

Declaration of Flemish Independence by the Council of Flanders

Flanders
1917



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Declaration of Flemish Independence by the Council of Flanders

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Verklaring over volledige zelfstandigheid van Vlaanderen door de Raad van Vlaanderen

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Context

In the context of the First World War, a small section of the Flemish Movement was influenced by the policy of the German Empire - which occupied Belgium during the war - which was aimed at radicalizing the Flemish question in order to destabilize Belgium. This 'Flamenpolitik'[Flemish Politics] would help to contribute to the establishment of the pro-German (radical) 'Council of Flanders' which would ultimately declare independence in December 1917. After the Great War, a part of the members of the Council would flee to the Netherlands, trying to plead with the Entente powers and the American President Roosevelt to keep the Flemish issue in mind during the Versailles Peace Talks (see Pro Flandria Servanda). In addition, radicalized collaborators during the war (also known as 'activists') would play a crucial role in the formation of the Flemish nationalist political parties 'Vlaamsche Front'[Flemish Front] and "Vlaamsch National Verbond" [Flemish National Union] during the interwar period.

Council of Flanders

In accordance with the aims indicated in its first Manifesto, published one year ago, the Council of Flanders, in its general assembly of 22 December 1917, solemnly and unanimously decreed Flanders' complete independence.

Following this declaration, the Council of Flanders resigns the mandate entrusted to it by the Flemish Diet of 4 February 1917 and will submit itself to a new People's Consultation, which should give the Flemish people the opportunity to express their will with regard to this decision of the Council.

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