

Struggle Over Peace: The Political Battles of Woodrow Wilson

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Abstract

Drafted at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, the Treaty of Versailles remains one of the most important documents of the 20th century. US President Woodrow Wilson, a key figure at the Conference, saw his vision for peace rejected and not reflected in the Treaty. Focusing on the Treaty of Versailles and the conclusion of World War I, my research examines the Treaty in the context of Wilson's political philosophy, while identifying the ways it diverges from his vision for peace. I utilize a number of primary sources, including newspaper articles, correspondences between the Allied and German leaders, speeches given by prominent political figures, and the Treaty itself. These sources reveal a disagreement among the Allied leaders; many, such as George Clemeneceau, fought for a "peace of justice," intending to punish Germany and gain both justice and peace in Europe. Wilson sought a different solution, called a "peace without victory." The Treaty of Versailles became a peace of justice, at the detriment of Wilson's ideals. While modern scholarship holds that Wilson failed to impact the peace process, he profoundly shaped the Paris Peace Conference and the Treaty of Versailles. Wilson's idealism set the tone for the Conference, and many leaders referred to him in their rhetoric, allowing his ideology to form a framework for discussion. Wilson did impact one Treaty term, as the League of Nations, created under the Treaty of Versailles, was purely Wilsonian in its design. This research highlights Wilson's strong influence on the Treaty of Versailles and the Paris Peace Conference, despite his failure to impose his policies on the entirety of the Treaty.

Keywords: Woodrow Wilson, World War One, Treaty of Versailles

1. Introduction

As soldiers from around the world left the battlefields of World War I and returned home, diplomats and world leaders descended upon the city of Paris in 1919. The Paris Peace Conference began with great fanfare on January 18th, 1919, and over the next several months politicians from 27 nations debated how to ensure a lasting peace after the horrors of the First World War. The Conference was dominated by 5 main powers; France, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, and the United States. Each held their own private agenda and plan for peace terms, which would often clash with other plans. Most notably, Woodrow Wilson's plans for the "peace without victory" outlined in his 14 Points collided with the plans other leaders had for harsher, more punitive peace terms. Similar to the events surrounding the Armistice at Compiegne, Wilson was again overshadowed at the Paris Peace Conference, as his "peace without victory" idealism gave way to his opponents' desire for reparations and a "victor's peace."

Germany had agreed to peace and the horrific war that consumed millions of lives had ground to a halt. Yet for Wilson, the real work of forging a lasting peace had only just begun. Wilson arrived in Paris to much pomp and grandeur. He brought quite a train of followers with him to Paris; professors, scholars, lawyers, public relations and financial experts all accompanied him to the French capital in January of 1919. This would ultimately become problematic for Wilson, as the huge support staff was often unable to agree on a course of action during the

Conference. True to form, Wilson's "eager academic countenance"¹ forced him to consider every angle of a problem during the Conference; something which often hindered his ability to act decisively.

Wilson's agenda can be encapsulated by his famous 14 Points, outlined in a speech delivered to Congress in January of 1918. This speech would become the foundation for Wilson's policy at Versailles and his vision for peace. The first point states that nations should engage in "open covenants of peace, openly arrived at,"² and is perhaps the most idealistic point in Wilson's speech. The President recognized the alliances and back-room deals that pushed Europe to war, and saw no place for that conduct in the new global order he envisioned. In the future, Wilson hoped nations would settle disputes openly and would not hide their interactions or correspondence. Point five called for a "free, open-minded and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims,"³ which ultimately proved concerning for imperial powers like Britain and France, who relied heavily on their colonial systems. Points six to thirteen concerned national boundaries and sovereignty, and demanded that Belgium, Poland, Serbia, the people of Austria-Hungary, as well as other unrepresented or occupied nations should have their sovereignty ensured. According to Wilson, military occupation of these nations should end and these nations should be allowed to determine their futures. This concept would later be called "self-determination." Finally, point fourteen calls for a "general association of nations,"⁴ to guarantee territorial integrity and the independence of nations around the globe. As a whole, this speech would form Wilson's unique vision for peace, setting him apart from the other leaders at the Conference. No other leader called for "open covenants" or self-determination, but Wilson fought for the 14 Points throughout the Conference.

Arriving in France with his entourage in tow, Woodrow Wilson's famous 14 Points drove his agenda at the Paris Peace Conference, and his true feelings regarding the 14 points surprised many of his contemporaries. When Wilson had given his 14 Points speech to Congress earlier in January, political leaders around the globe labeled it as a mere propaganda piece.⁵ These leaders received quite a shock in Paris the next year, when Wilson sincerely fought for the 14 Points throughout the whole Conference. His idealism shone through decisions, and he would often beg his staff to "tell me what's right- and I'll fight for it."⁶ Fighting for his ideals was part of Wilson's agenda, and in some respects he was successful. The 14 Points colored the debates and meetings of the Paris Peace Conference, and much of the peace talks were framed with the 14 Points in mind. Yet he faced numerous challenges both domestic and international; political in-fighting in the United States hurt his credibility in Paris, at the same time that savvy diplomatic maneuvering among the other Allies overshadowed his own actions at the Conference.

Interestingly, Wilson was perhaps the only political leader to arrive at the negotiations without the full confidence of his nation's people. Politicians in the United States were deeply divided by Wilson's ideas for peace, and the Republican Party opposed Wilson's ideals for a "peace without victory" and the 14 Points. Toward the end of the war, the United States was gearing up for new Congressional elections, and Wilson deeply feared his Democratic Party would lose to the Republicans, who would then oppose his 14 Points and his agenda for peace. On March 4th, 1919, Wilson's fears were fulfilled and both the Senate and the House of Representatives received new Republican majorities.⁷ This hampered Wilson's credibility in Paris, where international leaders were not interested in the ideas of a man who couldn't convince his own people to agree with him. One of the most prominent Republican leaders of the day, Theodore Roosevelt, had much to say on Wilson and his 14 Points. By 1919, Roosevelt had reached the pinnacle of his political career, served as President, and was settling into a "quiet" retirement. Speaking as the elder statesman of the Republican Party, Roosevelt announced that "Our Allies and our enemies and Mr. Wilson himself should all understand that Mr. Wilson has no authority to speak for the American People at this time."⁸ Roosevelt's remarks were indicative of the Republican view of Wilson, and his words speak to how divided the United States was on the issue of peace. Unlike the leaders of France, Britain, Italy and Japan, Wilson went into the Peace Conference trying to build up his credibility as a statesman. While Wilson was well-regarded for his involvement in the Armistice, divided political opinion in the United States diminished his credibility and standing at the Conference.

The other Allied nations were not troubled with the same issues of division, contributing to the political clout they held at the Conference. In France, George Clemenceau was adored as the "Father of Victory,"⁹ for weathering a soul-sucking war with Germany and ensuring the continued survival of France. The *New York Times* reported that the French public was "exceedingly loyal to a man who won its full confidence and affection."¹⁰ Clemenceau also held honorific positions which greatly enhanced his prestige at the Conference. Firstly, the mere fact that France hosted the Conference helped Clemenceau's position, giving him some sway as the host of the peace talks. In his opening address to the Conference, Clemenceau expounded on the "time-honoured courtesy shown toward the country which has the honour to welcome the Peace Conference in its capital."¹¹ In his address, Clemenceau cleverly reminded the other statesmen of the powerful position France commanded. The "honour" of hosting the Conference would have seemed like a great feat, and only something given to a powerful, important player on the world stage. Likewise, Clemenceau was also elected as President of the Conference.¹² While this was partly another

honorific title, it gave Clemenceau that extra clout he desired and further built up his position as respected statesman and world leader. Clemenceau continually sought to project the power his position as host and President of the Conference gave him, and was largely successful in this endeavor.

Clemenceau's illustrious reputation and high position proved one of Wilson's greatest challenges in Paris, as the wizened old Frenchman had his own distinct ideas for peace terms, which conflicted with Wilson's. Later in his opening address, Clemenceau discussed the issue of war reparations, or forcing Germany to repay the Allied nations for damages caused in the war. In his speech, Clemenceau exclaimed that "The greater the sanguinary catastrophe which devastated and ruined one of the richest regions of France, the more ample and more splendid should be the reparation."¹³ Here Clemenceau explicitly stated his expectation of German reparations, an idea which conflicted with Wilson's own. Clemenceau and his political allies would fight heavily for reparations, which would eventually be one of the most infamous sections in the Treaty of Versailles.

The French President of the Conference took this idea one step further in his address, clearly laying out his idea of peace for the victor. Toward the end of his remarks, Clemenceau claims "If we wish to establish justice in the world we can do so now, for we have won victory and can impose the penalties demanded by justice."¹⁴ If any German contemporary of Clemenceau's had read that statement, it would have been a chilling harbinger of the harsh peace terms to come. This is the very epitome of the "victor's peace" Wilson so often decried. Clemenceau's idea of "peace" hinged on justice, and in his mind, asking war reparations from Germany was just. Indeed, justice did not merely allow or imply penalties, it "demanded" them.

Clemenceau also made numerous disdainful comments on the 14 Points and Wilson's ideology. He stated during the conference that "those principles of President Wilson which are not sufficiently defined in their character to be taken as a basis for a concrete settlement... will resume their full strength in the matter of future settlement of public law, and this will remove one of the difficulties that might obstruct the Allies."¹⁵ Clemenceau took a number of carefully aimed jabs at the 14 Points, starting with the tone with which he started his statement. Clemenceau did not even deign to call Wilson's ideals the "Fourteen Points," he disparagingly referred to them as "those principles." He also argued that they were not "sufficiently defined" to serve as a political platform or ideology, painting the 14 Points as fragile and shaky. Lastly, Clemenceau viewed the 14 Points as an obstruction hindering progress towards peace, and claimed that it needed to move aside so real work on peace terms could begin. Clemenceau became a master at using rhetoric to cut down Wilson's argument, limiting the American President's ability to promote his agenda.

Another global power, Great Britain, entered the Conference with similar advantages, also opposing Wilson's ideas. British Prime Minister Lloyd George headed a coalition government for much of the war, yet new Parliamentary elections were needed. Elections for the House of Commons were scheduled for December 14th, 1918,¹⁶ and Lloyd George, concerned with the re-election of his coalition and his continued presence as Prime Minister, appealed to the sentiments of the British voters. The average British citizen in 1918 held strongly negative feelings towards Germany, blaming them for the war. Lloyd George's campaign reflected and tapped into those feelings, and his two most prominent campaign slogans were "Hang the Kaiser" and "Squeeze the lemon until you can hear the pips squeak."¹⁷ While the latter would not have fit comfortably onto a placard, it did reveal interesting sentiments present in British society. Akin to the French, most British citizens wanted to see Germany severely punished for the war, and did not take kindly to Wilson's talk of a "peace without victory." Lloyd George, recognizing this, based his campaign on this promise of war reparations, and claimed in one speech that "as far as justice is concerned, we have an absolute right to demand the whole cost of the war from Germany."¹⁸ This rhetoric connected strongly with the British people, and allowed Lloyd George to retain his position as Prime Minister of Great Britain. This came at some political cost since Lloyd George stayed in power on the assumption that he would fight for German reparations. Upon arrival in Paris, Lloyd George was forced to do just that. The uphill battle fought by Wilson appeared quite clear; the two other most powerful politicians at the Conference, who had the full confidence of their respective nations behind them, were actively opposed to Wilson's ideas. Wilson, on the other hand, struggled to convince his fellow Americans to agree with him, let alone foreign dignitaries.

Two other foreign powers who Wilson failed to convince were Italian Prime Minister Vittorio Orlando and former Japanese Prime Minister Saionji Kinmochi. At first glance, these men would have made suitable allies for Wilson's agenda; while both Japan and Italy held imperial ambitions, neither possessed colonies that would be affected by the President's plan, and neither nation was particularly committed to Clemenceau's vision for the Treaty. Yet both nations were alienated and eventually ceded away the influence they held at the Conference. Orlando sought after the territory of Fiume in Central Europe, yet when he was denied the territory the Italian leader balked, and held little influence at the Conference afterwards.¹⁹ Kinmochi's case is more racially-charged and controversial. The Japanese delegation proposed the inclusion of an "equality" clause into the League of Nations covenant, which would explicitly state the racial equality of all peoples involved in the League of Nations.²⁰ President Wilson would

eventually block this proposal from the League covenant, effectively alienating the Japanese delegation in his refusal to acknowledge their racial equality. Theoretically, President Wilson could have won both these delegations over to his side, yet other diplomatic and social issues prevented that from happening.

Apart from Wilson's political rivals, there were a number of other factors which contributed to the downfall of the 14 Points. Firstly, there was the issue of war "guilt." This issue was a central question in the peace talks, and a Commission was set up to investigate the issue of war guilt. The Commission consisted of two representatives from each of five main Allied powers, and one from Belgium, Greece, Poland, Romania and Serbia. US Secretary of State Robert Lansing served as chairman of the Commission. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Commission placed guilt squarely at the jack-booted feet of the German state. One of the conclusions the Commission drew was that "The war was premeditated by the Central Powers together with their Allies, Turkey and Bulgaria, and was the result of acts deliberately committed in order to make it unavoidable."²¹ This proved problematic for Wilson and magnificent for everyone else; Lloyd George, Clemenceau, and their allies used this report to reinforce their push for reparations, ensuring Germany's guilt was apparent to the whole world. This report was difficult for Wilson to discount, as his own Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, headed the Commission's investigation.

The final thorn in Wilson's side lay in the 14 Points themselves. While Wilson would disagree, Clemenceau may have been correct when he argued that the 14 Points contained weak, flimsy ideology and would not work well as international law. Throughout the 14 Points, there were a number of qualifiers, including numerous "must"s and "should"s.²² This allowed the 14 Points to be continually reinterpreted according to the wishes of the reader. Indeed, many at the Conference did just that. Clause 2 stated there shall be "freedom of the seas."²³ Great Britain, a great naval power, interpreted this to mean the opposite of Wilson's intent; to the British, "freedom of the seas" meant freedom to police and enforce their will on the waves. Indeed, a prominent legal journal in 1919 published an article focusing on the 14 Points and the Paris Peace Conference. The article claimed Clause 2 was "open to various interpretations."²⁴ While the 14 Points remains a profound treatise on peaceful, civil discourse between nations, its standing as a basis for political doctrine was shaky.

Ultimately, Woodrow Wilson was unsuccessful in Paris for a variety of reasons. He did not secure a place for his 14 Points in the Treaty of Versailles, nor did he prevent harsh reparations from falling on Germany. Most importantly, his desire for "peace without victory" fell on deaf ears; European leaders simply did not want to listen to a proposal that did not blame and punish Germany for the war. The President grew increasingly frustrated at the Conference, as his policies were overlooked, one by one. According to one report, Wilson "threatened to go home unless general progress was made in adjustment of the world's affairs."²⁵ Wilson was outmaneuvered by his rivals, Clemenceau and Lloyd George, while political division at home hamstrung his efforts in Europe. Wilson went into the Paris Peace Conference with the best intentions, yet wound up losing the political game he so desperately wanted to win.

As the debates at the Paris Peace Conference concluded in early May of 1919, the Treaty of Versailles was sent to Germany, whose leaders were given 3 weeks to review the document and decide to accept the Treaty. After heated deliberation among German politicians, two "virtually unknown men,"²⁶ Hermann Mueller and Johannes Bell, were sent to represent the German people. On June 28th, 1919, men from around the globe filed into the Hall of Mirrors in the Palace of Versailles, the same room where William I of Prussia had declared himself German Emperor in 1871.²⁷ Yet this event would be rather different for the Germans present; the imperious entrance of Clemenceau, Lloyd George and Wilson into the Hall was meekly followed by the German delegation, who "slipped almost unnoticed into its seats."²⁸ As signatures were signed and hands were shaken, it appeared the Allies, particularly US President Wilson, had been victorious in political battle fought over a European peace. Indeed, much talk was made of the Peace and its Wilsonian ideals. The Treaty, however, looked nothing like Wilson's vision for peace, even though his ideals framed the conversations surrounding the Conference and the Treaty. While the Treaty of Versailles diverged significantly from Wilson's vision, his ideals shaped the rhetoric surrounding the Treaty, as well as Germany's expectations for peace.

One of the most significant examples of the Treaty's diversion from Wilson's ideas lies in its punitive nature, reflected in many of the terms worked into the Treaty. Broadly speaking, Germany lost significant territory, both in Europe and in its colonial endeavors abroad.²⁹ Specifically, France absorbed Alsace-Lorraine, a highly profitable and long disputed region on the French-German border. Belgium was enlarged with the addition of former German territory, while parts of East Prussia and the Sudetenland were given to Lithuania and Czechoslovakia, respectively. On top of this, Germany's colonies were divided up between the victorious powers, as German holdings in China, for example, were given over to Japanese control. This contrasts strongly with Wilson's plan for a treaty, calling to mind the "victory terms imposed upon the vanquished"³⁰ he had warned the world about two years earlier in 1917. The divergence of the Treaty from Wilson's plans is critical to understanding his impact on the Treaty, and while his

principles gave way to a desire for retribution, Wilsonian ideals became critical in shaping the way politicians and nations viewed and discussed the Treaty.

There are a number of logical justifications for the punitive nature of the Treaty, explaining why the Allies were so harsh in their design. After the Peace Conference, the German delegation to Versailles sent letters detailing their grievances with the Treaty to George Clemenceau, who replied with varying degrees of irritation. In one such reply, Clemenceau describes the war as “the greatest crime against humanity and the freedom of peoples that any nation, calling itself civilized, has ever consciously committed.”³¹ In this statement, Clemenceau is expressing an idea which formed the professed moral aim of the Treaty. The Treaty was set up by Allied leaders to enforce a “peace of justice.”³² Those who subscribed to this idea sought to cement lasting peace through their idea of “justice.” Clemenceau and others believed that if peace were to last, “it will be because those responsible for concluding the war have had the courage to see that justice is not deflected for the sake of convenient peace.”³³ Justice was seen as essential to achieving peace, and Wilson’s ideas for peace seemed ludicrous to those Allied leaders who sought justice for their dead and dying. Justice was seen as the only correct recourse in the peace process. Not only would it bring justice to the fallen, it was thought that a “peace of justice” would ensure a lasting peace in Europe.

The harshness of the war spread this concept of justice across Europe, as Allied leaders were outraged by the war and eager to place blame for its atrocities. Many Allied leaders, most prominently Clemenceau, dumped this war guilt firmly on German shoulders; the inquiry done by the “Commission to Assign War Guilt” only reinforced this idea. Yet by the end of the Conference, Germany was not only blamed for starting the war, they were also seen as responsible for its gruesome nature. Clemenceau declared in May, 1919 that “she is no less responsible for the savage and inhuman manner in which it was conducted.”³⁴ This clearly explains the reasoning behind the punitive sections of the Treaty of Versailles; Germany was seen by the Allies as answerable for starting and maintaining a vicious, drawn out war. Later, in the same letter written to the German delegation, Clemenceau laid out a chilling statement regarding German war guilt; he claims that the “terrible responsibility which lies at her doors can be seen in the fact that not less than seven million dead lie buried in Europe.”³⁵ In his letters and speeches, Clemenceau pushed German war guilt to its furthest conclusion. He wrote those intimidating words to a German delegation trying to negotiate a more moderate peace treaty, and used Germany’s “terrible responsibility” to validate the Treaty. Yet he also wrote for an international audience, who read his words in newspapers around the world. For this reason, Clemenceau capitalized on European anger, pointing global frustration squarely at a German target.

While the validity of placing responsibility for the war on Germany can be debated, Germany’s position as global scapegoat had a serious impact on the Treaty of Versailles. As mentioned previously, justice was seen as the basis for a lasting peace. George Clemenceau reiterated this concept, stating that “justice, therefore, is the only possible basis for the settlement of the accounts of this terrible war.”³⁶ His statement illustrates the concept of peace held in Paris in 1919, where peace was seen as enmeshed with concepts of retributive justice, in which accounts needed to be settled and guilt needed to be paid. Clemenceau used clever rhetoric to galvanize public opinion towards his desire for justice, at the expense of Wilson’s plans. Indeed, this proved a straightforward task, as the world looked for a scapegoat to blame for the war. It eventually proved easier to convince the world of German guilt than to persuade an exhausted and angry world to agree to Wilsonian idealism.

In an ironic turn of events, Germany held its own concept of a “peace of justice.” In a letter sent June 1st, 1919, the German delegation to Versailles explained its numerous grievances regarding the Treaty. Early in the letter, the delegation stated they “hoped for the peace of justice which had been promised to us.”³⁷ German politicians were shocked at the terms of the Treaty, which was not the treaty they had expected or been promised. In the German mind, a “peace of justice” meant a fair and open treaty, without punitive terms meant to push down a nation or blame them for the war. This harkens back to the Wilsonian idea of “peace without victory,” which was a plan for peace which would be fair to all parties involved. Wilson’s ideas were exactly what Germany expected, yet they received the exact opposite. Germany’s absence at the Paris Peace Conference left them ignorant of the political struggle fought in Paris and surprised at the treaty they were given, a product of Clemenceau’s victory over Wilson in Paris.

Shock turned quickly to outrage, as close examination of the terms led the delegation to label the Treaty terms as the “victorious violence of our enemies.”³⁸ A number of different terms of the treaty led to this interesting label, all of which contrast with Wilsonian ideas, and were instead birthed by Clemenceau and his faction. The first points of contention were articles 227-31, most commonly known as the war guilt clause.³⁹ They were referred to as “points of honor” in Germany, and caused serious political divide among German politicians,⁴⁰ who were unable to agree on whether to accept that section of the Treaty or protest to get it removed. Eventually, it was agreed that Germany would protest the articles, and German Premier Gustav Bauer stated that “The government of the German republic is ready to sign the peace treaty without thereby acknowledging that the German people are the responsible authors of the war and without accepting Articles 227-31.”⁴¹ This did not come without cost, however, as the deadlock on the

war guilt clause led to the resignations of the chairman of the German delegation to Versailles, along with most of the delegation which was planned to accompany him.⁴² This political instability was fallout from the war guilt clause built into the Treaty, and a result of Clemenceau's vision for a peace of justice. In his mind, justice started with placing guilt on German shoulders. The Allies were not receptive to these German protests, and demanded the unconditional acceptance of the Treaty as a whole.

Another major German criticism of the Treaty was its harsh territorial laws. Germany lost significant territories in Europe, many of which were filled with ethnic German populations. For example, Danzig, "which is German to the core,"⁴³ was taken from Germany and molded into a semi-autonomous city state. Large areas of German territory, including parts of Prussia, were taken from Germany to create the new state of Poland,⁴⁴ while other territorial exchanges have already been mentioned above. This territorial manipulation was, unsurprisingly, not well received in Germany. In a May 17th letter, the German Peace Delegation declared that "it is to be inadmissible that by the Treaty of Peace German populations and territories should be bartered about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were mere chattels and pawns."⁴⁵ This is an inherently Wilsonian idea, and reflects the impact Wilson's policies had on German thinking.

Germany's losses in Europe were not their only territories to fall victim to the Treaty, which also set its sights squarely on German colonial holding. Germany held colonies in Africa and Asia, all of which would be divided up by major powers, including Britain and Japan.⁴⁶ This was yet another huge German grievance to the Treaty, and again divided German political opinion. The German Colonial Secretary, Johannes Bell, was sent as part of the German Delegation to Versailles, eventually signing the treaty with great "conflict of conscious,"⁴⁷ as he felt very uncomfortable signing away Germany's colonies as the German Colonial Secretary. Bell made it known that "only under duress was he making this sacrifice for the German people and his fatherland."⁴⁸ Interestingly, once he signed the document, Bell's title was changed to "federal minister," as he no longer had any colonies to manage.⁴⁹ This manipulation of German territory is exactly what Wilson fought against in the two years leading up to the Treaty. Not only is it a testament to the failure of his political action in Paris, it also served to reinforce German disdain for the Treaty. German leaders felt they were promised a Wilsonian peace, and their anger was magnified as this unexpected Treaty emerged from France.

Indeed, while Wilson's policies may have failed to directly impact the terms of the Treaty, his ideals and rhetoric colored expectations of its terms, especially in Germany. In the June 1st letter to Clemenceau, Germany stated that "In territorial questions Germany takes up her position unreservedly on the ground of the Wilson program."⁵⁰ This explicit statement of adherence to Wilson's principles underlines the influence Wilson had on German policy, as well as showcasing how widespread his thoughts and ideas had become. Part of German outrage at the territorial conditions of the Treaty stemmed from their expectation of a very different peace document, one resembling Wilson's 14 Points and Peace without Victory ideology. This is further seen in a quote from another letter of protest, where the German Delegation writes that they expected the Peace Conference to "have formed the terms of the treaty with constant thought of the principles upon which, at the time the armistice and the negotiations for peace were proposed."⁵¹ It is clear Germany held certain expectations for the Treaty which were not met, leading Germany to continually resist and protest the new ruthless terms which bore no resemblance to that Wilsonian peace they so desired.

Perhaps Polish political leader Ignace Paderewski best describes the Treaty of Versailles, when he points out that "conditions have been dictated to them."⁵² Germany's protests and counter-proposals were eventually all for naught, as they signed the Treaty of Versailles in all its punitive, harsh glory, on July 28th, 1919. On that day, President Woodrow Wilson was in the Hall of Mirrors and signed the document along with dozens of others. It must have been bittersweet, as all his political boxing and maneuvering had proved to be in vain, and the Treaty of Versailles looked much more like Clemenceau's vision than Wilson's own. Yet in spite of this, Wilson's ideas were discussed throughout the period between the Conference and the signing of the Treaty, and while the Treaty often diverges or even works against his own ideas, Wilson cast a long shadow over the proceedings at Versailles, which even Clemenceau could not ignore.

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