was in doubt. Faced with the possibility that two of the Allies would not sign the treaty, Wilson was determined to keep Japan in the Alliance. Hence, he was willing to sacrifice China to gain Japanese support.14

14The standard view of Wilson's role in the Japanese negotiations differs from those expressed in this paper. See Walworth, II, 313-315. A comparison of views may be found in the conclusions.
CHAPTER V

THE SAAR AND THE RHINELAND

The controversial arrangements concerning the Saar and the Rhineland were handled by the Council because one of the Four, France, was directly involved. The French were interested in the Saar Basin because of its economic worth. Since their coal mines had been destroyed by the Germans during the war, the French believed that they were entitled to repayment in kind. The German mines in the Saar seemed to be a logical choice. However, Clemenceau voiced dissatisfaction over receiving only coal from the area. To the Council he proposed that France annex the Basin since it had been French until 1815.

While Lloyd George and Wilson agreed that France was entitled to exploit the mines for a time, they objected to the proposed annexation, believing that the integrity of the region should be maintained. Since the Saar had not been French for 100 years, Clemenceau had no real basis for annexing it. Wilson urged the French Premier to accept a reasonable arrangement. Clemenceau was willing to compromise, for he had only made the claim as a basis for negotiation.¹

The American President proposed that France have the use of the mines in the Saar, a customs union, and the right to develop communications in the area. Germany would retain sovereignty. Since no new government would be imposed on the citizens of the Basin, Wilson believed that his proposal was advantageous. Clemenceau argued that a dual system such as Wilson proposed would cause continual friction with Germany. The Germans, dissatisfied with the loss of the mines could obstruct any French activities by claiming that such violated German rights of sovereignty.\(^2\)

After consulting with his advisors, Lloyd George decided that the French objections were well-founded. If the economy were controlled by France while the administration remained in German hands, an impasse would result. As a compromise, he suggested that the Saar be given local autonomy under League of Nations' control. France would be assured free use of the mines, for she would select the governor and have a customs union with the Saar.

Colonel House, who was substituting for Wilson during the President's illness, liked the new proposals. Since he had no authority to reach a settlement, he could only recommend the plan to Wilson.\(^3\)

\(^2\)Council of Four, March 31, 1919, \textit{ibid.}, pp. 89-91.

\(^3\)Council of Four, April 8, 1919, \textit{ibid.}, pp. 181-183.
During the afternoon of April 8 when Wilson returned to the meetings, he continued to oppose any transfer of sovereignty. As an alternate proposal, he suggested allowing Germany to retain sovereignty, with a permanent arbitration commission interpreting the treaty and making the necessary settlements. The commission would have five members: one each from Germany and France, and three designated by the League of Nations. After fifteen years a plebiscite would decide the future of the region. If the citizens elected to remain with Germany, that country could buy back the mines. That solution would avoid the political difficulty of immediate transfer of sovereignty.

Wilson's colleagues raised several objections. Lloyd George insisted that Germany would have just enough power to intervene and obstruct French activities. Clemenceau believed that such a complicated system would provide very little security for exploitation of the mines. There would be endless disputes. However, he agreed to study the plan with more care. Annoyed, Wilson instructed him not to delay the peace of the world over the question of the Saar. Clemenceau retorted that world peace depended on the establishment of just arrangements.4

By the following afternoon Wilson, rather than Clemenceau, changed his mind. In a speech to the Council he reiterated

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4Council of Four, April 8, 1919, ibid., pp. 193-194.
his belief that German renunciation of sovereignty was unjust. He wanted to find a solution based on his principles. However, he would not stand on the letter of principle to obstruct a reasonable solution. For this reason, he proposed that Germany give up the Saar to the League of Nations for fifteen years. The citizens would keep their laws and institutions. A commission would have the power to make changes necessitated by the special economic settlements of the treaty and to oversee the administration. At the end of fifteen years, a plebiscite would determine sovereignty.

In essence, Wilson had adopted Lloyd George's proposal except that the League of Nations' commission rather than a French governor would have executive powers. The British Prime Minister accepted the alterations immediately. Clemenceau finally agreed that Wilson's proposal would be a basis for agreement.5

Acceptance of Wilson's general proposal did not end the discussions concerning the Saar. The Council continued negotiations over the precise terms. Since one of the Four was an interested party, the matter was not turned over to a commission immediately after the basic agreement was reached. The Council wasted several hours quibbling over minor points concerning residence requirements for voting in the plebiscite to be held in fifteen years, and whether Germany should be required to

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5Council of Four, April 9, 1919, ibid., pp. 203-207.
furnish coal to France if the Saar plebiscite was favorable to Germany. After several days of such haggling, in which Wilson took little part, the Four decided to have its Saar experts, led by the French representatives, Andre Tardieu and Louis Loucheur, draw up the definitive text to be incorporated in the treaty.

Although Wilson's attitude in the Saar negotiations was unstable, in that instance the results were fortunate. In accordance with his principles of self-determination, the President did not want to alter the sovereignty of the citizens of the Saar. To avoid such a change, he proposed a complicated system under which two hostile nations would divide administrative and economic responsibility. Finally convinced that his scheme would not be accepted, Wilson agreed to a compromise. Before doing so, he was compelled to remind his colleagues that the arrangement violated his principles. However, he would not stand in the way of peace. Because he failed to insist on the acceptance of his proposals, Wilson made possible a satisfactory solution to the Saar problem. Had he prevailed, there would have been fifteen years of chaos in the Basin.

Besides the financial interests which the French had in German areas, they were also concerned with demilitarizing the German provinces west of the Rhine River. In addition to

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6 Council of Four, April 10, 1919, ibid., pp. 209-213.
7 Council of Four, April 11, 1919, ibid., pp. 224-228.
removing German military installations from the area which had always been a menace to France, Clemenceau wanted a joint British-American guarantee to defend France against aggression. To make the agreement permanent, he believed that it should be incorporated into the League of Nations' Covenant. Wilson insisted that the Covenant was only an outline of general principles. There should be no special cases for the League would protect its members against aggression.\(^8\)

The military advisors were invited to one of the first discussions of the problem. Marshal Ferdinand Foch, who really believed that the Rhine should be the Franco-German border, was willing to accept an occupation instead. However, he insisted that if Allied troops withdrew, the peace would become unstable. In answer to Wilson's questions concerning the length of time and purpose of occupation, Foch stated that the Allied troops would remain in the area until Germany changed her attitude and disarmed under surveillance. Wilson was unconcerned about the vagueness of the Frenchman's reply, but he preferred that the case be handled by the League. Britain and the United States would guarantee French security until the League was well-established.\(^9\)

On April 22 the Council approved the demilitarization agreement. Germany was to remove troops and abandon fortifications up to a line fifty kilometers east of the Rhine.

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\(^8\) Council of Four, March 27, 1919, Mantoux, I, 50-51.

There was no provision for an eventual return to militarization. At the same meeting the Four approved the guarantees of execution of the treaty in which they promised gradually to remove occupation forces if Germany complied with the treaty. In fifteen years, if all went well, the Allies would remove all troops. Again Wilson did not object to the generalizations concerning the number of troops to be used. The Germans would not be forewarned of the type of occupation to expect.

To further guarantee French security, Wilson recommended that both Britain and the United States, in separate agreements, promise to aid France against German aggression. Since the Senate would oppose a triple agreement, he wanted an arrangement which was triple in form but not in fact. His colleagues agreed although Clemenceau preferred a more formal arrangement under the League of Nations.\(^{10}\) Wilson did not elaborate his statement that the Senate would oppose a formal treaty among the three nations. Since he expressed no doubts about the acceptability of the Treaty of Versailles, he could not have been overly concerned about approval of a relatively minor treaty. Probably he was only governed by his own aversion for commitments to France.

On May 6 the matter of British and United States' guarantees arose again. Tardieu proposed a new draft which Wilson opposed.

\(^{10}\)Council of Four, April 22, 1919, FRUS, V, 114.
because it implied that if Germany began to mobilize, the United States would have to send troops. He wanted to protect France against real aggression, not mere threats. Apparently Wilson did not realize that mobilization is the first step toward aggression.

After brief discussion of phrasing the Council agreed that the more moderate British draft would be acceptable. Lloyd George and Wilson would incorporate it into letters sent to Clemenceau. Thus, Wilson's desire to keep the United States uncommitted resulted in a compromise. There was only an informal arrangement which did not really please Clemenceau, for there would be no formal treaty, merely two letters which promised to submit treaties for ratification.\footnote{Council of Four, May 6, 1919, \textit{ibid.}, pp. 474-475.}

With the guarantee to the French settled, the Council turned again to the problem of the Rhine. The Four agreed to ask the Military Representative to draft a convention to be signed by Germany regarding the occupation of the territories west of the Rhine.\footnote{Council of Four, May 8, 1919, \textit{ibid.}, p. 515.} Wilson had shown little interest in the Rhine problem for he was content to turn the question of occupation over to the military advisors without outlining a general policy for them to follow.

When the matter arose in the Council several weeks after the Germans had received the treaty, Lloyd George wanted to
reconsider the entire question of military occupation. He believed that foreign troops would antagonize the people and make rapprochement more difficult. In addition, since Germany would have to pay the cost of maintaining the troops, the amount would be subtracted from the reparations payments. Finally, Germany was not presently a threat. The real danger would come when she had regained strength, but, by that time, the Allies would have withdrawn.

Wilson also had changed his attitude, for American expert P. B. Noyes had told him that the convention which the military experts had drawn up was brutal and would arouse the hatred of the German people. He recommended keeping as few troops in Germany as possible. The citizens should have self-government, except for a Civil Commission which would make or change regulations whenever necessary to implement the treaty. In addition, only a few American and British troops would be sent to show the flags while France supplied the bulk of the force. Wilson's approval of a plan volunteered by one of his experts was most unusual. However, when one of them did offer a scheme which appealed to him, the President was willing to accept it as the best solution. The Council agreed with Wilson's proposal that four civilians be appointed to rewrite the convention along the lines suggested by Noyes.¹³

When the second draft was presented to the Council on June 12, Lloyd George opposed it because the length of time

and number of troops were not mentioned. He wanted to know if occupation would be long and gentle or short and harsh. Since neither Wilson or Clemenceau was concerned with that problem, discussion was adjourned. 14 On the following day, having no support for his recommendations, Lloyd George agreed to accept the Rhine Convention. 15 On June 27, the Council arranged to sign the agreement at the same time as the treaty. They also agreed that they would discuss the details of it with the Germans at a later date. 16 The guarantees were signed on the morning of June 28 shortly before the Germans signed the Treaty of Versailles. 17

Thus, the important matter of demilitarizing the Rhine and protecting France against aggression was handled with little concern on Wilson's part. His only interest was to keep from committing the United States. Eventually he compromised, insisting on an informal exchange of letters promising a treaty. Clemenceau had to accept the proposal although he had hoped for more. In addition, Wilson was unconcerned about the occupation of the Rhineland, except to insist that few Americans would be involved. When his expert, Noyes, told him what to do, Wilson insisted on following that advice.

14 Council of Four, June 12, 1919, ibid., pp. 327-329.
16 Council of Four, June 27, 1919, ibid., p. 730.
17 Council of Four, June 28, 1919, ibid., p. 740.
Finally, after Lloyd George pointed out that the Rhine Convention did not indicate the type of occupation, Wilson refused to consider further alterations. He had an arrangement which conformed to his expert's suggestions, and he needed no more. As a result of that attitude, neither the Germans nor the French could know whether the occupation would be gently handled over a long period of time or would be harsh and brief. They only knew that an unspecified number of troops would be sent to Germany for an undetermined length of time.18

18 These conclusions differ from the traditional view. Walworth mentioned the Rhineland only to state that the matter was settled (Walworth, II, 329). The Saar was discussed in more detail in Walworth, II, 294, 296-300. See conclusions.
CHAPTER VI

THE GERMAN-POLISH FRONTIER

One of the most complicated problems the Council of Four had to solve was the eastern boundary between Germany and Poland. The Four wanted to fulfill the Fourteen Points by securing a good port for the landlocked Poles while mixing the two nationalities as little as possible. These two conditions were difficult to fulfill.

When Wilson came to Paris, he had already fallen under the influence of Ignace Paderewski, an accomplished pianist and even more able Polish propagandist. During the war he toured America to stir up support for a new Poland. His seductive personality captivated Wilson and House. Indeed, a sentimental plea from Paderewski was more likely to sway the President than the most learned discourse by a colleague.

Wilson overlooked the fact that Poland had ceased to exist in 1795 when Russia, Prussia, and Austria completed the partitioning of the area. Thus, the new Poland was to be created from territory which had not been Polish for one hundred fifty years.1 The Four had decided that the city of Danzig,

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which had been Polish until 1742, was the best choice for a Polish port even though the city had been under German sovereignty and had a German population. Wilson listed four alternatives for dealing with the city. First, it could be made a free city with enough territory around it to insure a German majority. The frontier of East Prussia would be expanded west to include all German territory to the Vistula River. Poland would keep the left bank of the river. The second choice would be to give Danzig to Poland on the understanding that the territory of East Prussia would remain as before. Another possibility would be to turn the matter over to a commission to arrange. Finally, the Council could decide to give Danzig to the League of Nations, which would entrust it to Poland on the condition that the city have relative autonomy. The Executive Council of the League would fix the frontiers between Danzig and East Prussia. The disadvantage of the first proposal, according to Wilson, was that if Danzig were a free city, the Germans there would be tempted to agitate for a return to Germany. It was only a compromise solution. On the other hand, if the last suggestion were adopted, the League could intervene to guarantee the system.

Lloyd George, who had always been concerned because too many Germans were being put under Polish sovereignty, mentioned that Marienwerder Province would be under Polish domination. In that district, south of Danzig, 420,000 Germans would be placed under a new sovereignty.
Wilson suggested returning the area to Germany if a plebiscite were favorable. Thus, he was willing to allow Germany to control a small area surrounded by Poland and Danzig.

After further discussion, the Four were inclined to establish Danzig as a free city under the League of Nations. Clemenceau, however, was not in favor of the solution at first. After listening to Wilson's analysis, he thought that the plan might work if they took careful precautions so that Poland would not be thrown into disorder. He agreed to think over the matter.2

Several days later, when Wilson reported that the experts were in agreement on Danzig, Clemenceau was ready to withdraw his opposition, for he believed that it was essential to arrive at a solution acceptable to the Poles. He did not want to break with the Allies, although agreement was not always easy.

Wilson summed up the decision. Danzig would be a little state inhabited by Germans but tied to Poland by a customs union. In Marienwerder Province, the people of the predominantly German region would be consulted by a plebiscite and might, if it wished, rejoin East Prussia. In that case the Vistula River would be internationalized. Germany would have

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the right, in peacetime, to direct railway services across the state of Danzig to East Prussia and Russia. Danzig and Poland would have the same communications rights.3

Although the Council thought that the matter of Danzig had been settled, the question arose again the following week when Lloyd George mentioned that in the new state of Danzig there would be 340,000 people, of which only 16,000 were Polish. When Orlando asked how many Germans would be in Poland after all the proposed changes were made, Wilson replied that the total would be more than 2,000,000.4 Unfortunately no other solution was possible "because the German population is dispersed and their presence is due, in great part, to systematic colonization." Again Lloyd George warned that too many Germans would be affected by the changes.

The Polish President of the Council of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Paderewski, was invited to the meeting so that the Four could tell him of their decision. Wilson explained that they wanted to avoid putting too many of one nationality under another's sovereignty. They were particularly concerned about Danzig. Paderewski replied that the Poles had faith in the Four, but life in Poland was very difficult. Unless Danzig were given to Poland there would be

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3Council of Four, April 3, 1919, ibid., pp. 125-126.

4The estimated number of Germans in Poland varied. See FRUS, VI, 53.
chaos and Bolshevism. The Poles had to have Danzig to restore their morale. He did not claim that the citizens were Polish.

Wilson repeated that the Four wanted to make Danzig a free city having a customs union with Poland. In addition, Poland would have the same rights in the port as if she were sovereign. That system would create the least possible danger for the future.5

The Four were in agreement but the Poles dissented. Finally, the Council approved the plan which they had always favored, despite Polish opposition.6 Thus, the Council established a "free city" which had a customs union with Poland, and granted the Poles the right to control the port and railway system.7 Since Wilson's principles would not allow him to hand a German city to Poland, he did the best he could by giving the Polish government control of the important functions of Danzig while making the city nominally free.

Settling the status of Danzig did not end the negotiations of the German-Polish frontier, for the problem of Upper Silesia remained. However, the Council did not take up the matter until after the treaty had been presented to the Germans. In the first discussions of the problem on June 3 Lloyd George pointed out that Upper Silesia had not been Polish for 800 years.

5Council of Four, April 9, 1919, Mantsoux, I, 199-202.
6Council of Four, April 18, 1919, ibid., pp. 271-273.
and at least one-third of the population was German. Although the area was dominated by Germans, he would favor a plebiscite in the area if Allied troops would supervise the voting. Wilson opposed the plebiscite because he believed that the area was German and should remain so. However, he agreed to consider the matter. 8

In an interview with Paderewski, Wilson explained that the Four were considering a plebiscite in the area. The Polish delegate opposed the plan, for only the eastern sections would vote for Poland. In that event, the mines and industries would be on the frontier where they could be invaded by Germany. On the other hand, if all of Upper Silesia voted as a unit, Germany would win. Even if Allied troops occupied the area until the plebiscite, the results would be prejudiced, for the landowners and clergy were in control. The people would be forced to vote in favor of Germany. The Poles had expected to be given Upper Silesia. If it were lost, the government would have to resign. 9 The real reason Paderewski opposed the plebiscite was simply that the majority of the people did not want to be under Polish domination. 10

As discussion of the plebiscite continued, Wilson again announced his opposition. However, his reasons had changed.

8Council of Four, June 3, 1919, FRUS, VI, 147-155.
9Council of Four, June 5, 1919, ibid., pp., 191-201.
10Lloyd George, I, 201.
Because of Paderewski's remarks and a report which he claimed to have seen, the President was sure that the German Catholic clergy was influencing the population against Poland. The people, on the other hand, really wanted to join Poland. To Lloyd George's comment that Wilson's report was one-sided, the President responded that the information came from Americans in Poland. Besides, he was "pro-Pole with all his heart." Nor was he affected by Lloyd George's reminder that the Poles had fought against the Allies until the end of the war.\footnote{Council of Four, June 11, 1919, \textit{FRUS}, VI, 303-305.} The principle of popular determination of sovereignty was displaced by a sentimental plea for territory which was not Polish. The man of principle was concerned about the welfare of the Poles. On the other hand, he had a most unprincipled disregard for the Germans.

The Subcommittee on Eastern Frontiers of Germany reported to the Council that a free plebiscite was impossible at that time, for the people were indeed under the domination of landowners in a feudal system. Martial law and suppression of Polish newspapers were the major means of intimidation practiced by the Germans. The subcommittee recommended that one or two years elapse before the vote. Having again reversed his position, Wilson proposed that the Council agree to the suggestion concerning the plebiscite, for he now believed
that the people really wanted it. He had talked earlier with American expert Dr. R. H. Lord, who told him that the latest reports indicated popular support of the vote. Dr. Lord opposed the plebiscite but believed that Wilson should know the facts. Impressed with his expert's honesty, Wilson changed his stand.\(^{12}\)

On June 14 the Council met with Paderewski to inform him of the decisions concerning Upper Silesia. Wilson explained that while the Germans did not deny that the population of the region was Polish, they did deny that the people preferred living under the Polish government. Thus, there would be a plebiscite by communes. He was sure that the industrial region would vote in favor of Poland. To remove the prejudicial elements, the Allies would occupy the area temporarily and the voting would be delayed for some time.

Paderewski replied that the people of Poland would be saddened by the decision. The people of Upper Silesia wanted to be part of Poland. There would be chaos in his country until the plebiscite. He opposed the Council's plan, but he had to accept it. As a result of that touching speech, the Council decided to have the plebiscite in six to eighteen months after the treaty was signed rather than the two years they had wanted.\(^{13}\)

\(^{12}\)Ibid., p. 316.

\(^{13}\)Council of Four, June 14, 1919, ibid., pp. 446-452.
Later that day Wilson said, in contradiction to his earlier statement, that he opposed the plebiscite, but had agreed to it to please Lloyd George. Germany had no case under the Fourteen Points. Still unsure that a plebiscite could be carried out with justice, and moved by Paderewski's pleading, Wilson did not want to be responsible for insisting on it. That was an inconsistent attitude for one who claimed to be dedicated to popular determination of sovereignty.

Since Paderewski was dissatisfied with the Polish settlement, he sent a memorandum of his complaints to the Four. When he read the document, Wilson was shocked by the statement that the Allies were claiming more for the Germans in Poland than for the Poles in Germany. That, he thought was a serious indictment. Nonetheless, the Council decided to send the memorandum to the Committee on New States to consider the objections and see if some of them could be met. Later the Four authorized the commission to make changes in the final draft of the treaty with Poland so that more favors could be granted. None of these changes affected the frontiers.\(^{15}\)

Meanwhile, Wilson was still concerned about the prospect of a plebiscite in Upper Silesia. He had learned that it would be difficult for him to send troops to the area during

\(^{14}\)Ibid., pp. 454-456.

\(^{15}\)Council of Four, June 17, 1919, ibid., pp. 529-530, 569-570.
the voting, for after the treaty was signed the United States troops would have to be withdrawn.\textsuperscript{16} The Council decided to ask the military representatives to consider the composition, size, and method of occupation of the Allied troops in preparation for the plebiscite.\textsuperscript{17}

Thus, the Council reached decisions on the German-Polish frontiers rather easily, for none of the Four was directly involved in the settlement. However, Paderewski was able to get concessions from Wilson because of the President's sentimental attachment to Poland.

Ironically, Wilson, who spoke often of popular determination of sovereignty, willingly handed 2,000,000 Germans over to Poland without consulting them, for he was unconcerned about the well-being of the Germans. Then he fostered a scheme whereby the overwhelmingly German area around Danzig was tied by a customs union to Poland. He opposed a plebiscite in Upper Silesia on the basis of a pro-Polish report that the vote would be prejudiced. In a sudden shift of opinion, he decided that a plebiscite would be desirable because one of the experts told him so. Later Wilson claimed that he had consented only to appease Lloyd George, although the President had not previously used such an approach.

\textsuperscript{16}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 534.

\textsuperscript{17}\textit{Council of Four, June 26, 1919, ibid.}, pp. 703-704.
In short, Wilson did not know whether a plebiscite would be successful and he did not want to be responsible for its failure. In addition, he admitted to pro-Polish attitudes, and was affected by Paderewski's opposition to the vote. Wilson's behavior was in direct conflict with his oft-stated principle that people should have the right to determine their sovereignty, for he was unwilling to gamble when there was a possibility that he would be criticized for lending his support. In addition he admitted that he favored the Poles over the Germans. Such attitudes were indeed unfitting for a man who claimed to be motivated by the highest of principles and who wanted to solve Europe's problems on an impartial basis.  

18 These conclusions differ from the traditional view of Wilson's attitude. Walworth ignored the Polish problem.
CHAPTER VII

THE FINAL DAYS

After the treaty was formally presented to the Germans at Versailles on May 7, the Council began the work of revision. The Four had never intended that the treaty would be accepted without change. The Four were content to let the commissions resolve most of the issues raised by the German delegation. The replies to German objections concerning the Saar, military conditions, responsibilities, and prisoners were approved by the Four with few alterations. In most cases the Allies simply reaffirmed the terms of the treaty, for there were few changes in the text. All negotiations with the Germans were carried out in writing, for on April 24 Wilson readily accepted Clemenceau's suggestion that the exchanges of views should be written.1

The German delegation began commenting on the treaty soon after they discovered its contents. On May 10 the Council received a note from Ulrich Brockdorff-Rantzau, head of the German delegation, stating that the peace proposals were intolerable. He claimed that no nation could endure the terms. Moreover, many of the conditions could not be fulfilled.

Wilson drafted a reply alleging that the terms were formulated on the basis of the Fourteen Points. The Allies refused to discuss their right to insist on the terms of the peace. Hereafter, they could consider only practical proposals for revision. That curt note set the scene for the ensuing exchange of letters.

On the same day the German delegation protested having to accept the League of Nations as part of the treaty while they were not invited to join. They asked if an invitation were implicit. Again Wilson drafted a reply stating that the matter of German admission had not been overlooked, for it was provided for in the second paragraph of article one. According to the Covenant, new members could be accepted by the League when two thirds of the members agreed and the nation had given effective guarantees of its intention to observe international obligations and accept regulations prescribed by the League regarding military and naval forces and armaments. That letter ended German hopes that they would be welcomed into the League of Nations.

The exchange of letters continued until June 3, when Wilson decided that the practice should be stopped. He believed that the Council should collect all of its replies to German comments into one final memorandum. Thus, communications

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3 Ibid., pp. 559-564.
between the Four and the German delegation were severed until the reply was sent on June 16. 4

On May 17 the Council began the work of revising the reparations clauses, after receiving Brockdorff-Rantzau's letter denying that Germany was responsible for the war or that the people had supported the government's actions. He did not believe that the terms were justified, although Germany had agreed to pay reparations. During the discussion Wilson made his first serious complaint concerning the reparations settlement, insisting that the Allies would soon realize that the scheme would not work. He had no proposals of his own, and the discussion ended. 5

In a weak attempt to explain rather than revise the clauses, Wilson proposed on May 21 that the Allied experts and the German delegates discuss the economic and financial conditions to insure proper interpretation of those clauses. The discussions would demonstrate that the Allies had used every means to induce the Germans to sign. The Allies would not lose face in going to the Germans, for they would only be explaining parts of the treaty, and they would make no concessions. Wilson believed that the Germans did not understand the terms, and he wanted to assure them that the burden


5 Council of Four, May 17, 1919, FRUS, VI, 852-857.
was not great. Clemenceau opposed the plan, for he believed that the Allies would seem to be asking for favors. Although Wilson still wanted discussions among experts, he did not insist. 6 Apparently a small protest against the imposed peace was enough to convince Wilson that he had tried to negotiate. Certainly he made no real effort to convince his colleagues that personal confrontations were necessary.

The matter did not arise again until June 3 when the Four began discussing the latest German observations on the terms of the treaty. Again, the delegation recognized the obligation to pay reparations, but they wanted to know the total amount. Furthermore, the Germans asked to be consulted before the final amount was set, and they wanted to establish broader systems of payment in kind. 7

The American experts were determined to set a definite sum in the treaty. Wilson explained the problem to the Council, saying that the Germans opposed having their capacity to pay computed by outsiders. However, if the total amount were set, half of the objections would disappear. He did not suggest that the Germans be consulted on the matter.

Annoyed by the Prime Minister's comments, Wilson retorted that he had always favored naming a definite sum. In their

6 Council of Four, June 7, 1919, ibid., p. 236.
7 German Delegation to the Council of Four, May 29, 1919, ibid., pp. 852-857.
The Germans had settled on the same figure, five billion pounds, that the Allies had discussed. There was a difference, however, for the Germans had intended the amount to be the total, while the Allies were adding interest. Wilson wanted to consider naming that amount, capitalized, as the total liability. He mentioned that over a thirty-year period the sum would be quite large. Apparently he did not realize how large it would be.

Again Lloyd George proposed a compromise scheme. The Germans would accept the reparations clauses as they were in the treaty; then they would be given three months to set a definite sum. If the offer were unsatisfactory, the clauses would go into effect, including the provision for naming the total figure in May, 1921. The Four agreed to turn the matter over to the financial experts for investigation.8

Several days later Lloyd George reported that he and Loucheur, the French expert, agreed that allowing Germany three months to name a figure was the best solution. In addition, they wanted Germany to pay as much as possible in labor and material. Clemenceau readily agreed. However, Wilson and the American experts were still anxious to set the amount immediately. The matter was dropped without further discussion.9


9Council of Four, June 7, 1919, ibid., p. 240.
On June 9 the Council received the Reparations Commission report which summarized the situation. After reading the report, Lloyd George reiterated that he wanted to re-establish German industry by supplying that country with credit and raw material. However, he could not agree with Wilson's stand that the sum could be named quickly. In addition, any amount named at that time would frighten rather than reassure the Germans. Moreover, the Council had too much to do in subsequent days. They did not have time to settle the problem, for it could not be resolved by an hour's chat. The President remained adamant, insisting that the amount had to be decided immediately. He realized that the decision would have to be arbitrary, but Germany needed a basis for credit. By the following day Wilson changed his mind and compromised with Lloyd George, for the American experts had surrendered to British and French intrasigence. The Council accepted a proposed note to the Germans including the agreement to give them four months to name a sum which could be paid. The Allies would examine the proposal and decide whether it would be accepted. In the meantime, the Germans would have to accept the treaty as it stood.

Because he did not understand the technical aspects of the reparations' negotiations, Wilson allowed the clauses to be


11Council of Four, June 11, 1919, ibid., pp. 272-277; Burnett, I, 138-139.
accepted with only minor protest. When he realized the gravity of the situation, he began to insist on changes after the treaty had been handed to the Germans. By that time it was too late to make the vast alterations he wanted. Wilson naively argued that a figure should be selected on short notice, even though it would be arbitrary. Since the Council had spent months debating the problem, naming an amount arbitrarily would have been unreasonable. Although only a compromise, probably the best solution was submitted by Lloyd George. In the earlier debates he had favored naming a sum in the treaty, but he got no support from Wilson because there were other conditions in the Prime Minister's proposals. After the terms had been settled, the Prime Minister believed that sweeping changes could not be made, but he conceded that the Germans should have a voice in naming their liability. Had Wilson accepted Lloyd George's earlier plan, the entire problem of revision might have been avoided. Wilson's realization that the treaty's clauses were unjust came too late.

As the Four worked on the terms of the treaty and then on revisions, they were constantly worried that Germany would refuse to sign. Early in April the matter was first discussed in the Council.\footnote{Council of Four, April 8, 1919, Mantoux, I, pp. 179-180.} In the following weeks the Four made preparations for a military invasion in the event Germany refused to sign the treaty.
On May 9, two days after the presentation of the treaty, the Four read Marshal Foch's note outlining the plan for a march toward Berlin to force acceptance of the terms. The general also stated that the Allies had an advantage at that time. If the forces were further reduced, the advantage would be lost. Wilson was worried because the United States would have to keep a larger force on the Rhine than he had expected. By June 1 there would be only six to eight American divisions in Europe, for the troops were being sent home at the rate of 300,000 men per month. Commenting that his advisors were concerned about the rapid American withdrawal, Lloyd George asked Wilson to speak to the American General Tasker H. Bliss about the matter.\(^\text{13}\)

On the following day Foch told the Four that he could prepare an advance into Germany on eight days' notice. He anticipated no difficulty, for the German army was weak and there were few fortifications along the route. The Council agreed to begin a gradual concentration of troops on the Rhine.\(^\text{14}\)

Foch announced to the Council on May 19 that the French army was ready to march, but the British troops needed to be re-supplied. The American forces were in good order, but

\(^{13}\text{Council of Four, May 9, 1919, } \text{FRUS, V, 526.}\)

\(^{14}\text{Council of Four, May 10, 1919, ibid., pp. 537-540.}\)
only two divisions would be available because three of the remaining five divisions were returning home.\textsuperscript{15} Apparently Wilson had made no effort to stop the withdrawal of troops.

Believing that the plans were set, the Four were shocked June 16 when Foch informed them that he did not have enough troops to march to Berlin. He had only thirty-nine divisions to lead through 300 miles of hostile territory. Since he would have to leave occupying forces behind as he advanced, only a very weak force would reach Berlin. The general preferred detaching the southern states of Bavaria, Wurttemburg, and Baden from the rest of Germany. These states could be forced to sign the treaty. Then the army could move on to Berlin. He would be unable to get a single signature on the treaty, but he would be able to force representatives of each state to sign.

Flabbergasted, Wilson reminded the general that he had favored a march to Berlin when the matter had been discussed earlier. Why had he changed his mind? The general insisted that he had always favored detachment. Lloyd George and Clemenceau denounced Foch's plan, for they opposed mixing the military and political aspects of the problem. They refused to believe that the situation was so grave. Wilson agreed with his colleagues and added that he could ask for more troops.

\textsuperscript{15}Council of Four, May 19, 1919, \textit{ibid.}, pp. 702-704.
but he was not prepared to tell Congress that thirty-nine divisions were not enough for an invasion of Germany. Foch alleged that he had never said the armies could reach Berlin. He had only prepared an advance into Germany. The separatist plan was the best solution.\(^{16}\)

On the following day in Council, Lloyd George and Wilson admitted that they knew nothing of the British and American plans for the invasion. All of their information had come from Foch. The Four cast about for a solution to their dilemma and decided to send Foch a carefully-worded statement that if Germany refused to sign, the objective was Berlin and the object was to get the peace signed.\(^{17}\)

The Four met with their military advisors at the French Ministry of War on June 20 to discuss the matter again. Foch agreed to march toward Berlin, but he insisted on going through southern Germany. At that time he had only enough troops to move to the Weser River where he would have to stop for reinforcements. The other generals agreed with Foch's views. Indeed, Bliss said that he had reached the same conclusions before he knew of Foch's opinion. Wilson had few comments at that meeting. Apparently he had accepted the general's opinions, for he agreed to authorize Foch to begin the advance as the generals had planned on the expiration of the armistice on June 23.\(^{18}\)

\(^{16}\)Council of Four, June 16, 1919, FRUS, VI, 501-509.

\(^{17}\)Council of Four, June 17, 1919, ibid., p. 524.

\(^{18}\)Council of Four, June 20, 1919, ibid., pp. 543-551.
Thus, the Four were startled to learn that Allied strength had diminished to a point where a march on Berlin was impossible. Wilson admitted that he knew nothing of the American plans for an advance. He did know that American troops were rapidly being withdrawn. Early in May he realized that more troops would be needed. Apparently he did nothing to slow the withdrawal. Wilson's ignorance of and lack of interest in the military situation partially accounted for the lack of strength in the Allied armies at a crucial time.

The Four were again disconcerted on the afternoon on June 21 when they learned that the interned German ships at Scapa Flow had been sunk by the maintenance crews. On the following day the Council agreed to send a letter to the German delegation stating that the act was a breach of faith for which the German government would be held responsible. The Allies would consider the matter, and they reserved the right to take whatever action necessary.

By June 23 the Council received a full report of the incident. Since the protest had not been sent, the Four met with their legal advisors to decide on a better course of action. They argued about the technical aspects of the protest but reach no decision.

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19 Council of Four, June 21, 1919, ibid., p. 588.
20 Council of Four, June 22, 1919, ibid., p. 606.
On the next day Clemenceau, angered because some French flags had been burned in Germany, urged the Council to protest the sinking of the ships and the flag burning. After the treaty was signed, he wanted the Allies to take possession of Essen, a munitions-manufacturing center in Germany, as a show of strength. Wilson made no comment in opposition to Clemenceau's plan.22 On June 25 Lloyd George, who had been absent when the French Premier made his proposal, opposed taking Essen. He wanted only to announce that the guilty would be punished and to demand additional ships as reparations. He asked Clemenceau not to order occupation of Essen by French troops in spite of the burned flags. Clemenceau agreed, for the sake of Allied unity, although he still believed that his plan was sound.23

At the same meeting the Council discussed a report from the admirals suggesting that the Germans turn over additional warships, floating docks, and merchant ships to pay for their action. Wilson was concerned about the incident at Scapa Flow. He doubted that the German government could be held responsible for something that happened outside its jurisdiction. He had no doubts about the responsibility of the German admiral who ordered the scuttling. Wilson believed that the same sort of

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23 Council of Four, June 25, 1919, ibid., pp. 656-661.
problem would arise under the treaty, for the Germans would claim that any destruction was carried out by individuals rather than the government. The Council had to decide if the Allies would go to war over such destruction. If the sinkings were treated as a violation of the Armistice, there would be war. In addition, there was another difficulty, for if Germany refused to fulfill the terms, the Allies had only one means of compulsion. They would have to extend the period of occupation because any use of force would break the treaty and lead to war. Wilson supported Lloyd George's suggestion to inform the Germans that the admiral would be tried and to demand restitution for the ships. The Council agreed to send a letter prepared by Balfour and Loucheur. In addition, they agreed to appoint a five-member commission to consider the possibility of exacting further reparation for the scuttled ships.\textsuperscript{24}

Thus, when a crisis developed, Wilson displayed a lack of leadership, for he had no proposals to offer. When Clemenceau suggested occupying German territory, Wilson did not attempt to dissuade him. That task fell to Lloyd George on the next day. The President eventually realized the significance of the action and understood that the Allies could compel German cooperation only through military force. These facts stated, he offered no solution. Fortunately, he accepted Lloyd George's

\textsuperscript{24}Council of Four, June 25, 1919, \textit{ibid.}, pp. 661-663, 671.
sensible proposals to demand punishment and reparation rather than agreeing to Clemenceau's rash plan for invasion and occupation.

On June 22 the Council's fears of renewed war were proved groundless when the German delegation agreed to sign the treaty without recognizing Germany's responsibility for starting the war. Nor would they agree to deliver accused persons for trial. Certain that the Germans would accept the entire treaty, the Four approved Wilson's plan to refuse further alterations and to remind the Germans that only twenty-four hours remained before the armistice expired. The Allies had considered all German proposals, but the time for discussion had passed. The delegation must accept the whole treaty.25

On the following day the Four received a request for a forty-eight hour extension of the armistice. Remark ing that he did not trust the Germans, Wilson suggested refusing the request. The Four agreed to send a politely-worded note saying that further delay was impossible.26

On June 23 at five p.m., two hours before the armistice expired, the Council learned that the Germans had agreed to sign the treaty.27

26Council of Four, June 23, 1919, ibid., pp. 613-615.
27Ibid., p. 644.
Thus, during the negotiations for revising the treaty, Wilson again took the lead. He supported the plan to conduct discussions with the German delegation in writing. There were no personal confrontations, and the Germans were kept in virtual isolation for six weeks.

The President also drafted the letter which informed the Germans that there would be no discussion of the treaty, except for specific points. He insisted that the peace was based carefully on the Fourteen Points, although that program was violated repeatedly.

Wilson demanded that the Germans approve the League of Nations while remaining outside of it. Although he often spoke of the new order he was creating, the President was not willing to allow the Germans to join it. His reply to the German request for membership was a brief note reminding them that Germany could be accepted in the future. The tone of his letter was far from encouraging.

Although Wilson suggested that the Allied financial experts meet the Germans to explain the reparations clauses, he did not insist. Such a meeting could not have hurt the Allied cause, and it might have helped to establish good will. However, the matter did not seem important enough for Wilson to demand that it be done.

Finally, the Council planned to revise the treaty in the light of German comments and proposals. In fact, the committees
handled most of the complaints by reaffirming the clauses of the treaty. The only real change was in the reparations section. Wilson returned to his old position that an arbitrary sum be set. Realizing that such an approach was unjust and inaccurate, Lloyd George proposed allowing the Germans to set an amount after having surveyed their capacity to pay. Eventually Wilson accepted the plan.

Although he led the Council in the discussions of revision, Wilson was ineffectual when other difficulties arose. When the Council learned that the Allies did not have the necessary strength to invade Germany, Wilson admitted that he was uninformed about the United States' strategy. However, he had known that American troops were leaving too quickly, but he did nothing to slow the withdrawal. Thus, the President was partly responsible for the shortage of troops.

Again, when the Four learned that the German ships had been sunk, Wilson did nothing. Finally realizing that the incident would have far-reaching effects, he approved Lloyd George's plan to avoid armed conflict.

When the Germans agreed to limited acceptance of the treaty, Wilson returned to his leading role and insisted on complete acceptance. Although he believed in his idealistic concept of a new order in Europe, he was unable to regard the Germans as equals. Instead, he treated them, as vanquished foes had always been treated, with suspicion and without
regard for their opinions. Indeed, he "... believed in mankind, but distrusted all men." Had Wilson been sympathetic toward the German plight and had been determined to follow his program for a new Europe created in justice and honor, the German attitude toward the Treaty of Versailles might have been different.29

28David Lloyd George, Memoirs of the Peace Conference (New Haven, 1939), I, 149.

29This interpretation differs from the traditional view of Wilson's role as found in Arthur Clarence Walworth, Woodrow Wilson (New York, 1959), II, 323-324, 328-329. See concluding chapter.
CHAPTER VIII

THE AUSTRIAN TREATY

When preparations for the Treaty of Versailles were well under way, the Council began to consider the terms for Austria, Hungary, and Bulgaria, using the German settlement as a model. Although Wilson complained about many features of the German treaty, he neither took action, nor opposed using that document as a guide for the remaining treaties. The Austrian treaty was the first of the latter group to be considered. When it was finished, the Conference simply adapted the same features for the Hungarian and Bulgarian treaties. Indeed, the Four took little interest in the conditions of those settlements, for they assigned the task of drafting the clauses to the committees which had worked on the German treaty. Most of the terms were approved by the Four with few alterations. However, Wilson and his colleagues were interested in the welfare of the new states which were created from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Four spent many days listening to the complaints of representatives of Czechoslovakia,

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Rumania, Poland, and Yugoslavia. Invariably the Council was rebuffed by the extremely sensitive and petty leaders of the new states. The Four were unable to handle their "allies," because they made many undeserved concessions and received very little co-operation in return.

On April 30 the Four agreed to call the Austrian delegation to Paris one week after the Germans received their treaty. When told that the Drafting Committee could not complete its work in such a short time, Wilson replied that he only wanted to discuss the general lines of the treaty. The Allies would not present the complete treaty to the Austrians. On June 2 the draft was presented, but the military, financial, and frontiers clauses reserved. Thus, the treaty was handled in a casual manner, and the most important clauses were presented at a later date. The negotiations were completed and the treaty was signed on September 10, 1919, long after the Four had left Paris. Their subordinates carried out the final arrangements. 3

The most difficult part of the Austrian treaty was the question of frontiers. Since the new states were being created from the old Empire, there were many boundaries to be settled. Wilson believed that all of the boundaries should be made simultaneously to avoid confusion. Because the new states were not treated as enemies, the Council decided to consult

3Temperley, IV, 154, 394.
those delegations before settling the frontiers for Wilson opposed cutting the Empire into bits without consulting the parties involved. He did not include Austria in the negotiations.

On May 8 the subject came before the Council when Lloyd George wanted to set the frontiers of Austria and Hungary while postponing the other decisions. Wilson pointed out that after the treaty was signed, the conference would have no more authority. If the countries themselves tried to settle matters, there would be difficulties. Finally, he accepted Lloyd George's proposal that Austria and Hungary would be bound by their treaties to recognize the boundaries arranged by the Allies. Wilson summed up the decision: where the frontiers could be fixed that would be done; where decisions could not be made quickly, the parties would be bound to accept whatever the Allies decided. Having agreed on that principle, the Council turned the matter over to the experts.

The problem came before the Council again when the experts failed to find a solution to the question of the Klagenfurt Basin between Austria and Yugoslavia. The difficulty was compounded by fighting in the area. On May 26 when the Four considered the problem, Austria had requested Allied intervention.

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4 Council of Four, May 7, 1919, FRUS, V, 498-500.
During the discussion the Four considered and rejected the suggestion that an armistice commission be sent to the area. Finally, the Council decided to settle the boundary first, and then insist that both forces withdraw behind the frontier.  

The next day Wilson explained to his colleagues that economic and ethnic boundaries in Klagenfurt did not coincide, for the economic boundary ran so far to the south that many Yugoslavs were tied to Austria. Also, the Basin was separated from Yugoslavia by a steep mountain range. The Council had to decide whether natural or political interests should prevail.  

When the experts on Yugoslav affairs were called before the Council on May 29, Wilson told them to draft a text indicating that the disputed area would have a plebiscite within six months after the signing of the treaty. Meanwhile Klagenfurt would be administered by an international commission.  

On the following day the Four learned that the fighting had grown more intense. Orlando proposed sending an Allied Commission to secure a truce. Wilson, on the other hand, wanted to send a note to the Yugoslav delegation warning them that fighting must cease if the boundaries were to be settled.

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6Council of Four, May 26, 1919, PRUS, VI, 46-47.  
7Council of Four, May 27, 1919, ibid., p. 72.  
8Council of Four, May 29, 1919, ibid., p. 102.
because battles would not influence decisions over the frontiers. The Council accepted the President's proposal. Instead of intervening in the hostilities, the Four were content to send a note asking for co-operation.

In spite of the unfriendly attitude of the Yugoslavs, the Four decided to consult that delegation before reaching a decision. On June 4 Milenko R. Vesnitch was summoned to the meeting. Wilson explained that a plebiscite would be held in the southern part of Klagenfurt within six months after the treaty was signed. If that area voted for Austria, the matter would be settled. If the southern region selected Yugoslavia, then the northern section would also hold a plebiscite to decide its sovereignty. Should the south vote for Yugoslavia and the north for Austria, the district would be divided into two parts. Vesnitch opposed the plebiscite, claiming that it would be impractical and unjust. Apparently he did not believe that the region would vote in favor of Yugoslavia. However, the Council decided to carry out its complicated scheme.

When that decision did not stop the fighting, Orlando suggested turning the matter over to the military representatives. Instead, Wilson agreed to accept the Italian's earlier proposal and send an American officer to the area. As the fighting

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11Council of Four, June 5, 1919, ibid., p. 189.
grew more serious, the Council decided to send another telegram to the Yugoslavs asking for explanations and insisting on a truce. Wilson added that Britain, France, and the United States each had sent an officer to Klagenfurt to watch the armistice negotiations. Again the Council, led by Wilson, refused to take direct action to halt the hostilities.

Ignoring the Council's instructions, the Yugoslavs occupied Klagenfurt and forced Austria to accept an armistice. The Allied military officers had no authority to intervene. When the information was communicated to the Four, Wilson recommended sending messages to the Yugoslav and Austrian delegations requesting them to order the withdrawal of troops from the area. When asked about the difficulty of keeping order, Wilson said that the local police would be responsible. The Four accepted the suggestion.

The Committee on Rumanian and Yugoslav Affairs submitted a majority and minority report concerning the plebiscite. Having reversed his position, Wilson approved the majority report recommending that the southern zone be occupied by Yugoslav troops and the northern zone by Austrians. The Italian representative wanted all partisan troops to be removed from the area while Allied troops supervised the voting. He had understood that

12 Council of Four, June 7, 1919, ibid., p. 234.
13 Council of Four, June 17, 1919, ibid., p. 534.
Wilson wanted both sides to withdraw, for occupation would
predetermine the outcome. Wilson insisted that Austrian and
Yugoslav troops should remain in Klagenfurt, for it was unsafe
to remove all such forces. He proposed that the number of
troops be reduced as soon as local police could be recruited.
The Council adopted his suggestion.14

Again, Wilson reversed his stand because his advisors
favored a course different from that which he had advocated.
During the earlier negotiations he had insisted that fighting
had to stop so that the boundary could be set. Then on the
strength of a report, Wilson decided to let hostile forces
occupy Klagenfurt until after the plebiscite. To provide
safety for the inhabitants, he wanted the troops to occupy
the area until local police could be recruited. However, his
proposal was so vague that neither the number of troops nor
the length of time were settled. In reality Wilson let the
terms of the occupation be determined by the Austrian and
Yugoslav authorities. In contrast, he had insisted that pre-
judicial influences be removed before the voting in Upper
Silesia. Apparently he did not realize that his actions were
contradictory or that the proposal endangered the freedom of
the plebiscite.

The question of reparations continued to plague the
Council. For the Austrian treaty the main difficulty was to

decide if the new states should pay part of the cost of the war and reparations. In the first discussion Wilson stated that Poland should not have to pay because of her suffering at the hands of the Russians, Germans, and Austrians. The other new states should contribute to the costs, but he did not know how to determine their shares. In addition, he did not believe that the new states should bear any of the war debt but should pay part of the reparations. After further discussion, Wilson suggested that the experts determine how much the whole of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire (except Poland) could pay. If a sum could not be fixed, the experts should determine what proportion of the total each of the states could pay. He wanted the new states to pay as little as possible although Lloyd George reminded him that the people in those areas had fought against the Allies. Now they were being given self-government, and the Allies had paid for their emancipation.\footnote{Council of Four, May 10, 1919, \textit{PHUS}, V, 461-462.}

On May 22 the Council discussed the draft clauses prepared by the Reparations Commission. Now Wilson opposed making the new states pay part of the reparations, for the burden would be too great. Moreover, he was disturbed about the principle of liability, for those debts would have a bad effect on the new states' credit. Some of them might refuse to sign the treaty and turn toward Germany. In addition, the states would not know the extent of their debts until 1941. In the ensuing
discussion, Lloyd George insisted that the states should pay part of the cost of their emancipation, but he thought that the amount should be determined in six months rather than two years. Wilson changed his mind and agreed that the states should make a contribution. Before deciding the amount, he wanted to discuss the proposal with the representatives of the new states.16

The reparations' clauses for the Austrian treaty were in the same form as those in the German treaty. On the previous day Wilson had insisted that the plan was unjust and would not work as the Allies had planned. However, he made no complaints about the form of the Austrian clauses. Since the total liability was smaller, Wilson apparently believed that it was not worth a struggle.

On May 27 American financial expert T. W. Lamont reported that the representatives of the new states could not bear to be considered as enemy states or classified along with Austria. However, they might be willing to consider sharing the costs of the war, provided that the proposal was not a demand for reparation. Wilson suggested that the statement be phrased so that the new states would be required to make a contribution toward the cost of their own liberation.17 Thus, the Czechs, Yugoslavs, Poles, and Romanians were not to pay reparations.

17Council of Four, May 27, 1919, FRUS, VI, 65-66.
Instead, they were required to make a contribution. Wilson did not propose any means of enforcing the decision.

As in the negotiations of the reparations' clauses for the German treaty, Wilson took little part in the technical discussions. His experts, Norman Davis and John Foster Dulles, did most of the talking. When the Council learned that the new states were reluctant to pay any part of the war costs, the Four approved the American proposal that the representatives of the new states be told that they would have to accept their liability for contributions as negotiated by the experts. If they refused to comply, they would be liable for reparations' payments under the Treaty of St. Germain.\(^\text{18}\) Hence, the American experts assured that the war costs would be shared by all former members of the Empire.

The Council also had to settle the military clauses of the treaty because the experts could not agree. Their main concern was the size of the armies in Austria, Hungary, and the new states. Wilson and his colleagues agreed that the armies must be restricted, but they were unable to decide on a basis for computing the number of troops.\(^\text{19}\) The President was afraid that the new states' armies would be huge if they were not restricted. He proposed that on January 1, 1921,

\(^{18}\)Council of Four, June 27, 1919, \textit{ibid.}, pp. 216-218.

\(^{19}\)Council of Four, May 15, 1919, \textit{FRUS}, V, 627-667.
the armies would be reduced to a predetermined number of troops unless the League of Nations approved an extension.

When Lloyd George suggested that the Council meet with delegates of the new states to hear their views, Wilson agreed, adding that only one representative from each state would be admitted. There would be no military advisors. The sizes of the armies would be determined in proportion to the size of the Austrian army. If that force were limited to 40,000, as the experts recommended, the sizes of the other military forces could be computed rapidly. The Council agreed to discuss the proposal with the representatives of the new states although Chamenceau believed that the Four should approve the clauses first and then tell the delegates of their decision. That method would avoid the previous difficulties created by uncooperative representatives.  

However, on June 5 the Four met the delegates from Yugoslavia, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. When Wilson explained that the Council planned to limit the size of the armies, the delegates unanimously rejected the plan and insisted that their states be treated as equals with the Allies. The Four agreed to consider the matter further.  

On June 16 the Council approved the revised draft of the military clauses as submitted by their advisors. There was no

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20 Council of Four, June 4, 1919, FRUS, VI, 182-185.  
mention of limited armies for the new states, but Austria was to have only 40,000 troops. Wilson's plan to limit the size of the armies of the new states was sound. However, he failed to persuade the delegates to accept the program, and he never considered forcing compliance.

Wilson was also very concerned about the relationship of the new states to the League of Nations. He was less interested in Austria's position. On May 14 he commented that he hoped Austria would be allowed to join the League. The plenary session, he believed, should decide the matter. However, Wilson failed to follow up on the comment. Again he simply called attention to a matter to soothe his conscience.

On the other hand, he was determined that the new states should favor the League. On June 6 he read a report from the Committee on New States, raising the question whether appeals to the League in matters of minorities would be allowable by any member or only by a member of the Council of the League. Recalling the sensitivity of the representatives of the new states when they thought the Allies were imposing on them, Wilson feared that they would be insulted if denied the right to call matters before the League. Furthermore, there would

22 Council of Four, June 16, 1919, ibid., p. 487.
23 Council of Four, May 14, 1919, FRUS, V, 517.
be equality among the new states. Thus, if Poland failed to keep her covenant regarding the Jews, a Rumanian representative could call the matter to the attention of the League.

The Four agreed to discuss the problem with representatives of the new states although Clemenceau forecast that they would again be uncooperative. To avoid confronting united opposition, they decided to see the delegates separately and report their findings to the Council.24

Wilson's concern for the sensitivity of the delegates went unrewarded. The Four reported that the Polish, Czech, Yugoslav, and Rumanian representatives opposed the President's plan. Instead, they preferred that only the Council members be allowed to bring problems to the attention of the League. No reason was given for that attitude.25 Wilson attempted to court favor with the new states only to be rebuffed.

Thus, the Council dealt with only a few aspects of the Austrian treaty, and the Four did not remain in Paris for the final negotiations. Ignoring the Austrians, Wilson's main concern was to please the representatives of the new states. He insisted on consulting these delegates at every turn. In the boundary dispute over Klagenfurt, Wilson kept the Council from taking direct action to stop the fighting. Instead he sent

24 Council of Four, June 6, 1919, FRUS, VI, 221-222.

a series of notes to the Yugoslavs requesting that the hostilities cease. However, the fighting ended only after the Yugoslavs occupied the Basin and forced an armistice. Finally, the President reversed his previous stand and insisted that both Austrian and Yugoslav troops occupy a section of the Basin until the complicated plebiscite was held. When told that such an occupation would prejudice the vote, Wilson offered a vague proposal that the troops would be replaced by local police whenever possible. Popular determination was severely crippled by the military occupation.

During the reparations' negotiations Wilson made no protest against the form of the clauses although they were copied from the German treaty. Apparently the sum involved was not worth a struggle. Wilson's only concern with the reparations' section was to protect the new states from a heavy burden. He was willing merely to ask the new states to contribute to the cost of their liberation. However, the American experts drafted the approved text to include a method of enforcing payment.

Wilson wanted to avoid further fighting in the area by restricting the armies of all of the old members of the Empire. However, the delegates of the new states were irate when told of the restriction. Thus, only the Austrian army was limited.

Finally, Wilson tried to win approval of the new states by allowing all League members to bring matters before the Council. Again his plan was coldly refused.
Hence, Wilson and his colleagues ignored the Austrians, except to label them enemies. They took no interest in the Hungarian and Bulgarian treaties. On the other hand, the new states were treated as Allies and granted many concessions even though they had fought for the Central Powers. The delegates for the new states rudely rejected proposals and refused to cooperate. Wilson was so anxious to gain their favor that he did not object to such behavior. He had much less respect for the Italians who had contributed to the Allied cause. Had Wilson and the Four simply drafted the terms of the treaty and presented them to all members of the Empire, the Council would have saved time and avoided the unpleasant confrontations with the uncooperative representatives of the new states. Wilson's only attempt to negotiate the peace terms ended in failure. 26

26Wilson's role in negotiating the Austrian treaty has generally been ignored by historians. Walworth did not mention the discussion.
CHAPTER IX
THE MILITARY PROBLEMS

While the Four were arranging the terms of the peace treaties, they continued to function as the Supreme War Council dealing with the complicated problems caused by fighting in Hungary, Eastern Galicia, and Russia. In all cases the Four had no formal policy to use as a guide. Wilson was especially hesitant to take an active role in stopping the hostilities.

The Hungarian problem was complicated by a change in government. After the armistice in November, 1918, a republic had been declared. In March, 1919, Bela Kun led a Bolshevik uprising and overthrew the republic. Wilson refused to meet with these Hungarians because he objected to their form of government. He preferred settling the terms of the peace without consulting Hungarian representatives.¹

In Council on May 19 Wilson read a dispatch from an unidentified American representative, claiming that Allied intervention was necessary in Budapest to prevent anarchy. There would be no difficulty, for the masses disliked the government.

None of the Council members favored such an expedition, however, and the matter was dropped.²

Fighting had not stopped after the armistice, for the Rumanians and Hungarians were still clashing along the frontier. On April 26 Wilson suggested that the Rumanians be asked to stop their aggression, but nothing was done.³ Six weeks later, on June 5, the Four learned that the Hungarians had attacked the Czechs. Clemenceau proposed that the matter be called to the attention of the military advisors since they were dealing with the Rumanian–Hungarian hostilities.⁴ Later the Four learned that the Rumanians had twice crossed the frontier. On the third attempt they were stopped by the Hungarians. Having routed one adversary, Bela Kun turned against the advancing Czechs. Instead of remonstrating against their aggressive "allies," the Four sent a message to the Hungarians advising them to make peace or face the consequences of Allied action.

As the discussions continued, Wilson commented that the Rumanians should retire behind the boundary drawn when the armistice was signed. Later he recommended informing the new states' delegations to co-operate or lose Allied support. The Four belatedly agreed to stop sending war material to Rumania.⁵

³Council of Four, April 26, 1919, ibid., pp. 291–292.
⁴Council of Four, June 5, 1919, FRUS, VI, 189.
On June 10 the Four met with the Czech and Rumanian representatives to explain the Council's position. Jean J. C. Bratiano, the Rumanian delegate, declared that the Four were ill-informed. Rumania had only advanced into Hungary to stop the Bolsheviks, but apparently the Allies did not care that the Hungarians were being oppressed by their revolutionary government. Wilson retorted that resolving grievances and settling the boundaries would bring about peace, leaving the Bolsheviks without reason for complaint. There was no need to invade Hungary.

After the Four conferred privately, Wilson told the delegates that the Council of Foreign Ministers would meet with the Czech and Rumanian representatives the next day to settle the permanent boundaries. The Hungarians would be told that violations would end the peace talks. If the new states did not respect the frontiers, the Allies would send no further aid.7

The Foreign Ministers reported that neither of the new states had accepted the boundary proposals unconditionally.8

The Four decided to insist on an end to hostilities and the withdrawal of military forces. On June 16 the new states agreed.9

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7Council of Four, June 10, 1919, ibid., pp. 281-289.
8Council of Four, June 11, 1919, ibid., pp. 318-319.
9Council of Four, June 12, 1919, ibid., pp. 351-352; Council of Four, June 16, 1919, ibid., p. 513.
Thus, Wilson again differentiated among the members of the former Empire. Hungary, like Austria, was not consulted about the terms to be imposed. On the other hand, the Czechs and Rumanians were called before the Council. After a series of unpleasant confrontations with representatives of the new states, Wilson finally learned that appeasement would not succeed. When he understood that the new allies were aggressors, he insisted that they accept the Council’s decisions or forfeit further support. When faced with firm opposition, the Czechs and Rumanians complied. However, Wilson had presumed that the Hungarians were guilty of frontier violations. After the truth was learned, the Council waited for nearly two months before arriving at a decision. During that time fighting continued. Had Wilson been determined to stop the hostilities, the needless battling could have been halted.

In the discussions of the problems in Eastern Galicia, Wilson was again prejudiced in favor of the Poles. The military situation became critical when General Joseph Pilsudski, Chief of the Polish High Command, launched an offensive against Eastern Galicia, inhabited by Ukrainians. Although the latter repeatedly asked for an armistice, the Poles refused to stop their advances.

On April 15 Wilson reported to the Council that the Ukrainians were willing to accept the truce proposed by the
Allies. The Four agreed to establish an armistice commission to handle the negotiations.\textsuperscript{10}

However, the Poles did not accept the armistice and the situation rapidly deteriorated because Paderewski, who opposed the fighting, could not control the army and the diet. On May 17 the Council received a letter from the South African General, Louis Botha, Chairman of the Polish-Ukrainian Armistice Commission, stating that the Council was held in contempt by many because of its neglect of the situation. The Ukrainians were still asking for an armistice, but the Poles would not cooperate. Wilson responded that the Council was unable to get accurate information. Besides, their purpose was to make final settlements rather than to resolve temporary disputes. However, he agreed to draft a letter to General Pilsudski hinting that aid would cease if the Council's orders for an armistice were not carried out.\textsuperscript{11}

The issue was further complicated when the Four received contradictory reports from various observers. Wilson told the Four of a telegram from the American Minister at Warsaw, claiming that the Ukrainians were Bolshevik and aggressive.\textsuperscript{12} An American officer who had been in Poland also reported that the


\textsuperscript{11}Council of Four, May 17, 1919, \textit{FRUS}, V, 676.

\textsuperscript{12}Council of Four, May 19, 1919, \textit{ibid.}, pp. 705-706, 711-715.
Galician peasants did not oppose the Poles. Besides, the Ukrainians were incapable of self-government. Although Wilson did not comment on these reports, they seem to have affected his ultimate decisions.

In contrast to the American views, General Botha reported to the Four on May 21 that he was impressed with the Ukrainian cause, for he believed that they represented an independent movement against Bolshevism. The Poles should not be allowed to crush the Ukrainians. Wilson wanted to inform everyone concerned that supplies to the Poles would be halted if the fighting continued. Then he suggested drawing the frontier and insisting that it be accepted. Before adopting that course, the Four agreed to see the armistice commission and the Ukrainian delegation.

At the afternoon meeting the Ukrainians pictured themselves as defenders of their homeland against aggression by Poland and the Bolsheviks. General Botha urged the Four to decide quickly, for the fighting must stop. Again the Poles had refused to accept an armistice. The Council agreed to revise Wilson's letter to Pilsudski, adding that the Poles owed their existence as a state to the Council. The general was also reminded that the Four had adopted and confirmed the armistice.

15 Ibid., pp. 775-781.
On May 24 Wilson read a dispatch from an unidentified American representative in Warsaw stating that Paderewski was strongly favorable to the Allies and had defended Wilson's views. Polish troops were being moved away from Eastern Galicia in order that peace could be negotiated. However, that armistice never materialized, and the fighting continued.

Two weeks later the Four met with Paderewski, who claimed that the Ukrainians had attacked the city of Lemberg and the Poles had made a "defensive advance" to protect themselves. Later he admitted that much of Eastern Galicia had a Ukrainian population and that Poland claimed the area. He denied that the Poles were imperialistic. Apparently the President was again impressed by the Pole's impassioned, if unjust, plea.

On June 12 Wilson suggested that the Four decide on a boundary between Poland and the Ukraine. When Lloyd George recommended a plebiscite in Eastern Galicia, Wilson agreed and suggested that the Foreign Ministers decide in what area the vote would be held.

On June 25 the Council decided that the Poles should pursue their military operations in Eastern Galicia to protect the people against the Bolsheviks. That authorization was not

16 Council of Four, May 24, 1919, ibid., p. 915.
17 Council of Four, June 5, 1919, FRUS, VI, 194–201.
18 Council of Four, June 12, 1919, Mantoux, II, 397.
supposed to affect later discussions on the political status
of the area.\textsuperscript{19}

Thus, when the Four disbanded on June 28 they had not
resolved the problem of Eastern Galicia. The fighting had not
been stopped, nor had supplies been halted as Wilson had
threatened. The plebiscite had not been arranged, but Polish
troops were allowed to enter and hold the disputed area. Wilson
and his colleagues had accepted the prejudiced views of Paderew-
ski and several minor American officials in Poland. They re-
jected not only the pleas of the Ukrainians, but also the re-
ports of General Botha, whom the Council had appointed chairman
of the armistice commission. Although the Ukrainians repeatedly
asked for an armistice, which the Poles refused, the latter
emerged in control of Eastern Galicia with the approval of the
Four. In the Fourteen Points Wilson had called for the re-
establishment of Poland from indisputably Polish territory.
However, even Paderewski admitted that Eastern Galicia had a
Ukrainian majority. Thus, there was no justification for al-
lowing a Polish occupation of the area. Wilson abandoned his
principles, for he did not oppose the scheme to place Ukrai-
rians under Polish domination. Again Wilson's desire to protect
the rights of all people was subverted by his sentimental at-
tachment to Poland.

\textsuperscript{19}Council of Four, June 25, 1919, \textit{FRUS}, VI, 677-678.
Wilson's inability to formulate policy in the face of hostilities and conflicting reports was revealed by his handling on the Russian situation. After the Bolshevik coup in November, 1917, civil war continued in Russia. The opposition was led by General A. I. Denikin in the west and Admiral A. V. Kolchak in Siberia. Each had formed a government and sought Allied support. The Allies had made little effort to intervene in the struggle. An American force had landed at Vladivostok in August, 1918, to prevent the Japanese from gaining control, and the British were sending supplies to the forces at Archangel. The Council had not defined its policy toward the anti-Bolsheviks. On May 7 when the Four considered their position, Wilson wanted to insist that the White Russian leaders specify their program of reforms before receiving more support. The President admitted that he did not know what supplies had been sent.

Wilson was concerned about the American troops in Siberia, for Kolchak's followers were angry because those troops were not helping in the struggle against the Bolsheviks. The President feared that there would be clashes between the Americans and Russians. Claiming that he did not believe in Kolchak's abilities and intentions, Wilson explained that the United States had only two alternatives: to side with Kolchak and send


21Council of Four, May 7, 1919, FRUS, V, 497-498.
stronger forces, or to withdraw. He wanted to remove all American troops "and leave it to the Russians to fight it out among themselves." Before deciding on that course, he suggested that the Council ask Kolchak about his reform program.22

Meanwhile the Four interviewed Nikolai V. Chaikovski, who led a civilian government at Archangel. Wilson explained that the Four wanted to decide on the best policy toward Russia. Kolchak was becoming stronger and was moving toward Moscow, but the Council feared that he would restore reactionary policies. Chaikovski replied that Denikin and Kolchak had similar views. They wanted to unite Russia under a democratic government. Although he was a dictator, Kolchak was constantly announcing democratic measures, for he did not intend to remain in control when peace was secured.

After Chaikovski left, Wilson was still unsure that Kolchak could be trusted. He decided to ask Roland Morris, United States Ambassador to Japan, to go to Omsk and study the admiral's political intentions.23

On May 17 Wilson reported that both Denikin and Kolchak had won major battles. He noted also that the Four still had no policy toward Russia. Wilson suggested no solution.24

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22Council of Four, May 9, 1919, ibid., pp. 526-530.
Two days later Wilson again urged that the anti-Bolsheviks adopt a reform program before more Allied aid was sent. He realized that if the Allies did not support the Russian groups, they would collapse.\(^{25}\) The Council agreed to send a formal demand that each of the White Russian revolutionary leaders promise to unite with the other anti-Bolshevik groups to establish a democratic government. The Council would intimate that no further aid would be sent unless the promise was made.\(^{26}\)

When Clemenceau suggested that the Council recognize the Kolchak government, Wilson opposed the plan. Indeed, he did not want to send the list of demands to the admiral if recognition were even implied. Assured that only supplies would be promised, Wilson again tried to disengage himself. First, he insisted that Kolchak should promise to call regional elections immediately. Lloyd George pointed out that those procedures were impossible in wartime. Then Wilson claimed that only Britain had supplied the anti-Bolsheviks. Since the United States was not really involved, only Lloyd George should sign the letter.\(^{27}\) Apparently Wilson did not believe that the American troops in Siberia constituted a commitment.

\(^{25}\) Council of Four, May 19, 1919, \textit{ibid.}, p. 725.
\(^{26}\) Council of Four, May 20, 1919, \textit{ibid.}, pp. 734-737.
\(^{27}\) Council of Four, May 23, 1919, \textit{ibid.}, pp. 901-903.
Even after Lansing assured the President that American participation was justified, Wilson continued to stall.\textsuperscript{28}

At a meeting with the Japanese representatives, Wilson explained the Council's misgivings concerning Kolchak's policies. The Japanese believed that the admiral was doing well, for the other Russian groups had recognized his government. When the Japanese approved the formal demand drafted by the Four, Wilson agreed to sign it also.\textsuperscript{29}

On May 27 the letter was sent to Kolchak. In order to receive further aid, the admiral had to promise to call a constituent assembly, guarantee free elections, abolish special privileges, recognize the independence of Poland and Finland, join the League of Nations when a democratic government was established, and accept the Russian debt.\textsuperscript{30}

The reply from Kolchak arrived on June 11. After reading the letter, Wilson pronounced it satisfactory. Perhaps he realized that the promises were empty gestures, for he did not discuss the reply at length. On the following day the Four sent a telegram to the admiral stating that they would support him.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{28}Council of Four, May 24, 1919, \textit{ibid.}, pp. 914-915.

\textsuperscript{29}\textit{PRUS}, VI, 15-19.

\textsuperscript{30}Council of Four, May 27, 1919, \textit{ibid.}, pp. 71-72.

\textsuperscript{31}Council of Four, June 11, 1919, \textit{ibid.}, p. 319.
The Council learned on June 17 that Kolchak was not doing well, for he had evacuated a large area. His army was no longer a threat to Moscow. The Four considered continuing the blockade after the peace was signed to prevent German trade with Bolshevik Russia. Wilson insisted that there was no legal basis for a blockade in peacetime. However, he agreed that nothing should be done to encourage trade. Indeed, there would be no public announcement that the restrictions had been lifted.32 There was no further discussion of the Russian problem.

After returning home Wilson received a series of sympathetic but realistic reports from Ambassador Morris. Although he believed in Kolchak's honesty, Morris was convinced that the admiral was on the brink of defeat. Finally he told Wilson that unless the Allies sent 40,000 troops as reinforcements, the resistance would collapse, and further supplies would be wasted.33 Wilson was unwilling to involve the United States in the fighting. No more aid was sent to Kolchak, and his regime collapsed as expected.34

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32 Council of Four, June 17, 1919, ibid., pp. 530-532.


34 George F. Kennan, Russia and the West Under Lenin and Stalin (Boston, 1960), p. 146.
The Council had vacillated for months before facing the dilemma. Wilson realized that he should either withdraw the American forces or send more support to Kolchak. He did not accept either course, but settled for a policy which neither abandoned nor aided the anti-Bolsheviks. Although he did not trust Kolchak, Wilson finally agreed to support him. He tried to avoid committing the United States, for he did not want to sign the list of demands. After stalling for several days, he signed the latter, the terms of which he had proposed originally. Extracting the pledges from Kolchak was a pointless exercise, for the Four would have been unable to force the admiral to comply had he come to power.

When the reply was received, Wilson announced that it was satisfactory, and he and his colleagues agreed to support Kolchak. Then, learning that the admiral would not be able to win without the help of Allied troops and supplies, Wilson refused to become involved. No further supplies were sent. In a weak attempt to cripple Bolshevik strength, Wilson proposed that the lifting of the German blockade not be announced. He hoped to keep the Germans from trading with the Bolsheviks.

Thus, Wilson never really formulated a Russian policy. He did not want to help the anti-Bolsheviks, but agreed to do so. After making the promise, he was unwilling to provide the necessary men and material required for victory.

Wilson's inability to act in a crisis was particularly evident during the frontier clashes in Hungary and Eastern
Galicia. His only suggestion was that the boundaries should be drawn and both sides would be ordered to accept it. He would not demand that fighting stop before the frontier was established. Hostilities were allowed to continue needlessly. He presumed that the Rumanians and Czechs were innocent while the Hungarians were aggressive. When Wilson realized that the Allies were guilty of violating the frontiers, he insisted that the new states accept Allied demands for peace.

The President was unable to sift conflicting reports to determine the truth. Either he never realized that the Poles rather than the Ukrainians were aggressors in Eastern Galicia or he simply ignored the truth. The Poles were allowed to occupy the disputed area while the Ukrainians were treated as Bolsheviks despite Botha's reports to the contrary.

The Russian problem was also difficult for Wilson, for he opposed the Bolsheviks but did not trust the other leaders. The President obstructed plans to aid Kolchak. When he finally agreed to send supplies, the offensive was collapsing. Wilson never ordered that his promise be carried out, for a commitment of troops and supplies was more than he could approve.
CONCLUSIONS

The traditional view of Wilson the diplomat pictures him fighting courageously to uphold his principles against the greed of Lloyd George and Clemenceau. The faults of the peace treaties were blamed on the stupidity of the President’s colleagues rather than on his own lack of diplomatic skill. Such an interpretation was prevalent because very little was known about the secret procedures of the Council of Four. Wilson confided his version to Ray Stannard Baker, who published the accounts. Those works were the standard references for historians for many years. With the recent publication of the official minutes of the Council meetings and Paul Mantoux’s *Les Deliberations du Conseil des Quatre*, a more objective analysis of Wilson’s role is possible. However, the revisionists have been slow to present their interpretations. Indeed, a re-evaluation of Wilson’s activities is overdue.

In 1958 Arthur Walworth won the Pulitzer Prize in Biography for his two-volume work, *Woodrow Wilson*. The author’s second volume, dealing with the President’s role during the war and the peace conference, was subtitled *World Prophet*. That epithet summarized his attitude toward Wilson. Although Walworth examined the new documentary evidence, he did so with the preconceived belief that Wilson was the prophet of the western world. While he had consulted both records of Council
proceedings, the author relied heavily on the older and more biased writings of Ray Stannard Baker, Edward M. House, Charles Seymour, Edith Wilson, and William Dodd. Walworth ignored many parts of the deliberations, possibly because the President's actions plainly contradicted his principles, and thus, seemed inexplicable. Often Walworth's conclusions cannot be verified by the minutes.

Concerning the trial of the Kaiser, Walworth claimed that Wilson argued against the proposal. When faced with British and French intransigence, he drew up a formula that his own conscience could approve, and his colleagues signed it.

During the reparations' negotiations the President "stayed both the grasping hands of aggrandizement and the raised fists of retribution, and he had softened the impact of the treaty on Germany's economy."¹ In the Italian crisis Wilson could have shifted to Lloyd George and Clemenceau the burden of opposing the Italian. He could have accepted the Treaty of London, but his principles would not allow that compromise. The author did not examine the final negotiations of the Italian claims, for he only mentioned that Orlando returned to the Council on May 7 because he could not afford to forfeit the claims under the Treaty of London.

Regarding the Chinese question, Walworth alleged that Wilson sought a solution which was fair to China, Japan, and

the Covenant. He admitted that there was a contradiction between the President's attitude toward Italy and Japan because Italy had approved the League and Japan had not. Wilson was willing to do anything to get Japan into the League.

Walworth avoided the problems of the Saar, the Rhineland, Poland, the Austrian treaty, the military problems, and the crises of the final days. In each of those instances Wilson either violated his principles or was unable to act when decisions were needed.

Current college textbooks also accept the traditional attitude toward Wilson's role. The President is always pictured as struggling valiantly against Lloyd George, who was determined to make Germany pay, and Clemenceau, who was skeptical of Wilson's liberal views and was only concerned about French security. Wilson tried to lower the cost of reparations, only to be defeated by his greedy colleagues. The Chinese concession was a painful defeat, but he won the right of self-determination for the Poles and insured justice for the citizens of the Saar. Examination of the documents indicates that all of those premises are incorrect.

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Wilson was not an able, high-principled diplomat who fought for his ideals against insurmountable opposition. When the trial of the Kaiser was discussed, Wilson argued against the proposal on several occasions. However, he capitulated rather quickly and then drafted his own proposals which were quite similar to those presented by the commission. That done, Wilson became engrossed in the plans for trying William II. He had abandoned his high-minded idealism and had become concerned with the mundane details of the trial.

Although Wilson claimed that he wanted to keep the reparations' bill as small as possible, he did not struggle to attain that goal. First he insisted that the German capacity to pay be determined and the total amount be included in the treaty. When his method was not accepted, he refused to compromise and accept Lloyd George's suggestion because he did not understand the conditions. Eventually he approved a plan which did not set the amount. Then the President agreed to double the reparations' costs, for he accepted the advice of General Smuts that pensions and allowances should be included. Although his experts were opposed, Wilson was easily swayed from his convictions. Finally, he did not oppose the agreement, made in his absence, which allowed the Germans to make payments for an unlimited period.

Thus, the injustice of the reparations' clauses cannot be blamed alone on British and French greed, but also on the
President's unwillingness to fight for his program. The reparations' plans were approved almost by default.

Wilson's conduct while negotiating the Italian claims was an example of diplomacy at its worst. Believing himself impartial, he set about to resolve the problems. He refused to accept the Treaty of London or to use it as a basis for negotiations. Instead, he regarded the agreement as immoral and unjust. Rather than looking for solutions, Wilson was content to lecture his colleagues, comparing his noble aims to their self-seeking greed.

Then he proceeded to his worst blunder: issuing an appeal to the Italian people over the head of their Prime Minister. Orlando had no choice but to leave Paris and return home. When his manifesto stirred up a furor, Wilson wanted to compound the difficulty by having Lloyd George and Clemenceau publish a similar document. Apparently he wanted to correct his error by having his colleagues commit a similar one.

Having no other choice, the Italians returned to the conference to make their reparation claim against Germany and to seek a solution to their impasse. They agreed to accept Tardieu's proposal to make Fiume an independent state under the League of Nations for fifteen years. Wilson wanted Italy to keep only a few of the Adriatic Islands. Agreement seemed near until the President changed his mind and insisted that the Italians renounce more of their claims. The Italians could not
accept the plan. Thus, a compromise settlement, fair to all sides, would have been approved had Wilson not decided to alter the proposals.

Although Wilson claimed that he was concerned about the welfare of China, the documents indicate that his concern consisted of conciliatory statements to the Chinese delegates alleging that he was struggling for a just settlement against the opposition of his colleagues. However, the President agreed to grant one ally economic concessions in another's territory. Indeed, the Japanese were allowed to bypass the League of Nations and take control of their mandate with approval of the Four. In short, Wilson capitulated to the Japanese on every point. He may have wanted a solution which was fair to all, but he settled for an agreement which was favorable to Japan. In the meantime, both Chinese integrity and his principles were compromised.

During the Saar negotiations, Wilson proposed a complicated scheme which divided political and economic control of the region. Although his intent was to avoid changing the sovereignty of the area, the plan would not have worked well. Only after lecturing his colleagues about his noble principles was Wilson able to accept a compromise. He agreed to place the Saar under League of Nations' administration for fifteen years.

In the discussions of the Rhineland, Wilson's only concern was to keep the United States uncommitted. Finally, he agreed
to an exchange of letters in which he and Lloyd George each promised to submit treaties to aid the French in case of aggression. The President avoided a formal commitment. In addition, he was unconcerned about the occupation of the Rhine provinces. Despite the warnings of Lloyd George, the President approved an agreement which specified neither the number of troops nor the length of time of the occupation.

Wilson's role in the Polish question has been ignored by most historians. However, his actions were significant for his principles clashed with his Polish sympathies. The President fostered a scheme which virtually gave Poland control of the German city of Danzig. Then he was unable to decide about a plebiscite in Upper Silesia. Although he favored popular determination of sovereignty, he feared that the region would vote for Germany. Often Wilson was influenced by Paderewski, who claimed areas which clearly were not Polish. Admitting that 2,000,000,000 Germans would come under Polish domination, Wilson seemed unconcerned about the desires of those people. Although the Fourteen Points provided for the creation of a new Poland out of indisputably Polish territory, neither Danzig nor Eastern Galicia had a Polish population. Nonetheless, the Poles emerged in control of both areas. Thus, Wilson's principles were displaced by his pro-Polish sentiments. He was a partisan rather than an arbiter.

During the final days of the Council, Lloyd George realized that there were many injustices in the treaty, particularly
in the reparations' clauses. He proposed a scheme to allow the Germans to determine their ability to pay. However, Wilson wanted to set an arbitrary amount for inclusion in the treaty. The President did not accept the plan until his experts capitulated. His desire was not to reduce Germany's obligation, as has been alleged, but to reach a final decision, regardless of its justice.

When other difficulties arose during the final days, Wilson was ineffectual. He did nothing to slow the withdrawal of American troops although he knew that an advance into Germany might be necessary to force acceptance of the treaty. Therefore, Wilson was partially responsible for the shortage of troops at a critical moment. After admitting that he knew nothing of American invasion strategy, he apparently did not attempt to learn.

On learning that the interned ships at Scapa Flow had been sunk, Wilson did nothing. When Clemenceau wanted to occupy German territory because some French flags had been burned, Wilson did not oppose the scheme. Fortunately, Lloyd George was able to dissuade the Premier.

When the Four worked on the Austrian treaty, Wilson did not oppose using the German treaty as a model although he had been critical of many parts of the text. Apparently the Treaty of St. Germain was not important enough for a struggle. Wilson virtually ignored the Austrians, whom he had branded as enemies, and tried to court the favor of the new states.
In the dispute over Klagenfurt, Wilson was unable to make stern demands that the fighting stop. Instead, he and the Council sent several warnings to the Yugoslavs without taking any action to stop their aggression. After the Four agreed on a plebiscite, Wilson insisted that Austrian and Yugoslav troops should each occupy part of the area until after the voting. Apparently the President did not realize that such prejudicial influences would endanger the freedom of the plebiscite.

During the reparations' negotiations Wilson labored to reduce the payments of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Poland. He opposed forcing them to pay anything, but he finally agreed that they could make a contribution toward the cost of their emancipation instead of paying reparations.

The President was also concerned that the new states' armies would be huge if their size were not limited. However, when the representatives opposed the plan, Wilson surrendered, and only the Austrian army was restricted. Thus, his few attempts to negotiate the peace terms ended in failure, for the new states rebuffed all of his offers.

Wilson was particularly inept when confronted with armed clashes over frontiers. In most cases he had no definite policy, for his only idea was to set the boundaries and demand that both sides accept it. He allowed fighting to continue because he was
unwilling to demand an armistice or to intervene with force. Instead, he threatened to cut off supplies, but did not follow through.

The President always assumed that the allies were the victims of aggression although Poland invaded Eastern Galicia, and Rumania and Czechoslovakia attacked Hungary. When called before the Council, these allies were uncooperative and Wilson was unable to deal deftly with them.

During the discussions of the Russian crisis, Wilson was in a dilemma, for he opposed the Bolsheviks, but distrusted the opposition. Instead of making a concerted effort to learn the truth, he vacillated and obstructed the Council's plans to aid Kolchak. When he finally agreed to support the anti-Bolsheviks, the offensive was collapsing.

Although Wilson claimed to be impartial, he did not attempt to alter the unjust clauses of the treaty. Nor was he without bias, for he was unconcerned about the welfare of the Germans in Danzig and Upper Silesia. He did not try to lighten Germany's reparations' burden, for he never made a strenuous effort to oppose the clauses. Although Lloyd George has been pictured as greedy and grasping, he tried to find fair solutions to the problems. He received no assistance from Wilson.

While the President's disinterest in German welfare might be rationalized as a natural dislike for the enemy, his role in the Japanese and Italian negotiations is more difficult to explain. Although the Italians had sold their services, they
were regarded as allies. However, Wilson had no respect for such immoral behavior. He refused to recognize the Treaty of London or to use it as a basis of negotiation. Instead, he bullied, reprimanded, and humiliated Orlando until the Italian left the conference.

Toward the Japanese, Wilson's attitude was reversed, for, having lost one ally, he feared losing another, and he wanted Japan to accept the League. The Chinese concessions were given to Japan at Wilson's urging. He subverted his principles for the sake of expediency.

The available evidence contradicts the traditional belief that noble Wilson fought valiantly, but unsuccessfully, against sly Lloyd George and greedy Clemenceau. Wilson must be revealed for what he was: an inept diplomat, untrained, poorly prepared, and emotionally unsuited for such a summit conference. When his plans were unacceptable, he was unable to evaluate compromise proposals and accept good solutions. Instead, he lectured his colleagues about his commitment to his principles, revised the proposals, and usually accepted them. He obtained the treaty he wanted, for he did not really try to change any of the clauses. In a crisis he could not reach a decision and act quickly. Often he did nothing, hoping the problem would resolve itself. Finally, his principles were not so important to him as historians have believed, for whenever they clashed with practicality or prejudice, Wilson sacrificed his ideals.
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