



Paris Peace Conference

Background Guide



Chairs:

EagleMUNC

Model United Nations
Conference

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EAGLEMUNC

Introduction:

Letter from the Chair:

Hello Delegates!

Welcome to EagleMUNC VII! My name is Olivia Mills and I will be your chair for the Paris Peace Conference. I am a sophomore at Boston College majoring in International Studies. I am interested in management working with non-profit organizations. After completing an internship this summer at a local non-profit, I realize it is something I am interested in being involved in. I have always been fascinated by history and politics and although I didn't participate in Model UN in high school, I knew it was something I wanted to participate in once I got to Boston College. I grew up in Boston so I am very familiar with the city!

This year at EagleMUNC VII our committee will explore the events of World War I that led up to the Paris Peace Conference, as well as the decisions that continue to shape our present day society today. World War I caused over 16 million deaths between combatants and citizens. It is one of the deadliest conflicts ever, and marks the revolution of technological innovation, like trench warfare and poison gas that fundamentally changed the political structure of the world. We will be discussing topics from the reparations of different nations, to the financial losses of the war, and the effects of conflicts going on back home during the time of the conference.

I hope everyone is getting excited for the conference and for all of the events that we have planned. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any and all questions, good luck preparing, and we will see you in March!

Best,

Olivia Mills

Background info:

World War I, the war to “end all wars,” saw unprecedented suffering and destruction, and was fueled by new military technology and trench warfare.¹ During the war, which lasted around 4 years, from 1914-1918, the Central Powers, which consisted of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and the Ottoman empire fought against Great Britain, France, Russia, Italy, Romania, Japan, and the United States. It was one of the greatest turning points in world history, and fundamentally changed the nature of geopolitics.

Following numerous military victories from 1862 and 1871, German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck formed a German state out of several principalities. He feared however, that following this unification, neighboring countries like France and Austria-Hungary might seek to break up Germany.² As a result, Bismarck sought to balance the power of European empires. France was not a viable option as an ally because of the remaining anger over German control of Alsace-Lorraine, which Germany seized post-Franco-Prussian war in 1871. The next choice for an alliance would be Britain, which was pursuing a push-back policy of disengagement and was not looking to form any alliances with European nations. Bismarck therefore turned to Austria-Hungary and Russia, and they formed the Three Emperors League in 1873. Russia later backed out in 1878, and it became the Dual Alliance in 1879.³

¹ History.com Staff. “World War I.” History.com, A&E Television Networks, 2009, www.history.com/topics/world-war-i/world-war-i-history.

² Robert Wilde. "The Major Alliances of World War I." ThoughtCo. <https://www.thoughtco.com/world-war-one-the-major-alliances-1222059>.

³ Ibid.

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Bismarck's foreign policy began to crumble after he was voted out and Kaiser Wilhelm II took power; with this, the balance of power throughout the region began to shift. Following his policy of rapid militarization, Britain and France began to tense up and strengthen their own ties. Russia and France formed the Franco-Russian military convention, in which both nations pledged support to the other in the case of a war.⁴ Following this, Britain became concerned about the protection of its own colonies, and pledged military support to France in the Entente Cordiale of 1904, and three years later signed a similar agreement with Russia.⁵

Growing tensions and political instability throughout the region culminated when Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austro-Hungarian empire, was assassinated by Bosnian Serb Gavrilo Princip. By doing this, Princip hoped to strengthen Serbian nationalism. The assassination quickly heightened the tensions, and after receiving support from Kaiser Wilhelm II, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia on July 28th, 1914.⁶ This was after Serbia denied the harsh ultimatum and list of demands sent by Austria-Hungary to Serbia in response to the assassination. The ultimatum, which if accepted forced Serbia to accept an Austro-Hungarian inquiry into the assassination, suppress all anti-Austrian propaganda, and take steps to root out and eliminate terrorist organizations, was demanded by the Dual Monarchy (Austria-Hungary) to be answered within 48 hours.⁷ The unlikely possibility of Austria-Hungary acting alone against Serbia, along with the possibility that Germany would stand with the Dual Monarchy, meant that Serbia, Russia, and Russia's allies, England and France, would by extension become involved as well.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Op. cit 1

⁷ History.com Staff. "Austria-Hungary issues ultimatum to Serbia." History.com, A & E Television Networks, 2009, <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/austria-hungary-issues-ultimatum-to-serbia>.

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Soon after, Russia, Belgium, France, and Great Britain backed Serbia against Austria-Hungary and Germany, and World War I was underway. Germany sought to utilize the Schlieffen Plan, in which they would quickly and efficiently defeat France so that their troops could move to the Eastern front to combat Russia. Germany saw France as less of a threat, and thought that in using the bulk of their military against France, they could quickly defeat them before the Russian army could even properly mobilize. In order to do this however, Germany had to travel through Belgium, thus violating the neutrality treaty that protected the state, and pulling in Britain, who was obligated to defend a small country like Belgium.⁹ The Germans nearly made it to Paris but were stalled by the Battle of Marne, in which France threatened the German army with encirclement and the German First and Second armies were forced to retreat

⁸"First World War." The National Archives. Accessed September 03, 2018.

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/firstworldwar/maps/europe1914.htm>.

⁹ Kennedy Hickman. "World War I: An Overview." ThoughtCo. <https://www.thoughtco.com/world-war-i-overview-2361419>.

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to the north.¹⁰ The estimated Allied Powers loss was around around 236,000, and the Germans dealt with similar losses.

1915 marked the beginning of trench warfare where France and Britain sought to break through German lines. Germany, however, was more focused on Russia, but they debuted the use of poison gas in their limited attacks on the west.¹¹ Starting in 1916, Germany fought a war of attrition by assaulting the French fortress city of Verdun. Germany hoped that by constantly hitting the French with one attack after another, they would continue to wear down French forces until surrender became the only option. Two of the deadliest battles were fought in 1916, and while Germany, Britain, and France were quickly depleting their resources, Russia was able to recover and launch offensive attacks.¹²

However, the stability experienced within Russia was short lived as the country fell apart during the Russian Revolution of 1917. The boom that resulted from the war economy brought with it rapid inflation and led to the collapse of the economy and infrastructure.¹³ On March 3rd, 1918, in the city of Brest-Litovsk, Russia signed a treaty with the Central Powers ending its involvement in World War I. Internally, food shortages and increased unrest led to mass demonstrations as well as a revolt by the Tsar's guards, forcing the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II on March 15th. The Russian assembly formed a provisional government and the leaders of the provisional government opposed violent social revolution, but they established a program of rights.¹⁴ One of the prominent leaders, Minister of War Alexander Kerensky, continued Russia's war effort, but contrary to public opinion; this only exacerbated the food shortage and angered

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Op. cit. 9

¹² Op. cit. 10

¹³ Kennedy Hickman. "World War I: America Joins the Fight." ThoughtCo. <https://www.thoughtco.com/america-joins-the-fight-in-1917-2361562>.

¹⁴ History.com Staff. "Russian Revolution." History.com, A&E Television Networks, 2009, <http://www.history.com/topics/russian-revolution>.

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people even more. On November 6th and 7th of 1917, the Bolshevik Party, led by Vladimir Lenin, launched a bloodless coup d'état against the provisional government. The Bolsheviks occupied strategic locations and formed a government with Lenin as the leader-- forming the world's first communist state.¹⁵

United States involvement sought to follow the policy favoured by Woodrow Wilson--a policy of neutrality. The United States wasn't involved initially, and instead opted to continue to trade with both sides of the conflict. The neutrality that the US sought to pursue was difficult to maintain in response to Germany's unrestrained aggression against commercial and passenger boats, even including some United States' ships. On May 7th, a British ocean liner, occupied by almost 2,000 civilian passengers, was raided and destroyed and 1,198 passengers were killed. Germany agreed to prioritize the safety of civilian passengers before sinking ships they believed to be armed, but just a few months after that pledge, they sunk an Italian ship and killed over 250 passengers. In addition, the Zimmerman Telegram, which was sent from Germany to Mexico, proposed an alliance between the two countries if the United States entered the war. The telegram was intercepted and decoded by Britain, and this only continued to generate tension and encourage the United States to become involved in the war. Congress subsequently passed a bill which included \$250 million arms appropriations bill, and ensured that the United States was ready for war. On April 2nd, after Germany had sunk four more American merchant ships, Woodrow Wilson called for a declaration of war against Germany.

By the fall of 1918, after their last great offensive failed, the Central Powers were losing their power. Austria-Hungary was dissolving due to nationalist movements across its broad population, and they reached an armistice on November 4th, of 1918. Germany, after dealing

¹⁵ Ibid

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with the surrender of their allies, discontent back home over the results of the war, and a limited number of remaining resource, was forced to surrender on November 18th, 1918, marking the end of World War 1.

Topic I: Reparations by Participating Nations

After the devastation caused by World War I, it became clear that nations needed to be held accountable for their contributions in the war. Nearly 10 million soldiers died, an additional 7 million civilians died as well, and more than 21 million soldiers were injured.¹⁶ Millions were pushed out of their homes, and Europe had been fundamentally altered. World War I proved to be one of the most destructive wars in modern history. The enormous losses on both sides of the fighting were a result of new machine gun and gas warfare, and “attrition warfare” caused the deaths of hundreds of thousands of soldiers.¹⁷ By wearing down the Central Powers to the point of collapse, the Allied Powers used attrition warfare to ultimately win the war, but not without causing massive, long term effects.

Germany’s Kaiser Wilhelm II was considered militaristic and eager for confrontation. Germany had been slowly building up their navy to rival that of Great Britain, and the 19th century ideas of imperialism and national expansion continued to fuel Germany’s desire for more land. Many historians consider Germany’s promise to the Austrians as a “blank cheque to war,” acknowledging that Germany seemed to approve of Austria’s invasion of Serbia.¹⁸ Thus, this fueled the tension and ignited the war, rather than seeking to diffuse the situation. Hoping to end

¹⁶“World War I.” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Accessed September 03, 2018. <https://www.ushmm.org/information/exhibitions/online-exhibitions/special-focus/world-war-i>.

¹⁷ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Accessed September 03, 2018. <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007427>.

¹⁸ Jennifer Llewellyn et al, “World War I and Germany”, Alpha History, 2014, <https://alphahistory.com/weimarrepublic/world-war-i/>.

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by 1915, all countries involved implemented a condition of total war, which led to unrestrained warfare. Traditional rules of warfare were disregarded and it required involvement from the government, the economy, and the people, not just the military.

Many leaders believed Germany to be the main instigator of World War I, and therefore deserving of the harshest reparations. Germany alone had the power to withdraw its support of Austria's invasion into Serbia. Although the initial tension was started between Austria-Hungary and Serbia, Kaiser Wilhelm and other military figures stirred up aggression, and once Germany backed Austria-Hungary, Russia was then forced to support its ally and prepare for war.¹⁹ Germany also escalated hostilities by sending an ultimatum to Russia, as well as one to France, and declared war on both countries once the ultimata were rejected. Germany also broke international treaties by invading Luxemburg and Belgium, knowing it was certain to bring in Britain. However, Serbia was very provocative towards Austria-Hungary and although the Central Powers took the initiative, the Russian government did not hesitate to respond. Each country can point the finger at another for causing the most damage and for needing to make the most reparations. Deciding who should pay, as well as how much they should pay, would factor into the post-war discussions.

Topic II: Rebuilding of Nations in the Post-War Period

While World War I caused a great loss of life, the relentless bombings, construction of trenches, and fighting caused significant destruction to property and land. Prior to World War I, warfare was structured and had a set of acknowledged rules, such as avoiding attacking civilians and restraining from use of chemical weapons. The creation and advancement in warfare

¹⁹ "World War One: 10 Interpretations of Who Started WW1." BBC News. February 12, 2014. Accessed September 03, 2018. <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-26048324>.

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changed all this: introducing chemical weapons, tanks, and stronger bombs. Germany's bombing campaign against Great Britain resulted in almost 5,000 casualties over the course of the war. Costing about 2.9 million British pounds of damage, the bombing campaign failed to break British morale.²⁰ Similarly, in Paris, the bombing campaign's goal was to weaken French morale and give Germany a win to continue to push into the Western part of France. However, the campaign, which lasted from over a six month period from March 1918 to August 1918, only amounted to 256 total casualties.²¹ Mainly because long range ballistic missiles were used on the ground, rather than launching an aerial campaign, the Germans failed to weaken the French's forces but did cause significant damage to property.

Most notably, the system of trenches constructed along France's border still has lasting effects on the French landscape even today. During the Battle of the Marne in September 1914, the Germans encountered their first instance with trench warfare, as they waged a continuous back and forth fight against the French. By the beginning of 1915, trenches along France's border with Germany were constructed, as the two engaged in a tit-for-tat campaign over the next year. Launching artillery shells, combined with the trenches, forever changed the French landscape. Life in the trenches was horrendous: disease spread quickly, living quarters were tight, supplies were limited, and the use of chemical gases by an opposing side not only amounted to more deaths, but also a destruction and contamination of the French countryside.

²⁰ Castle, Ian: London, Bombing of , in: 1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War, ed. by Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson, issued by Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin 2016-04-14. DOI: [10.15463/ie1418.10889](https://doi.org/10.15463/ie1418.10889).

²¹ Dutrône, Christophe: Paris Guns , in: 1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War, ed. by Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson, issued by Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin 2014-10-08. DOI: [10.15463/ie1418.10335](https://doi.org/10.15463/ie1418.10335).

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Much artwork depicts the depressing and destructive state of the trenches, most notably The Menin Road by Paul Nash.²²



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Battles throughout Europe destroyed property on all both sides of the conflict. Battles such as the Battle of Verdun, the Battle of the Marne, the Battle of Ypres, and the Battle of the Somme in France laid waste to French land. In Russia, the Bolshevik Revolution caused an upheaval in the structure of government; while there wasn't much damage to property, the question of how to govern caused Russia to reevaluate how its nation would function. The Battle of Gallipoli in the Ottoman Empire, additionally led to trench warfare though not as extensive as the French trenches. The Battle of Megiddo in the Sinai Peninsula contributed to the desert warfare taking place within North Africa and the Middle East in an effort to weaken the Ottomans and the German colonies.²⁴ Countless other battles throughout Western and Eastern Europe, North Africa, and Russia led to a destruction of the landscape and property. As soldiers return home from war, and national leaders refocus their attention on issues within their borders,

²²Paul Nash. "The Menin Road." <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/20087>

²³ Green Ted, "Trench: a History of Trench Warfare on the Western Front." Historical Association, 2014, <https://www.history.org.uk/historian/resource/7424/trench-a-history-of-trench-warfare-on-the-western>

²⁴ Kennedy Hickman. "World War I Battles." ThoughtCo. <https://www.thoughtco.com/world-war-i-battles-2361390>.

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the question remains as to how each nation will accomplish the large task of restoring destroyed property and rebuilding morale, unity, and support from their people.

Financially, the war led to a further increase in every nation's debt. An estimated \$125,690,477,000 was spent by the Allied Powers and \$60,643,160,000 by the Central Powers.²⁵ What initially was thought of as a quick war turned into an immense, costly undertaking. Upon returning from the conflict, government leaders will have to devise solutions to reduce their debt from war spending and use what money that still remains to rebuild their countries.

Topic III: Preventing Future Global Conflicts

The conflicts behind World War I did not begin with the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand, but with tensions that had begun in the past decades. Under Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, Germany annexed the Alsace-Lorraine region in 1871 from France and began to implement German policies while the French still living in the region fought to keep their customs in place. The addition of 120,000 German settlers contributed to a growth of pro-German sentiment, and any Frenchman in the region who refused to support the German Empire was placed in "preventative detention camps" by 1914.²⁶ Many accepted their fate and passively allowed the Germans to control the region. Following the rule of Bismarck, Chancellor Leo von Caprivi failed to continue Bismarck's successful campaign for diplomatic, economic, and military unity with Russia as well as failing to form a strong union with Great Britain.²⁷ This

²⁵ John Simkin. "Financial Cost of the First World War." Spartacus Educational, 2014, <http://spartacus-educational.com/FWWcosts.htm>.

²⁶ Vlossak, Elizabeth: Alsace-Lorraine , in: 1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War, ed. by Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson, issued by Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin 2016-10-21. DOI: [10.15463/ie1418.10984](https://doi.org/10.15463/ie1418.10984).

²⁷ John C. G. Röhl (1967). *Germany Without Bismarck: The Crisis of Government in the Second Reich, 1890-1900*. University of California Press. pp. 77-90.

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decision would come back to haunt Germany, as they faced both Russia and Great Britain during World War I.

In Eastern Europe, the wars in the Balkans during the early 20th century continued to flare tensions. Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, and Serbia had all achieved independence by the turn of the century from the Ottoman Empire and formed the Baltic League. Their main objective was to fight the Ottomans to free their remaining ethnic populations under Ottoman rule. By the conclusion of the First Balkan War, the Ottomans had lost significant amounts of land, as well as Austria-Hungary, as a result of Serbia's growth in strength and hunger for expansion. Ultimately, this conflict set the stage for the July Crisis in 1914, where a quick succession of events following the assassination caused many countries to be pulled into the start of the war.²⁸

Within Austria-Hungary, many different ethnic groups were living under the control of the empire, including Germans, Hungarians, Poles, Czechs, Ukrainians, Slovaks, Slovenes, Croatians, Serbs, Italians, and Romanians.²⁹ The formation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1867 meant that all of the various ethnic groups would need to find a way to peacefully live together and function. Many problems arose, especially in the military: Austrian officers spoke German, but many soldiers were of Hungarian, Czech, Slovak, and other ethnicities and did not speak German. Within social circles, the clash between language, culture, and religion weakened the unity of the Empire. Austria's and Hungary's decision to unite and form a single state may have proved beneficial from a political standpoint, but the many ethnic groups weakened the empire far more than expected. Rather than address these societal differences, national leaders ignored them, believing that they would address the issue when it became a real problem.

²⁸ Christopher Clark (2013). "Balkan Entanglements". *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914*. HarperCollins. ISBN 978-0-06-219922-5.

²⁹ Jennifer Llewellyn et al, "Austria-Hungary before World War I" at Alpha History, 2014, <https://alphahistory.com/worldwar1/austria-hungary/>.

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In the past, calling a meeting between many leaders was done at the conclusion of fighting. Treaties were signed, peace was established, and these meetings allowed nations to outline the reparations that would need to be made. Throughout the 19th century, imperialism conquests by many Western European nations led to many national leaders wanting to expand their borders. Wherever they expanded, if they succeeded in annexing the land, people living in that region reacted negatively, but did not act to reclaim their land. This passivity facilitated the flaring up of tensions, and once they boiled over, led to the fighting of World War I. The world has not seen many instances where leaders would come together to discuss their concerns and resolve their differences prior to fighting. Having such a forum might lead to the end of such costly and destructive wars, and allow for truly diplomatic ventures to occur.

Topic IV: Conflicts Back Home

After the conclusion of World War 1, countries were facing their own internal problems back home. Colonial powers were facing pressures from nations looking to become independent, Eastern European countries were divided among themselves, and most notably Russia was on the brink of their own civil war. The first factor that affected all countries throughout Europe was the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918, the deadliest ever. There were no effective drugs or vaccines to treat this strain of flu, and the years of fighting and lack of proper nutrition had weakened people's immune systems. Victims often died within hours or days of contracting symptoms.³⁰ Complicating the difficulty of treating the flu was the fact that the war left parts of Europe with a shortage of doctors and health workers, only a putting a further strain on countries' limited resources.

³⁰ History.com Staff, "Spanish Flu." History.com, A&E Networks, 2010, <https://www.history.com/topics/1918-flu-pandemic>.

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The economic and political problems posed by instability and discord throughout Russia were only exacerbated by the war. Food shortages and riots in February of 1917 led Nicholas II to abdicate. Anti-war radicals, joined by peasant soldiers, deserted the army to join the revolution. In an effort to restore order and reunite the people, the generals and army backed a military coup under the control of Russian Army's General Kornilov. After the coup failed, which further divided the country, the Bolsheviks were able to take power of the country in October of 1917. After their promise to bring "Peace, Bread, and Land" by decreased fighting was refused by the other powers, Lenin's lieutenant Trotsky was forced to sign the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk on March 3rd, 1918.³¹ ³² Anti-Bolshevik Russians, who were outraged at the fact that the treaty handed over Finland, Poland, and the Baltic provinces to the Central Powers, were assisted by the allied forces against the Bolsheviks, setting Russia up for a civil war.³³

For France, the cost of human lives turned out to be the most devastating, with about 1.4 million or 3.5 percent of the population dead. A daily reminder of the calamitous effects of the war were experience by the 760,000 orphans, 600,000 widows, and 1.2 million disabled citizens.³⁴ There were also 1.4 million refugees who had fled from German armies, and were desperate to return home no matter how destroyed their homeland was. In addition to dealing with the effects seen on citizens, France, along with every other country in the war, also had to deal with reintegrating the 5 million veterans.³⁵ The process of demobilization and rehabilitation

³¹ Dr. Jonathan Smele, "War and Revolution in Russia 1914-1921." BBC History, 2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwone/eastern_front_01.shtml.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Demiaux, Victor: Post-war Societies (France) , in: 1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War, ed. by Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson, issued by Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin 2015-01-22. DOI: 10.15463/ie1418.10540.

³⁵ Ibid.

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of French army members back into society was a daunting and complex issue that the French government was tasked with solving, all in an effort to come back to a pre-war era.

Britain, among other issues, was faced with dealing with masses of national debt, generated by wartime financial policies. With little room to maneuver, the British government was unable to raise taxes on the working class because any increase in taxation that affected the working class had the plausibility of intensifying post-war social conflict. They needed to find a way to pass some costs of the war onto the working-class while also dealing with the middle-class' opposition to government "waste" in public expenditure.³⁶

In addition, a Yugoslav committee was initially formed in 1914 in Rome by Balkan exiles to decide how to deal with the aftermath of the war if the Austro-Hungarians were to be defeated, as this was a very likely possibility. In 1915, as the war raged on and the committee moved to London, they suggested a new Slav South state that would act as an equal union among Serbs, Slovenes, and Croats. The Allies eventually agreed to the creation of a combined Slav state, and after negotiations on December 1st, 1918 the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes was declared, followed by the declaration of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in 1919.³⁷ The creation of this single state had serious economic and political implications for countries throughout Europe.

The war caused a financial burden on all the countries involved, and unemployment, unstable economies, social tension, debt, refugees, and reintegration were only a handful of problems that each country was dealing with at home. Domestic issues had become a major

³⁶ Godden, Christopher: Post-war Economies (Great Britain and Ireland) , in: 1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War, ed. by Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson, issued by Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin 2017-12-15. DOI: [10.15463/ie1418.11203](https://doi.org/10.15463/ie1418.11203).

³⁷ Robert Wilde. "Yugoslavia." ThoughtCo. <https://www.thoughtco.com/yugoslavia-1221863>.

factor in foreign negotiations and agreements as leaders were forced to weigh internal issues with those across borders.

Topic V: Redrawing of Boundaries

World War I left many countries and territories in disarray, and opened the door to the possibilities of redrawing boundaries. As some countries sought to gain more territory and others sought to get rid of colonial powers, the balance of power was bound to change as the world entered a new stage post World War I.

The Middle East was no less affected by World War I than Europe was, and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire left an open power vacuum that created even greater tensions. In the Middle East, the war ended with the British occupying the territory that would become Iraq, Palestine, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon.³⁸ This region was very unstable as the Armistice of Mudros on October 31st of 1918 between the Ottomans and the Allies did not bring any peace or stability to the region.³⁹ By 1919, there was little the Ottoman Empire could do to stop the Allies, mainly from British advancements into the region. The Ottoman Sixth Army in Mesopotamia, present-day Iraq, was barely intact, and the armies in Palestine and Syria had just been destroyed. Many citizens of the empire began to lose their identity as part of the Ottoman Empire. As the structure of the Ottoman military continued to fall apart, a new brand of Turkish nationalism emerged in Turkey which encouraged a new Turkish state that disassociated itself from the Ottomans. To achieve this, the Turkish nationalist began to hide weapons from Allied disarmament teams and conspired among civilian militias to divide the allies.

³⁸ David R Woodward. "World Wars: The Middle East during World War One." BBC History, 2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwone/middle_east_01.shtml#five

³⁹ "The Ottoman Empire." RSS. Accessed September 03, 2018. <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/war/ottoman-empire/collapse>.

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In the final two years of the war, after it became clear that the Allied powers had the upper hand, the empire of Austria-Hungary was defeated and out of resources. Even when the war started, Austria-Hungary was already at a disadvantage because of the internal discourse and instability. The Austro-Hungarian army had experienced multiple defeats against the Russians, and once Italy joined the war they were facing fronts on three sides of their borders.⁴⁰ The nation became more divided in 1918, when protests arose across its border with citizens calling for food and peace. Separation movements strengthened in Vienna and Budapest and people began to call for full independence among ethnic groups. The emperor had lost much of his power and once the Allied Power victory became obvious, his realm fragmented.⁴¹ The Austria-Hungary empire was comprised of numerous ethnic groups, and now with the looming likelihood of the collapse of the empire and the pressure for independence from each group, the fate of the territory remained entirely unclear.

Bloc Positions:

Principal Allied Powers (25 delegates)

- France, Italy, Japan, The United Kingdom, and the United States

As the Principal Allied Powers, each nation will have 5 delegates representing them at the conference. They have contributed the greatest amount of soldiers and resources to fighting against the Central Powers, and thus have suffered the greatest number of casualties and financial setbacks. Without the Central Powers present at the conference, the Principal Allied Powers will be able to fulfill their role as victors in the war and shape the balance of power in Europe as well as international politics for the decades to come. Topic covered at the peace

⁴⁰ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Austria-Hungary." Encyclopædia Britannica. April 26, 2018. Accessed September 03, 2018. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Austria-Hungary>.

⁴¹ Alexander Watson. "Ring of Steel: Germany and Austria-Hungary in World War I" (2014), p 536

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conference will mainly affect the state of relations within each nation, particularly in France where a majority of the fighting on the Western Front took place. While ideally the members of this bloc should join forces to determine how reparation should be made, each nation received larger or smaller damages than the other, allowing each nation to have the autonomy to determine how severe the punishments should be.

Allied Supporters (24 delegates)

- Belgium, Brazil, Serbia, China, Greece, The Hedjaz, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Siam, and Czechoslovakia

As the Allied Powers, each nation will have up to three delegates representing them at the conference. Each nation contributed to the war effort, whether it was through providing soldiers, supplies, or financial resources. While the Allied Powers did not have as large of a role in World War I as the Principal Allied Powers did and thus fewer delegates representing each nation, they still have the power and influence to shape the treaties created at the peace conference. Unlike the Principal Allied Powers, the Allied Powers have the ability to address the smaller results of the war, since they will not be the leaders in addressing the larger results of the war.

Questions to Consider:

Topic I: Reparations by Participating Nations

- How should the amount of reparations be measured?
- Who will be responsible for making reparations, and what will be the breakdown for this?
- How will the committee ensure that nations will fully contribute to the amount of reparations they must pay?
- In the case that a nation does not successfully pay their share, what consequences will there be?

Topic II: Rebuilding of Nations in the Post-War Period

- With the loss of morale among a nation's citizens, how will nations look to rebuild and strengthen unity?
- Should the governmental institutions and leaders of nations be modified or changed altogether?

Topic III: Preventing Future Global Conflicts

- How will nations prevent the occurrence of another great war?
- If a body is formed to address global conflicts, what would it look like?

Topic IV: Conflicts Back Home

- Will conflicts back home affect the results of treaties produced at the peace conference?

Topic V: Redrawing of Boundaries

- How will redrawing a nation's boundaries affect the people living in that area?
- Should new states be created, and if so, how will they be structured?

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