

Entente Nations Reply to Wilson

A Washington dispatch, dated Jan. 11 says: President Wilson today received the text of the Entente allies' reply to his peace note, giving their peace terms as requested. The translation from the French, as cabled by Ambassador Sharp from Paris, follows:

"The allied governments have received the note which was delivered to them in the name of the government of the United States on the 19th of December, 1916. They have studied it with the care imposed upon them both by the exact realization which they have of the gravity of the hour and by the sincere friendship which attaches them to the American people.

"In a general way they desire to declare their respect for the lofty sentiments inspiring the American note and their whole-hearted agreement with the proposal to create a league of nations which shall assure peace and justice throughout the world.

"They recognize all the advantages for the cause of humanity and civilization which the institution of international agreements destined to avoid violent conflicts between nations would present; agreements which must imply the sanctions necessary to insure their execution and thus prevent an apparent security from only facilitating new aggressions.

"But a discussion of future arrangements for insuring a durable peace presupposes a satisfactory settlement of the present conflict; the allies have as profound a desire as the government of the United States to terminate as soon as possible a war for which the central empires are responsible and which inflicts cruel sufferings upon humanity.

"But in their judgment it is impossible to obtain at this moment such a peace as will not only secure to them the reparation, the restitution and the guarantees justly due them, by reason of the act of aggression, the guilt of which is fixed upon the central powers, while the very principle from which it sprang was undermining the safety of Europe; and at the same time such a peace as will enable future European nations to be established upon a sure foundation.

"The allied nations are conscious that they are not fighting for selfish interests, but above all to safeguard the independence of peoples, of right and of humanity.

"The allies are fully aware of the losses and sufferings which the war causes to neutrals as well as to belligerents, and they deplore them; but they do not hold themselves responsible for them, having in no way either willed or provoked this war, and they strive to reduce these damages in the measure compatible with the inexorable exigencies of their defense against the violence and the wiles of the enemy.

"It is with satisfaction therefore that they take note of the declaration that the American communication is in no wise associated in its origin with that of the central powers transmitted on the 18th of December by the government of the United States. They did not doubt, moreover, the resolution of that government to avoid even the appearance of a support, even moral, of the authors responsible for the war.

"The allied governments feel it their duty to challenge in the most friendly, but also in the clearest, way the analogy drawn between the two groups of belligerents. This analogy,

based on public declarations of the central powers, is in direct conflict with the evidence, both as regards responsibility for the past and guarantees for the future. President Wilson, in alluding to this analogy, did not, of course, intend to adopt it as his own.

"If there is an historical fact established at the present date, it is the willful aggression of Germany and Austria-Hungary to insure their hegemony over Europe and their economic domination over the world. Germany proved by her declaration of war, by the immediate violation of Belgium and Luxemburg and by her manner of conducting the war her simulating contempt for all principles of humanity and all respect for small states; as the conflict developed the attitude of the central powers and their allies has been a continual defiance of humanity and civilization. It is necessary to recall the horrors which accompanied the invasion of Belgium and of Serbia, the atrocious regime imposed upon the invaded countries, the massacre of hundreds of thousands of inoffensive Armenians, the barbarities perpetrated against the populations of Syria, the raids of Zeppelins on open towns, the destruction by submarines of passenger steamers and of merchantmen even under neutral flags, the cruel treatment inflicted upon prisoners of war, the juridical murders of Miss Cavel, of Captain Fryatt, the deportation and the reduction to slavery of civil populations, et cetera? The execution of such a series of crimes perpetrated without any regard for universal reprobation fully explains to President Wilson the protest of the allies.

"They consider that the note which they sent to the United States in reply to the German note will be a response to the questions put by the American government, and, according to the exact words of the latter, constitute 'a public declaration as to the conditions upon which the war could be terminated.'

"President Wilson desires more. He desires that the belligerent powers openly affirm the objects which they seek by continuing the war; the allies experience no difficulty in replying to this request. Their objects in the war are well known; they have been formulated on many occasions by the chiefs of their divers governments.

"Their objects in the war will not be made known in detail with all the equitable compensations and indemnities for damages suffered until the hour of negotiations. But the civilized world knows that they imply in all necessity and in the first instance the restoration of Belgium, of Serbia and of Montenegro, and the indemnities which are due them; the evacuation of the invaded territories of France, of Russia and of Roumania with just reparation; the reorganization of Europe guaranteed by a stable regime and founded as much upon respect of nationalities and full security and liberty (of) economic development which all nations, great or small, possess, as upon territorial conventions and international agreements suitable to guarantee territorial and maritime frontiers against unjustified attacks; the restitution of provinces or territories wrested in the past from the allies by force or against the will of their populations, the liberation of Italians, of Slavs, of Roumanians and of Techo Slovians from foreign domination; the

enfranchisement of populations subject to the bloody tyranny of the Turks; the expulsion from Europe of the Ottoman empire, which has proved itself so radically alien to western civilization.

"The intentions of his majesty, the Emperor of Russia, regarding Poland have been clearly indicated in the proclamation which he has just addressed to his armies. It goes without saying that if the allies wish to liberate Europe from the brutal covetousness of Prussian militarism, it never has been their design, as has been alleged, to encompass the extermination of the German peoples and their political disappearance. That which they desire above all is to insure a peace upon the principles of liberty and justice, upon the inviolable fidelity to international obligation with which the government of the United States has never ceased to be inspired.

"United in the pursuits of this supreme object the allies are determined, individually and collectively, to act with all their power and to consent to all sacrifices to bring to a vigorous close a conflict upon which they are convinced not only their own safety and prosperity depend, but also the future of civilization itself."

THE BELGIAN NOTE

The translation of the Belgian note, which was handed to Ambassador Sharp with the entente reply, follows:

"The government of the king, which has associated itself with the answer handed by the president of the French council to the American ambassador on behalf of all, is particularly desirous of paying tribute to the sentiment of humanity which prompted the President of the United States to send his note to the belligerent powers and it highly esteems the friendship expressed for Belgium through his kindly intermediation. It desires as much as Mr. Woodrow Wilson to see the present war ended as early as possible.

"But the President seems to believe that the statesmen of the two opposing camps pursue the same objects of war. The example of Belgium unfortunately demonstrates that this is in no wise the fact. Belgium has never, like the central powers, aimed at conquests. The barbarous fashion in which the German government has treated, and still is treating, the Belgian nation does not permit the supposition that Germany will preoccupy herself with guaranteeing in the future the rights of the weak nations which she has not ceased to trample under foot since the war, let loose by her, began to desolate Europe. On the other hand, the government of the king has noted with pleasure and with confidence the assurances that the United States is impatient to cooperate in the measures which will be taken after the conclusion of peace, to protect and guarantee the small nations against violence and oppression.

"Previous to the German ultimatum Belgium only aspired to live upon good terms with all her neighbors; she practiced with scrupulous loyalty toward each one of them the duties imposed by her neutrality. In the same manner she has been rewarded by Germany for the confidence she placed in her, through which from one day to the other, without any plausible reason, her neutrality was violated, and the chancellor of the empire, when announcing to the reichstag this violation of right and of treaties, was

obliged to recognize the iniquity of such an act and predetermine that it would be repaired.

"But the Germans, after the occupation of Belgian territory, have displayed no better observance of the rights of international law or the stipulations of The Hague conventions. They have, by taxation, as heavy as it is arbitrary, drained the resources of the country; they have intentionally ruined its industries, destroyed whole cities, put to death and imprisoned a considerable number of inhabitants. Even now, while they are loudly proclaiming their desire to put an end to the horrors of war, they increase the rigors of the occupation by deporting into servitude Belgian workers by the thousands.

"If there is a country which has the right to say that it has taken up arms to defend its existence, it is assuredly Belgium. Compelled to fight or to submit to shame, she passionately desires that an end be brought to the unprecedented sufferings of her population. But she could only accept a peace which would assure her, as well as equitable reparation, security and guarantees for the future.

"The American people, since the beginning of the war, have manifested for the oppressed Belgian nation its most ardent sympathy. It is an American committee, the commission for relief in Belgium, which, in close union with the government of the king and the national committee, displays an untiring devotion and marvelous activity in revictualing Belgium. The government of the king is happy to avail itself of this opportunity to express its profound gratitude to the commission for relief as well as to the generous Americans eager to relieve the misery of the Belgian population. Finally, nowhere more than in the United States have the abductions and deportations of Belgian civilians provoked such a spontaneous movement of protestation and indignant reproof.

"These facts, entirely to the honor of the American nation, allow the government of the king to entertain the legitimate hope that at the time of the definite settlement of this long war the voice of the entente powers will find in the United States a unanimous echo to claim in favor of the Belgian nation, innocent victim of German ambition and covetousness, the rank and the place which its irreproachable past, the valor of its soldiers, its fidelity to honor and its remarkable faculties for work assigned to it among the civilized nations."

EXPRESSION OF SYMPATHY

At a regular meeting of the Bryan club, held at the home of Edward P. Hughes, 1310 Byron street, last night, the members gave expression of their loss in the death of Fred J. Hein as follows:

Whereas, It has pleased the Divine Ruler to remove from our midst Fred J. Hein in the prime of his life; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Bryan club lost a good and faithful member, William Jennings Bryan a loyal supporter, the city of Wheeling a good citizen and his sister a kind and loving brother; therefore be it further

Resolved, That these expressions be spread upon the minutes of the club and a copy sent to The Commoner. Frank Auber, Louis Gochke, Joseph Mahood, committee.—Wheeling Sunday Register, Wheeling, W. Va.