

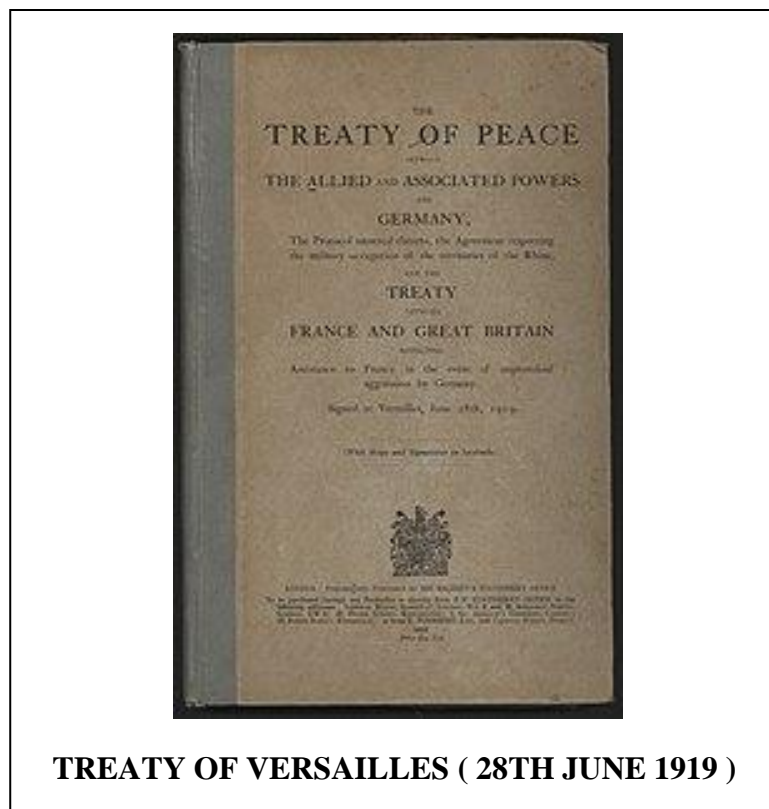
HOW TO REBUILD PEACE AFTER THE END OF THE WAR ? TREATY OF VERSAILLES (28TH JUNE 1919)

The Treaty of Versailles, signed in June 1919 at the Palace of Versailles in Paris at the end of World War I, codified peace terms between the victorious Allies and Germany.

The Treaty of Versailles held Germany responsible for starting the war and imposed harsh penalties in terms of loss of territory, massive reparations payments and demilitarization.

Far from the “peace without victory” that U.S. President Woodrow Wilson had outlined in his famous Fourteen Points in early 1918, the Treaty of Versailles humiliated Germany while failing to resolve the underlying issues that had led to war in the first place.

Economic distress and resentment of the treaty within Germany helped fuel the ultra-nationalist sentiment that led to the rise of Adolf Hitler and his Nazi Party, as well as the coming of a World War II just two decades later.



THE PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE

The Paris Peace Conference opened on January 18, 1919, a date that was significant in that it marked the anniversary of the coronation of German Emperor Wilhelm I, which took place in the Palace of Versailles at the end of the Franco-Prussian War in 1871.

Prussian victory in that conflict had resulted in Germany's unification and its seizure of Alsace and Lorraine provinces from France.

In 1919, France and its prime minister, Georges Clemenceau, had not forgotten the humiliating loss, and intended to avenge it in the new peace agreement.



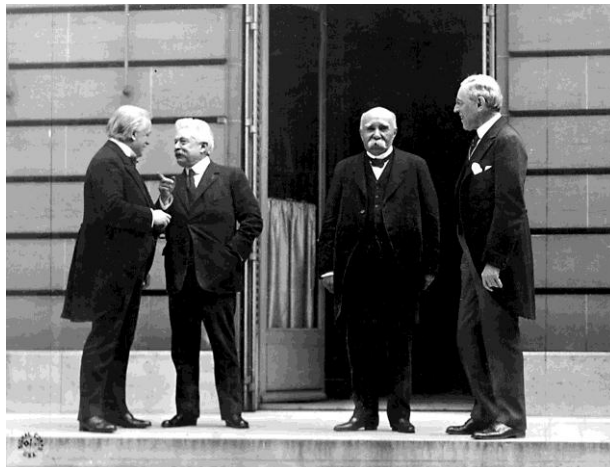
THE PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE

THE TERMS OF THE VERSAILLES TREATY

The “Big Four” leaders of the victorious Western nations - Wilson of the United States, David Lloyd George of Great Britain, Georges Clemenceau of France and, to a lesser extent, Vittorio Orlando of Italy - dominated the peace negotiations in Paris. Germany and the other defeated powers, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey, were not represented at the conference, neither was Russia.

In the end, the European Allies imposed harsh peace terms on Germany, forcing the nation to surrender around 10 percent of its territory and all of its overseas possessions.

Other key provisions of the Treaty of Versailles called for the demilitarization and occupation of the Rhineland, limited Germany’s army and navy, forbade it to maintain an air force, and required it to conduct war crimes trials against Kaiser Wilhelm II and other leaders for their aggression. Most importantly, Article 231 of the treaty, better known as the “war guilt clause,” forced Germany to accept full responsibility for starting World War I and pay enormous reparations for Allied war losses.



**BRITISH PRIME MINISTER DAVID LLOYD GEORGE,
ITALIAN PRIME MINISTER VITTORIO ORLANDO,
FRENCH PRESIDENT GEORGES CLEMENCEAU AND
US PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON AT THE
SIGNING OF THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES**

THE MAIN PROVISIONS OF THE PEACE TREATY WITH THE GERMAN

GUILT FOR THE WAR:

- I. Germany had to admit losses that it was the main culprit for the First World War.

TERRITORIAL LOSSES:

- II. It had to recognize all the newly formed states in Europe and pledged not to annex Austria.
- III. She lost all her colonies in favor of the victors
- IV. The provinces of Alsca and Lorraine, which Germany conquered in 1871, were returned to France. Some areas also belonged to Belgium, Denmark and Lithuania.
- V. The area in the east of the pre-war German Empire, in which the Polish population already lived, belonged to the restored Poland. Poland also gained access to the Baltic Sea near the city of Gdansk, and with that territory East Prussia was separated from the rest of the Germans. The port of Gdansk, with a majority German population, was declared a free city under the administration of the League of Nations.
- VI. The Saar, an important industrial area, quickly found itself under the control of the League of Nations, and all coal production in the next five years went to France.

MILITARY REGULATIONS:

- VII. The Rhineland was demilitarized. The Germans did not deploy their military units or carry out any military activities on the 50 km wide belt of the French border.
- VIII. The German army was reduced to only 119,000 men (during World War I, Germany was able to mobilize close to 2 million troops).
- IX. The German Merchant and Navy belonged to the victorious countries primarily the United Kingdom.

WAR COMPENSATION:

- X. Due to the war damage inflicted by its wars of conquest, Germany had to pay high war damage damaged within 30 years, which in 1921 was set at 132 billion gold marks.