



AP[®] European History 2003 Sample Student Responses

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In August of 1914, the German Reichstag made two major decisions. First, it began mobilization for World War I. Also, it declared Burgfrieden, or "civil peace" in which all previous issues and parties would be set aside for the duration of the war. As the years progressed, the people's opinions changed in regards to this policy. In 1914, at the announcement, there was awe and happiness. By the middle of the war, in the ~~the~~ years 1915 and 1916, people began to ignore the policy, as they were tired of war. By 1918, opinion was divided, mostly between supporters and dissenters of the war. These views show how the progress of World War I affected the German population.

In a speech on August 1, 1914, Emperor Wilhelm II beseeched the German people to stand together "like brothers" to unite the country (doc 1). The speech was surely biased, as the emperor needed support in his declaration of war. He was asking the people to follow him. The response was varied. A photograph of his speech (doc 2) suggests that the people did support the emperor, as the people appear to be waving their hats and cheering. This was a time of nationalism and the people shown most likely felt certain that they would win. Many women

were in support of the policy because it meant that they, who were already fighting for rights such as suffrage and equality, would be allowed to take part. This idea is supported by doc. 4, in which a women's rights advocate describes the ~~the~~ euphoria ^{they felt} at being allowed to help. Also in 1914 and 1915, there were people who, though in shock, knew they must be supportive. This shock is described in doc. 5 as a columnist ~~describe~~ wrote of ~~the~~ it ~~blatantly~~ leaving silence in the streets. S. Jobs, the writer, was liberal and may have been against the war, which could have affected the way he viewed people's reactions. The Social Democratic Party printed an article describing how they had to agree or would perish (doc 3). This shows that, though many were agreeable due to strong nationalism, many also agreed because it appeared that there was no other choice. In a pamphlet, most likely biased for the war and used as propaganda, the Pan-Germanic League urged the people to follow the emperor and find strength in unity. Initially, people agreed with the idea of "civil peace", whether they felt it was right or not.

As the years progressed, opinions shifted

and many of the German people were upset. This feeling of frustration is mirrored in doc 8. Evelyn Blixher described in a diary entry, which was most likely unbiased since it was private, her views of women in the streets complaining about the war. They were starving and forced to work in the place of men who were sent to fight. This is a far cry from the women of 1919. Other women were upset at doing their husband's jobs alone, or with bad help. This is described in a report by a military administrator (doc 9). He tells of hearing women who refuse to work for the government any longer. The wives were not the only ones upset. A German soldier in the trenches was quoted as saying that people back home were taking money & food from his family (doc 7). Discontent began to grow and would continue until the war was over (and even after that).

By 1917 and 1918, the population had schismed; some diehard supporters continued patriotically, while others rallied for an end. In a proclamation made by an army officer (doc 11), people in opposition of the war were compared to dogs. The support of the entire country was required to support the war effort. This side was most

likely favored by people high in the ranks (which could explain the stance of the General) and those in the government. The people, especially the lower middle class, were the ones suffering most from food shortages. The opinion of one such person was published in a Munich-based magazine (doc 12). It shows how the middle class was being "squished" by the aristocracy and industry. Others voiced their opinions much louder. In a police report in Berlin (doc 10), radical labor leaders were demanding an end to the war, more food, etc. This is a great example of an opposing view to the war because it is a meeting. People were rallying for an end to the war and reforms by 1917. This discontent may have aided the defeat of Germany at the end of World War I.

Thus, the policy of Burgfrieden during the war lasted for a while, but was unsuccessful by the end. Initially, many people were in shock and felt support was mandatory. Quiet dissent formed midway and became a roar by 1918. Little did the German population know, the end of the war which they desperately hoped for, would bring more problems with the Treaty of Versailles and its reparations requirements.

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When a civil peace was first announced, many Germans were optimistic about the war. However, the government lost a lot of support over the next few years. In November 1918, Germany finally surrendered.

Initially, Emperor Wilhelm II received a lot of support for the war and the civil peace he declared, although a lot of this support came from other political leaders. Document 2 shows a cheering crowd outside of the Royal Palace during the same month a civil peace and war were declared. Document 3 describes the Reichstag's support for the war and explains that they must unite in support because it will benefit them after the war. Document 4 shows that the women's rights movement will benefit from the civil peace because of the need for national women's service. However, all three of these documents were published by government publications or political activists who had much to gain from the war and the civil peace. Document 5, written in a liberal newspaper, states that ~~most~~ most of Berlin's population was unenthusiastic and even shocked by the proclamation of war.

In 1915, the government still supported the civil peace, but many citizens began to lose faith in the government. In Document 6, a member of the Pan-German League insists that ~~the~~ ^{Germany} ~~is~~ is strong because of ~~its~~ its unity, and that no one should be ~~permitted~~ allowed to disagree with the government. Document 7 and Document 8 ~~both~~ both express frustration with the food shortage. However, the soldier blames people who are becoming rich from the war, ^{while} ~~the~~ the English woman says that the German women blame the government. These women also believe that the government doesn't care about the soldiers as people, but is only exploiting them for their own gain.

In 1916 and 1917, the government ~~is~~ still ^{attempted} ~~attempting~~ to keep the civil peace, but government officials ~~are~~ began to realize that they had lost most of their

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Support, Document 9 describes the views of many farmers. They believe the ~~goverment~~ government, called "those Berliners", ~~are~~ ^{is} not doing anything to help ~~at~~ the people, and therefore, these people refuse to keep working like the government demands. Document 11 shows the government's attempt to ~~and~~ uphold the civil peace. However, it has now resorted to name-calling and commands to get the people to work together rather than earlier speech by Emperor Wilhelm II (Document 1) which ~~was~~ motivated them to work together for their common good.

When the civil peace was first declared, many people were optimistic and supported it, expecting that it would bring peace to Germany. However, as the war went on, food became scarce and people ~~they~~ stopped supporting the government which seemed to only be working for its own good.