

TREATY OF ST. GERMAIN

TREATY AT A GLANCE

Completed

September 10, 1919, at St. Germain-en-Laye, France

Signatories

United States, British Empire, France, Italy, and Japan ("Principal Allied and Associated Powers"); Belgium, China, Cuba, Ecuador, Greece, Nicaragua, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serb-Croat-Slovene State, Siam, and Czechoslovakia ("The Allied and Associated Powers"); and Austria

Overview

Besides the TREATY OF BREST-LITOVSK and the TREATY OF VERSAILLES (1919), this was the most important treaty relating to World War I. In concert with the Versailles document, it dissolved the Austro-Hungarian Empire, raised the hackles of the Italians concerning Italy's boundary with Austria and the newly created Yugoslavia, caused the Italian government to fall, and created a bitterness that fostered the rise of Mussolini's Fascists.

Historical Background

The end of World War I was accompanied by a series of treaties, of which the Treaty of Versailles was the central document. The Treaty of St. Germain (named for the Paris suburb in which the treaty was concluded), signed on September 10, 1919, made official the disintegration of the vast Austro-Hungarian, or Hapsburg, Empire, which had in actuality taken place during October and November 1918. By the treaty, Austria, now a small republic, recognized the political dispositions made by the Treaty of Versailles: the independence of Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Yugoslavia; and the award of Galicia to Poland and of the Trentino, south Tirol, Trieste, and Istria to Italy. The once major Austrian army was now cut to a maximum of 30,000 men, and Austria agreed to reparations. Most significantly, Austria was forbidden to unite with Germany—a dream cherished by many Germans as well as Austrians.

Czechoslovakia's foreign minister, Tomáš Masaryk, and Czechoslovakia's president, Edvard Beneš, avid fans of Woodrow Wilson and his self-determination policy for ethnic nationalities, exploited their personal friendship with the U.S. president to win two major concessions that violated the very principle of national self-determination they so admired. In order to give

Czechoslovakia a riverine outlet, the Paris Peace Conference granted the two men control of territory stretching south to Bratislava, which created within the newly established borders a minority of a million Magyars. Even more troublesome was the action taken to provide the vulnerable young country military protection from Germany: the diplomats placed the Sudety Mountains between the two nations. Thus did Czechoslovakia retain the entire historical province of Bohemia, bringing 3.5 million Sudeten Germans under the rule of Prague, a turn of events that would haunt the peacemakers when Adolf Hitler came to power.

Then, largely because of the Italians' traditional truculence and Wilson's typical sanctimoniousness, the negotiations to set Italy's boundaries between Austria and Yugoslavia became one of the more inflammatory issues of the entire peace talks. Italy's premier, Vittorio Orlando, clung to the Allied promises that had enticed Italy into the war in the first place under the 1915 TREATY OF LONDON.

The morally touchy Wilson, offended by the secret war-aims treaty, vented his frustrations with the peace process—disguised as righteous indignation—on the Italians. When he took to the streets of Paris to make his case publicly, not only did he commit a serious breach of diplomatic etiquette, but he provoked the easily aggravated Italians into bolting the conference.

They returned to promises of a sort of compromise spoils: Wilson would let them have Trieste, parts of Istria and Dalmatia, and the Upper Adige up to the Brenner Pass (with its 200,000 Austrians), but that was as far as he would go. No way would Italy get Fiume, a province with a Yugoslavian hinterland but an Italian port. On June 19 Orlando's government fell over the issue. A month later, a band of crypto-fascist freebooters under the command of the flamboyant Italian nationalist poet Gabriele D'Annunzio seized the port city and declared Fiume a free state.

Terms

As with the Treaty of Versailles, the COVENANT OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS was integral to the treaty as its Part 1. Part 2 of the treaty defined the new frontiers of Austria:

PART II FRONTIERS OF AUSTRIA

ARTICLE 27

The frontiers of Austria shall be fixed as follows:

1. *With Switzerland and Liechtenstein:*

The present frontier.

2. *With Italy:*

From the point 2645 (Gruben J.) eastwards to point 2915 (Klopaier Spitz), a line to be fixed on the ground passing through point 1483 on the Reschen-Nauders road;

thence eastwards to the summit of Dreiherrn Spitz (point 3505), the watershed between the basins of the Inn to the north and the Adige to the south;

thence generally south-south-eastwards to point 2545 (Marchkinkelle), the watershed between the basins of the Drave to the east and the Adige to the west;

thence south-eastwards to point 2483 (Helm Spitz),

a line to be fixed on the ground crossing the Drave between Winnbach and Arnbach;

thence east-south-eastwards to point 2050 (Osternig) about 9 kilometers northwest of Tarvis,

the watershed between the basins of the Drave on the north and successively the basins of the Sextenbach, the Piave and the Tagliamento on the south;

thence east-south-eastwards to point 1492 (about 2 kilometers west of Thörl),

the watershed between the Gail and the Gailitz;

thence eastwards to point 1509 (Pec),

a line to be fixed on the ground cutting the Gailitz south of the town and station of Thörl and passing through point 1270 (Cabin Berg).

3. *On the South, and then with the Klagenfurt area,* subject to the provisions of Section II of Part III (Political Clauses for Europe):

From point 1509 (Pec) eastwards to point 1817 (Malestiger),

the crest of the Karavanken;

from point 1817 (Malestiger) and in a north-east-erly direction as far as the Drave at a point situated about 1 kilometer southeast of the railway bridge on the eastern branch of the bend made by that river about 6 kilometers east of Villach,

a line to be fixed on the ground cutting the railway between Mallestig and Faak and passing through point 666 (Polana);

thence in a south-easterly direction to a point about 2 kilometers above St. Martin,

the course of the Drave;

thence in a northerly direction as far as point 18711 about 10 kilometers to the east-north-east of Villach,

a line running approximately from south to north to be fixed on the ground;

thence east-north-eastwards to a point to be chosen near point 725 about 10 kilometers north-west of Klagenfurt on the administrative boundary between the districts of St. Veit and Klagenfurt,

a line to be fixed on the ground passing through points 1069 (Taubenbühel), 1045 (Gallenberg) and 815 (Freudenberg);

thence eastwards to a point to be chosen on the ground west of point 1075 (Steinbruch Kogel),

the administrative boundary between the districts of St. Veit and Klagenfurt;

thence north-eastwards to the point on the Gurk where the administrative boundary of the district of Völkermarkt leaves that river,

a line to be fixed on the ground passing through point 1076;

thence north-eastwards to point 1899 (Speikkogl),

the administrative boundary between the districts of St. Veit and Völkermarkt;

thence south-eastwards to point 842 (1 kilometer west of Kasparstein),

the north-eastern boundary of the district of Völkermarkt;

thence eastwards to point 1522 (Hühner Kogel),

a line to be fixed on the ground passing north of Lavamund.

4. *With the Serb-Croat-Slovene State,* subject to the provisions of Section II of Part III (Political Clauses for Europe):

From point 1522 (Hühner Kogel) eastwards to point 917 (St. Lorenzen),

a line to be fixed on the ground passing through point 1330;

thence eastwards to the point where it meets the administrative boundary between the districts of Marburg and Leibnitz,

the watershed between the basins of the Drave to the south and the Saggau to the north;

thence north-eastwards to the point where this administrative boundary meets the Mur,

the above-mentioned administrative boundary;

thence to the point where it meets the old frontier of 1867 between Austria and Hungary about 5 kilometers south-east of Radkersburg,

must comply with the following conditions and provisions:

(a) Whatever part of the full amount of the proved claims is not paid in gold or in ships, securities, commodities or otherwise, Austria shall be required, under such conditions as the Commission may determine, to cover by way of guarantee, by an equivalent issue of bonds, obligations or otherwise, in order to constitute an acknowledgement of the said part of the debt.

(b) In periodically estimating Austria's capacity to pay the Commission shall examine the Austrian system of taxation first, to the end that the sums for reparation which Austria is required to pay shall become a charge upon all her revenues prior to that for the service or discharge of any domestic loan, and, secondly, so as to satisfy itself that in general the Austrian scheme of taxation is fully as heavy proportionately as that of any of the Powers represented on the Commission.

The Reparation Commission shall receive instructions to take account of:

(1) The actual economic and financial position of Austrian territory as delimited by the present Treaty; and

(2) The diminution of its resources and of its capacity for payment resulting from the clauses of the present Treaty.

As long as the position of Austria is not modified the Commission shall take account of these considerations in fixing the final amount of the obligations to be imposed on Austria, the payments by which these are to be discharged, and any postponement of payment of interest which may be asked for by Austria.

(c) The Commission shall, as provided in Article 181, take from Austria, by way of security for and acknowledgment of her debt, gold bearer bonds free of all taxes or charges of every description established or to be established by the Austrian Government or by any authorities subject to it. These bonds will be delivered at any time that may be judged expedient by the Commission, and in three portions, of which the respective amounts will be also fixed by the Commission, the crowns gold being payable in conformity with Article 214 of Part IX (Financial Clauses) of the present Treaty:

(1) A first issue in bearer bonds payable not later than May 1, 1921, without interest. There shall be specially applied to the amortisation of these bonds the payments which Austria is pledged to make in conformity with Article 181, after deduction of the sums used for the reimbursement of the expenses of the armies of occupation and other payments for food-stuffs and raw materials. Such bonds as may not have been redeemed by May 1, 1921, shall then be exchanged for new bonds of the same type as those provided for below (paragraph 12, (c) 2).

(2) A second issue in bearer bonds bearing interest at 2 1/2 per cent. between 1921 and 1926, and thereafter at 5 per cent. with an additional 1 per cent. for amortisation beginning in 1926 on the whole amount of the issue.

(3) An undertaking in writing to issue, when, but not until, the Commission is satisfied that Austria can meet the interest and sinking fund obligations, a further instalment of bearer bonds bearing interest at 5 per cent., the time and mode of payment of principal and interest to be determined by the Commission.

The dates for the payment of interest, the manner of employing the amortisation fund and all other questions relating to the issue, management and regulation of the bond issue shall be determined by the Commission from time to time.

Further issues by way of acknowledgment and security may be required as the Commission subsequently determines from time to time.

In case the Reparation Commission should proceed to fix definitely and no longer provisionally the sum of the common charges to be borne by Austria as a result of the claims of the Allied and Associated Powers, the Commission shall immediately annul all bonds which may have been issued in excess of this sum.

(d) In the event of bonds, obligations or other evidence of indebtedness issued by Austria by way of security for or acknowledgment of her reparation debt being disposed of outright, not by way of pledge, to persons other than the several Governments in whose favor Austria's original reparation indebtedness was created, an amount of such reparation indebtedness shall be deemed to be extinguished corresponding to the nominal value of the bonds, etc., so disposed of outright, and the obligation of Austria in respect of such bonds shall be confined to her liabilities to the holders of the bonds, as expressed upon their face.

(c) The damage for repairing, reconstructing and rebuilding property situated in the invaded and devastated districts, including re-installation of furniture, machinery and other equipment, will be calculated according to the cost at the date when the work is done.

(f) Decisions of the Commission relating to the total or partial cancellation of the capital or interest of any of the verified debt of Austria must be accompanied by a statement of its reasons.

The balance of the treaty covered economic and commercial relations and was, in this, consistent with the Treaty of Versailles.

Consequences

When the Italians began talk of their "mutilated victory" in the Great War, they were referring to the Treaty of St. Germain, and the passions this treaty evoked in Italy helped pave the way for the triumph of Mussolini's Fascists in 1922. Similarly, Adolf Hitler used the treaty in the late 1930s to justify his dismemberment of Czechoslovakia (to protect, he said, Sudeten Germans) and the establishment of the Anschluss (Nazi Germany's annexation of Austria).