

**THE UPPER SILESIA
QUESTION
AND GERMANY'S
COAL PROBLEM**

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The Upper Silesian question and Germany's coal problem by Sidney Osborne

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SIDNEY OSBORNE

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AND
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BY
SIDNEY OSBORNE

IN TWO PARTS
COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME
PART ONE

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

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FOREWORD

The author is aware that the most frequent charge launched against recent writers who have in any manner taken a position on current questions that is not unfavorable to German interests, has been that they are pro-German. Even Maynard Keynes had to suffer this charge.

At the risk of meeting a similar fate, the author herewith presents certain views which, however much they may seem favorable to German interests, are in no sense the result of German influences or pro-German bias. Indeed, if a declaration from the author is not entirely unacceptable, he wishes to add, by way of partial defence against the pro-German charge, that he is a native-born American citizen, educated in the schools and higher institutions of learning in the United States, and that he sympathized with the aims and ideals enunciated by the Allied and Associated Governments during the war, and particularly, of course, with those proclaimed by President Wilson.

In the preparation of what follows, the author has striven to present only such facts as seem to him capable of verification by any impartial investigator.

He has made an investigation, on the spot, of the conditions and political problems in Upper Silesia, with special reference to the possible fate of that world-historic region, under the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles. He has also made a study of Germany's coal production and of those other kindred subjects of inquiry, which are so closely bound up with the question of what is to become of Upper Silesia.

Facilities were courteously extended to the author by the proper authorities when it became known that he had the purpose to write upon these subjects, and it was sufficient to assure these authorities that he proposed to treat the topics discussed, objectively and without bias, to secure such permission as was necessary for making the requisite investigations.

As regards the necessity for the production of such a work as this, one has only to make a study of the reports published by the press in America and in England (to mention only the English-speaking countries), to discover what a vast amount of ignorance exists with respect to these problems which are of such vital importance not alone to Germany but to the world-at-large. To cite but one example — the author had occasion to read a copy of the *New York Tribune* of August 1, 1920, in which appears an article on the Russian and Polish situation by Frank H. Simonds, than whom there is no more influential and widely read writer on questions relating to the war and the peace terms in the English-

speaking world. Mr. Simonds goes on to argue that great injustice is being done to Poland, by failure to recognize her claims as championed by the French, and, among others, her claims upon Upper Silesia, where, as Mr. Simonds asserts, there is "not a question as to the predominance of Polish tongue and race".

Now, as a matter of fact, as the readers of this book will very soon discover, not only is there a question about the predominance of Polish tongue and race in Upper Silesia but the question is rather, To what extent has Poland exercised any influence whatever upon the history and development of Upper Silesia during the past six hundred years?

The so-called Polish element in Upper Silesia speak a language known as *Wasserpölnisch* (*Water Polish*), which is a mixture of German and Polish and quite unintelligible to the Poles across the border, who, indeed, have had nothing in common with the Upper Silesians for over six centuries past, excepting when they have wished to use them, as recently, for nationalistic Polish purposes, that is to say, for political purposes. It would be just as correct to call these Upper Silesians, Poles, as it would be to call those inhabitants of Pennsylvania who speak the dialect known as "Pennsylvania-Dutch", (a mixture of German and English), Germans. Moreover, Upper Silesia has been indisputably German land for six centuries, was colonized and settled by the Germans,

and has been developed by a combination of factors which are entirely German in origin. Nor do the Upper Silesians wish to be anything but German.

The peace-makers at Paris, influenced by propaganda* derived exclusively from Polish sources, made a most grievous mistake as regards the question of the nationality and political sentiments of the population of East and West Prussia with respect to whom a plebescite was ordered to be taken, in the expectation that a heavy pro-Polish vote would be revealed. The result of the plebescite showed, on the contrary, that over 95 per cent of the population were German and wanted to remain German. A similar mistake has been made with respect to Upper Silesia, and as the essential elements of the question do not seem to be understood in the countries which fought against Germany, the author has endeavored to present the facts in the pages that follow.

For purposes of clearness and precision the author has divided this little work into two parts. Part I will be taken up with the facts that bear upon the question of the natural, political and economic unity of Upper Silesia with Germany and in this connection

* For example, the authorized English version of "Petite Encyclopédie Polonaise", page 19 asserts that 35.5 per cent of the population of West Prussia are Poles, in the Dantzig district 67.73 per cent, and in East Prussia 50 per cent. These figures were accepted at Paris as authoritative, whereas the recent elections in these districts show that over 95% of these people are pure German.