

Terms of the Treaty of Versailles: On June 28th, 1919, a German delegation signed the Treaty of Versailles, which officially brought the Great War to a close. When the terms were first presented to the German government in May, they were met with a wave of indignation, sparking a ministerial crisis that culminated in the resignation of Chancellor Scheidemann, who charged that the Entente (aka the Allies) sought to make the German people “a nation of slaves and helots.” NOTE: Germany was NOT allowed to participate in the drafting of the treaty – it had been composed by the representatives of the Big Three (re: US, UK, FR) behind closed doors. Most German leaders, and people for that matter, felt upon the first reveal that it was a rather harsh settlement and proposed negotiation on several points. The Allies, however, rejected the German proposals and threatened to resume hostilities (re: November 11, 1918 = “armistice” not a surrender) as well as cut off all aid and food supplies unless the treaty was signed as presented. Thus, the German government had no choice but to accept since military resistance by May-June of 1919 would have been hopeless.

Below is a list of articles seen by Germans as the most unfair and humiliating. It is no wonder one of Hitler’s favorite themes in his political rise to power was the need to “revise” the Versailles Treaty.

Article 80 – Germany acknowledges and will respect strictly the independence of Austria, within the frontiers which may be fixed in a treaty between that State and the Principal Allied and Associated Powers; she agrees that this independence is inalienable, except with the consent of the Council of the League of Nations.

Article 119 – German renounces in favor of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers all her rights and titles over her oversea possessions.

Article 120 – All movable and immovable property in such territories belonging to the German Empire or to any German state shall pass to the Government exercising authority over such territories, on the terms of Article 257 of Part IX (Financial clauses) of the present treaty.

[NOTE: Germany was forced to abandon its claims, rights, and treaties in China, Siam, Liberia, Morocco, Egypt, Turkey and Bulgaria, and Shantung. Most of German claims and rights were handed over to either the British, the France, or the Japanese.]

Article 160 – By a date which must not be later than March 31, 1920, the German Army must not comprise more than seven divisions of infantry and three divisions of cavalry.

After that date the total number of effectives in the Army of the States constituting Germany must not exceed one hundred thousand men, including officers and establishments of depots. The Army shall be devoted exclusively to the maintenance of order within the territory and to the control of the frontiers.

The total effective strength of officers, including the personnel of staffs, whatever their composition, must not exceed four thousand.

Article 173 – Universal compulsory military service shall be abolished in Germany. The German Army may only be constituted and recruited by means of voluntary enlistment.

Article 174 – The period of enlistment for non-commissioned officers and privates must be twelve consecutive years.

Article 175 – The officers who are retained by the Army must undertake the obligation to serve in it up to the age of forty-five. Officers newly appointed must undertake to serve on the active list for twenty-five consecutive years at least.

Article 178 – All measures of mobilization or appertaining to mobilization are forbidden. In no case must formations, administrative services of General Staffs include supplementary cadres.

Article 180 – All fortified works, fortresses and field works situated in German territory to the west of a line drawn fifty kilometers to the east of the Rhine shall be disarmed and dismantled.

Article 181 – After the expiration of a period of two months from the coming into force of the present Treaty the German naval forces in commission must not exceed:

- 6 battleships of the *Deutschland* or *Lothringen* type,
- 6 light cruisers,,
- 12 destroyers,
- 12 torpedo boats.

Or an equal number of ships constructed to replace them as provided in Article 190.

No submarines are to be included.

All other warships, except where there is a provision to the contrary in the present Treaty, must be placed in reserve or devoted to commercial purposes.

Article 183 – After the expiration of a period of two months from the coming into force of the present Treaty, the total personnel of the German Navy, including the manning of the fleet, coast defenses, signal stations, administration and other land services, must not exceed fifteen thousand, including officers and men of all grades and corps.

The total strength of officers and warrant officers must not exceed fifteen hundred.

Within two months from the coming into force of the present Treaty the personnel in excess of the above strength shall be demobilized.

No Naval or military corps or reserve force in connection with the Navy may be organized in Germany without being included into the above strength.

Article 190 – Germany is forbidden to construct or acquire any warships other than those intended to replace the units in commission provided by Article 181 of the present Treaty.

The warships intended for replacement purposes as above shall not exceed the following displacement:

- Armored ships = 10,000 tons
- Light cruisers = 6,000 tons
- Destroyers = 800 tons
- Torpedo boats = 200 tons

Except where a ship has been lost, units of different classes shall only be replaced at the end of a period of twenty years in the case of battleships and cruisers, and fifteen years in the case of destroyers and torpedo boats, counting the launching of the ship.

Article 191 – The construction or acquisition of any submarine, even for commercial purposes, shall be forbidden in Germany.

Article 198 – The armed forces of Germany must not include any military or naval air forces.

Article 199 – Within two months from the coming into force of the present Treaty the personnel of air forces on the rolls of the German land and sea forces shall be demobilized.

Article 201 – During the six months following the coming into force of the present Treaty, the manufacture and importation of aircraft, parts of aircraft, engines for aircraft, and parts of engines for aircraft, shall be forbidden in all German territory.

Article 202 – On the coming into force of the present Treaty, all military and naval aeronautical material, except the machines mentioned in the second and third paragraphs of Article 198, must be delivered to the Governments of the Principal Allied and Associated powers.

Delivery must be effected at such places as the said Governments may select, and must be completed within three months.

In particular, this material will include all items under the following heads which are or have been in use or were designed for warlike purposes:

- Complete airplanes and seaplanes, as well as those being manufactured, repaired or assembled.
- Dirigibles able to take the air, being manufactured, repaired, or assembled.
- Plant for the manufacture of hydrogen.
- Dirigible sheds and shelters of every kind for aircraft.
- Pending their delivery, dirigibles will, at the expense of Germany, be maintained inflated with hydrogen; the plant for the manufacture of hydrogen as well as the sheds for dirigibles, may, at the discretion of the said Powers, be left to Germany until the time when the dirigibles are handed over.
- Engines for aircraft.
- Nacelles and fuselages.
- Armament (guns, machine guns, light machine guns, bomb-dropping apparatus, torpedo-dropping apparatus, synchronization apparatus, aiming apparatus).
- Munitions (cartridges, shells, bombs, loaded or unloaded, stocks of explosives or of material for their manufacture).
- Instruments for use on aircraft.
- Wireless apparatus and photographic or cinematograph apparatus for use on aircraft.
- Component parts of any of the items under the preceding heads.
- The material referred to above shall not be removed without special permission from the said Governments.

Article 231 – The Allied and Associated Governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her allies for causing all the loss and damage to which the Allied and Associated Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies.