

JejuMUN 8

Background Guide

1920 Paris Peace Conference

SDG: 16 Peace, Justice and strong institutions

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Committee Introduction

The Committee will take the form of the formal meeting that took place in Paris between victors of World War I and states and nations seeking to push their own agenda in November 1920. The committee will require delegates from different nations and states to draft resolutions, establishing a peaceful and just solution to the recent WW I and how losers of the war should be treated.

The following are some information regarding the procedure of the Committee and some caveats to participating in a Historical Committee:

This Committee will be adopting the UNA-USA format (Not Crisis). Delegates will be encouraged to write resolutions in UNA-USA format and will require a majority vote to be passed.

It is good to note that delegates participating in this meeting are not only thinking about how to treat losers of WW I but also consider establishing a global organization to prevent future conflicts, redrawing the borders across the world, and recognizing independence and sovereignty of certain nations without states. The historical events leading up to this meeting may have shaped your country's views in a certain way, and it would be helpful to consider the national interests at stake when drafting the resolutions.

Since it is a Historical Committee, delegates attending the meeting do not necessarily have to abide by the actual course of action that was taken by your country. Hence, any actual piece of history recorded after the date of the meeting can be disregarded when debating the resolution to post-WW I world—as far as the Committee is concerned, such events did not happen and are not projected to happen unless the Committee itself is driving the change. This allows for greater flexibility for delegates to create alternate history and documents and not a mere replica of post WW I history and Treaty of Versailles.

Agenda Introduction

The 1920 Paris Peace Conference,

The First World War which was “the cruellest and most terrible war that has ever scourged mankind”, according to British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, had finally come to an end after 5 continued years of armed conflict and violence. In its essence, the war was a power struggle amongst European nations to achieve domination over the continent. However, when the Central Powers - Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria - failed to materialise such initiatives due to the Allies - Britain, France and the United States of America - the prime agenda of the international community now became bringing about a new peace to the continent of Europe.

As an attempt to restore sustainable global peace, nations convened in Paris, where a series of settlements are to take place, named the ‘Paris Peace Conference’. The crux of this peace conference is to agree upon a peace settlement that would last and prevent a repeat of the slaughter of the First World War. However, reaching a consensus would not be an easy task given the fact that numerous stakeholders have a multitude of conflicting interests leading to a situation where everyone desires to achieve different things through this conference.

Ergo, it is the delegations’ purpose to propose a methodology in which nations can have the least disagreement as possible, whilst restoring peace throughout our time.

Letter from the Chairs

Welcome leaders of nations,

We are Sang Yoon (Fred) Lee, Jeslyn Park and Warrick Kwon, all from the North London Collegiate School Jeju. It is our greatest pleasure to be serving you as your chairs of the Paris Peace Conference 1920 in the Jeju MUN VIII.

The committee would take form as a Historical Meeting held between different delegates from nations and states, and you will seek to deal with pressing disputes and conflicts that have occurred in the post-WW I context. You will aim to view such disputes in alternative ways, seeking new viable solutions to solve previous historic occurrences and possibly modify the course of history. The Meeting is expected to meet two requirements: it is to make decisions that will assure prompt and effective action that will maintain peace as well as security of the global political sphere and bring forward suggestions that will shift the future course of the warring states. Ensuring the transparency, efficiency, and inclusiveness of the working methods of the Historical Committee will be essential for its productive functioning.

In order to yield effective and practical solutions, we highly recommend that all delegates acquire sufficient background knowledge on the topic. When researching for the conference, make efficient use of various online and offline resources, government statistics, journal articles and most importantly, this chair report.

If you have any further questions about the procedure or topic, please feel free to contact us at any time. We look forward to meeting you at the conference.

Kind Regards,

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Key Terms

***The information outlined includes real history for reference and delegates may choose to freely divert from such paths**

Treaty of Versailles

The Treaty of Versailles was signed on 28th of June 1919, because Germany lost in World War 1. It is a treaty that was most important among various peace treaties that brought WW1 to an end. It also ended the state of war between Germany and the Allied Powers. ToV was signed to prevent the potential war that might happen by Germany.

Main Terms of Treaty of Versailles

1. War Guilt Clause (Article 231)-Germany and her allies had to accept total responsibility for starting the war.

2. Reparations - Germany had to accept liability for reparations, the amount of which would be decided by a Reparations Commission.

3. Disarmament - this restricted Germany's ability to wage war in the future.

- The Germany army was to be restricted to 100000 with no conscription
- No tanks, armoured vehicles or heavy artillery were permitted
- No military or naval air force was permitted
- The navy was to be restricted to 6 battleships, 12 destroyers, 6 light cruisers, 12 torpedo boats, and no submarines
- Demilitarized Rhineland - German troops, fortifications are not allowed

4. German territories were taken. Some of them were returned to the owners, and some of them were taken to the League of Nations.

Big Three

The Big Three are the representatives of each country that were leading the international policies which are the United States, Great Britain and France. The leaders were Woodrow Wilson (USA), Georges Clemenceau (France), and David Lloyd George (Great Britain). They were partners, but didn't share common political aims, and they did have conflicts among them about how to deal with the war.

League of Nations

The League of Nations was founded on 10th of January, 1920, which is after WW1, in Geneva, Switzerland. Switzerland was a neutral country during World Wars which was possible for the countries to sign to make the League of Nations in Geneva.

Goals of League of Nations

1. Disarmament
2. Preventing war through collective security
3. Settling disputes between countries through negotiation and diplomacy
4. Improving global welfare

Treaty of St. Germain

The Treaty of St. Germain took place on the 10th of September in 1919 which claimed the following:

- i. The new Republic of Austria's acceptance of breaking up the Austro-Hungarian Empire
- ii. Austria must recognise the independence of Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Poland
- iii. Territory from the former empire is to be transferred to Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia, Italy and Romania
- iv. Ban of the Anschluss

Treaty of Neuilly

The Treaty of St. Germain took place on the 10th of September in 1919 which claimed the following:

- i. Bulgaria had to recognise the independence of Yugoslavia
- ii. Bulgaria must transfer its territory to Greece, Yugoslavia and Romania.

Historical Background

At the turn of the century, European powers were largely driven by their own imperialistic agendas. Successfully uniting its people in 1861 and 1871 respectively, the Kingdom of Italy and German Empire was craven for colonies. On the other hand, the British Empire and France grew wary of these newly rising powers near their border. Similarly, the Russian Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire were also plagued with their own internal struggles. From here, fierce competition started, each building bigger and stronger weapons to outcompete each other. Complicated military alliances formed and with the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the European continent was set on fire.

World War 1 (WW1) started on July 28th, 1914, and ended on November 11th, 1918. The war between Entente (France, British Empire, Russia, United States, Italy, Belgium, Japan, Portugal, Romania, Greece, Brazil to name a few) and the Allies (German Empire, Austro-Hungarian Empire, Ottoman Empire, and Kingdom of Bulgaria) ended in the Entente's favour. The war was fierce with millions of young soldiers killed in battle and huge economic damage. The blame for this atrocious war had to be attributed somewhere. Moreover, the consequences of the war had to be decided.

Current State of Affairs

The victorious powers along with several interested neutral parties have gathered to participate in the Paris Peace Conference. It is January 18th 1920, and delegates from various countries have gathered to draft future solutions. The conference is to be led mainly by the BIG 3. However, many other smaller parties may or may not succeed to reflect their own interests to the final resolution of this conference.

Germany was devastated after being defeated in World War 1. Additionally, there was the Treaty of Versailles which made Germany pay 132 billion gold marks (US\$ 33 billion), and this made the German economy even worse. The reparations were very expensive, and the German economy was in the worst condition. As Germany was not paying reparations because they couldn't afford it, it was forced to begin paying in 1921. Germany had a very strong army, and after losing World War 1, it was difficult for people to admit that they were defeated. When the Treaty of Versailles was signed, Germans were very angry about the treaty, and they called the treaty 'diktat' which means 'dictated peace'. Germans hated the treaty, and thought it was irrational, and German politicians who signed the treaty were called 'November Criminals'.

Great Britain wanted active trade with Germany because they were trading partners. To make this possible, Lloyd George was trying to release the treaty and economic sanction in ToV to continue the trade with Germany.

Stances of Parties

British Empire

The United Kingdom is one of the Big 3 (victors in WW I). Hence, a peace treaty can't be signed without the UK agreeing to it (British Empire has Veto Power in Substantive votes).

Although the British isles weren't necessarily invaded, Britain suffered considerable losses. The British economy is in its downturn and many young men have died fighting in the war. There is a growing anti-German sentiment. However, economists and other experts have warned the British government of the danger of punishing the Germans too harshly as it will also hurt the British economy.

The primary goal for the British Empire is to maintain its naval supremacy. Britain has held global hegemony through naval powers and that status shouldn't be threatened with this new treaty.

United States of America

The United States of America is one of the Big 3 (victors in WW I). Hence, a peace treaty can't be signed without the US agreeing to it (US has Veto Power in Substantive votes).

Joining the war three years after it started, the US hasn't taken many casualties. The economy is projected to boom and the world has seen the US' potential as the world's new superpower. The US is conflicted as citizens and the Senate have taken an isolationist stance. The US must make a choice between staying out of European conflicts or actively intervening to lead in creating the new, liberalized world order.

French Republic

The French Republic is one of the Big 3 (victors in WW I). Hence, a peace treaty can't be signed without the French agreeing to it (France has Veto Power in Substantive votes).

As most of the battle during the war took place in French territory, many farmlands and French industries were damaged. Furthermore, the French took huge casualties. The war was a catastrophe for the French. Harkening back to the French-Prussian war just a century ago, the French are no longer tolerant of German aggression. The French Republic wishes to force a very harsh peace treaty on Germany so that any German government in the future can dare to invade France again.

Weimar Republic

As the defeated side in the war, the Weimar Republic is mostly powerless and unpopular (Weimar Republic can not cast a vote for substantive documents). The Weimar Republic must ensure that the terms of the treaty aren't too harsh. The Weimar Republic should also attempt to draft a solution to the treaty that will effectively appease the German people.

Italy / Japan

Two nations are part of the Big 5 (just following behind the Big 3 countries). Although these two countries participated in the war on the allies side, they did so primarily for their territorial interests. Italy and Japan wish to gain as much influence and territory as possible.

Belgium

Belgium is a prime example of a country that suffered from WW I. The country was invaded by Germany under the Schlieffen plan. Belgium may attempt to limit Germany's influence and secure peace in Europe by balancing the power between the victors and the losers of the war or side with the victors to gain as much influence for itself.

Russia (White Russia)

While the war between the major European powers is over, the civil war between the Red army and the white army in Russia hasn't ended quite yet. White Russia is in a precarious condition and may wish to gain the support of the Big 3 in fighting off the Red Army.

Zionist Delegation

Anti-semitism has been present for a long period of time. Without a safe haven, the Jewish community is concerned that some time in the future the Jewish people may be threatened. The Zionist delegation is one of the most vocal participant in the conference arguing for self-determination along with many more delegations from nations without state.

Possible Solutions

Solutions Regarding Germany

Lenient Punishment

The Weimar government is a new, inexperienced administration. Harshly punishing the Germans for a War where atrocities were committed on both sides may not be the right solution. Considering that the Weimar government is already quite unpopular amongst the Germans, demanding high reparations or separating Germany into smaller territories may lead to further destabilization of the nation. Perhaps German colonies could be seized, but the terms of the treaty shouldn't be so unrealistic that Germans would want to seek revenge on the allies in 30 years time.

Harsh Punishment

Germany has consistently shown aggressive behaviour for the past century. A lenient punishment may only give the Germans an excuse to seek revenge on the allies soon. Germany could be torn into small independent provinces. An international organization could also be created to manage and oversee the administration in these microstates. The Paris Peace Conference may also attempt to demand high reparations for the immense economic loss and casualties. The entirety of the German territory could also be demilitarized.

Solutions Regarding Self-determination

Allowing Self-Determination

In the turn of the 20th century, the world observed a decline of colonial empires. The New World (America) is on the rise, and the traditional European powers are on their decline. Multiple nations previously part of different empires are demanding their right to self-determination. Perhaps the colonies in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East should be released as independent states. Europe also needs a drastic redrawing of the borderlines. The Emperor borders that separated and forcefully merged nations have been the main cause of the Great War. Ensuring greatest self-determination may be the first step to a peaceful, liberated world.

Consolidating Imperial Interests

The turn of the 20th century, the world observed an increase in armed conflicts and tensions. In such a chaotic world with immense distrust, heated arms race, and resource competition, states must either grow power to defend themselves or seek support under a stronger nation. Well-guided imperial powers have been stable for the past centuries and now that the war is over—with a clear loser and a winner—it is time for victorious states to carve up territories and create a new world order centered around powerful imperial states.

Questions to Consider

1. What problems would the conference bring to the international community if it disproportionately favours the victors of World War I?
2. If disproportionality is an issue, to what extent should the treaties punish the deeds of the Germans?
3. Which is more important: the retribution of the aggressor or the act of reconstructing the European continent for sustainable international peace?
4. What is a 'justifiable' level of reparation towards Germany?
5. How significant would the League of Nations be in maintaining peace? If not, which measures/guidelines should be provided to ensure that a war does not occur again?

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