PacificMUN 2017

League of Nations (LoN)

Information Guide

Topic: Socialism

PacificMUN 2017

Dare to Speak | February 24–26 2017

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Dear Delegates,

My name is Adam Dobrer and it is my absolute pleasure to welcome you all to PacificMUN 2017 and the League of Nations! Over the course of one single weekend my chair Manraj, and my trusty camera Charlie will help you navigate the fascinating period of international relations between the two most brutal wars in human history. Over the course of one weekend you will immerse yourselves into the thick of a continent and a world in transition- on track as you all know from the pages of history for a Second World War.

Before we dive head first into our two topics let me tell you a little bit about me!

So if you don't already know, I am a huge history nerd! When I'm not nose deep in a novel or frantically tying my tie you can find me pretending to do school work, out and about in the city with my trusty camera or arguing with people on the internet with a cup of tea in hand! I am currently a "rising senior" at Hugh Mcroberts Secondary, and have been involved in Model UN for three years now.

Are you ready? Are there any points or motions on the floor at this time?

No? Well that's alright! If any of you have any questions, comments or concerns please do not hesitate to shoot me an email. It's my job to make sure each and every one of you has a fabulous, fun and most importantly educational experience! See you all – February 24th, 2017!

Kindest Regards,
Adam Dobrer
League of Nations Director
PacificMUN 2017

The League of Nations was created in the immediate aftermath of one of history's most tragic wars. A war so horrible that at its end, with the surrender of the Triple Alliance on November 11th, 1918, observers coined it the "war to end all wars." So distraught was the continent of Europe and indeed the world at the scope of the Great War's brutality; that the leaders of the world vowed to make the continent and the rest of the planet "safe for democracy." This rhetoric pushed so passionately by United States President Woodrow Wilson gave fruit to his famous fourteen points speech- the cornerstone of which was an international forum where conflicts could be resolved not with war and bloodshed, but by peace and diplomacy.

Being the first attempt of its kind; the League of Nations had many flaws. It had no way to consistent way to enforce its resolutions, no independent standing army and was deeply reliant on The Great Powers (France, The United Kingdom and the United States) for arms, funding and soldiers. It had the mandate of ensuring international peace; any violence or declaration of war was viewed as failure. If a dispute arose, the League could take actions under its Covenant- known as its sanctions.

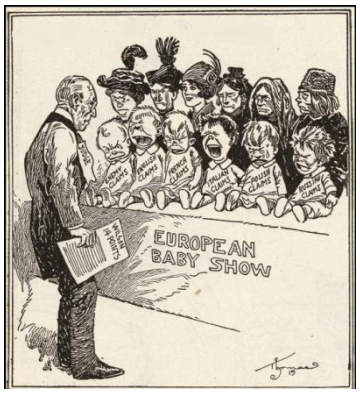
1. **Calls to Discussion-** The states in dispute would sit and discuss the problem in the League's Assembly, to determine how they would proceed.
2. **Verbal Sanctions-** If in the opinion of the League one party in a dispute was an aggressor, the League could introduce verbal sanctions- warning a nation to cease and desist or face further consequences.
3. **Economic Sanctions-** If parties in dispute failed to comply with the Assembly's decision, the League could introduce economic sanctions arranged by the League Council. These sanctions when placed on the aggressor were supposed to drive them into bankruptcy.
4. **Physical Sanctions-** Military force was to be used to implement the decision of the League; however the League did not have its own standing army and no state was obligated to provide armed forces to the League.

The results of the League of Nations were mixed and the organization today is largely recognized as failure. As delegates you have the power to change that.

The year is 1932. The global economy is in a deep and dark depression. The continent of Europe is fractured and divided. The specter of communism and fascism haunts the whole planet.

Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points

In January of 1918; Woodrow Wilson was in an embattled and politically difficult position at home. The cornerstone promise of his election campaign, to keep the United States out of the war, had been broken- angering the isolationists within his own party and the Republicans- who controlled the House of Representatives. Thus, President Wilson stood before Congress to outline his vision for Progressive vision for the post-war political reality in Europe. The content of the speech was very much due to political wrangling and back channel negotiations between the Department of Defense and the Allied Powers[1] in an attempt to create a unified framework for the transition period after World War I.



The Fourteen Points speech' garnered much international press attention and lay the groundwork for the establishment of the League of Nations as well as key concepts of international relations today.

"XIV. A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike." - Point Fourteen, Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Point Speech, January 18th, 1918[2]

The Paris Peace Conference

In January of 1919, global dignitaries gathered at Versailles to formulate and ratify the terms of peace which would ensure a stable and prosperous European continent; to end all wars. While officially all states were welcome- the actual terms of the treaty were decided by the Big Four; Britain, France, The United States and Italy[3] with input from Poland, Korea and Japan. The terms were then imposed upon the delegations of Germany and Austro-Hungary who were impugned under penalty of law to sign.

The Paris Peace Conference established signed treaties between each of the five "axis" powers; most famous of which is the *Treaty of Versailles,* dispossessed defeated states of their colonial holdings which were subsequently transferred to Britain and France, blamed Germany and Austro-Hungary for the war and demanded reparations. It also formally established into force of law the existence of "A Covenant of Nations" which immediately prompted great dispute over the scope of the mandate.

American Rejection of the League of Nations

Wilson won a majority in both the Senate and the House in 1916. By 1918, with mid-term elections closing in and an infuriated Republican opposition after Wilson declared that a Republican victory would "give comfort to the Germans."[4] The Republicans won control of both the Senate and the House. After Wilson suffered a debilitating stroke in the fall of 1919, a new election was held bringing Republican Warren Harding to power- who vowed to oppose the League of Nations at all costs.

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[1] Godfrey Hodgson, *Woodrow Wilson's Right Hand: The Life of Colonel Edward M. House* (Yale University Press, 2006), pp. 160-63.
[2] "President Woodrow Wilson's 14 Points". *www.ourdocuments.gov*. Retrieved 2016-08-20.
[3] Margaret Macmillan, *Peacemakers: The Paris Peace Conference of 1919 and Its Attempt to End War* (2002)
[4] Wertzman, Bernard. "Why Did the United States Fail to Join the League of Nations?" *Council on Foreign Relations*. Council on Foreign Relations, 2013. Web. 24 Aug. 2016.

1920	January 10	Entry into force of the Versailles Peace Treaty and of the Covenant of the League of Nations.
	November 1	The seat of the League of Nations is transferred from London to Geneva.
	December 15	Admission of Austria to the League.
1921	September 2	The Permanent Court of International Justice comes into force.
		Resolution of the Aland Island dispute between Finland and Sweden.
1922	January 22	First meeting of the Permanent Court of International Justice.
	May 15	Signature of German-Polish Convention relating to Upper Silesia.
	September 18	Admission of Hungary to the League.
1923		Italian Invasion of Corfu.
1924	October 1	Resolution of the Assembly opening the Protocol for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes for signature by the Members.
1925	December 14	Transfer of the Locarno Agreements to the Archives of the League.
1926	January 16	Inauguration of the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation.
	May 18	First meeting of the Preparatory Disarmament Commission, Geneva.
	June 14	Brazil gives notice of withdrawal from the League of Nations.
	September 8	Admission of Germany to the League; Germany made a permanent Member of the Council.
1927	January 1	Costa Rica ceases to be a Member of the League.
	June 13	Brazil ceases to be a Member of the League.

1928		General Treaty for Renunciation of War as an Instrument of National Policy.
1929	August 16	The General Act for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes comes into force.
1931	January 24	The Council decides to convene the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments.
	September 26	The Assembly adopts a General Convention to improve the Means of Preventing War.
1932	September 14	Germany notifies the President of the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments of its decision to withdraw.
	October 3	Admission of Iraq to the League.

The trauma and physical destruction that resulted from the World War I created widespread political and economic instability in Europe. Established political traditions and practices were the first to be challenged in this uncertain environment, first by the communists who sought to build upon the revolutionary experiences of Russia, and then by radical right-wing factions and fascists, who set themselves against both liberal democrats and left-wing parties. In these circumstances, socialists of the social democratic variety fared rather poorly. In most countries, socialist parties had barely recovered from their setbacks during the war when they were met with crises caused by the aforementioned groups. On one level, the communists forced socialists to adopt either the Russian Revolution as their standard or the reformist model that still prevailed in most European social democratic movements. The result was disastrous in countries like Italy and Germany, where a divided left made the socialists and communists more vulnerable to their more unified opponents on the right. The fascists were particularly adroit at playing on the weaknesses of the socialists. By the mid-1930s socialists everywhere were either in retreat in the few democratic countries that had survived the aftershocks of the war or driven completely underground by the authoritarian and totalitarian one-party states that had come into existence across Continental Europe.

Socialist participation in the communist-inspired Popular Front was an electoral strategy during the mid-1930s that was meant to check the rapid advance of fascism and other antidemocratic movements that were gaining ground at this time. In both Spain and France, for example, socialists played a pivotal role in forging a political alliance that embraced a wide spectrum of left and liberal factions. However, in Spain the Popular Front government formed in February 1936 was short lived, as civil war broke out in July. In France, Léon Blum's (1872–1950) socialist-led Popular Front coalition also enjoyed only limited success between 1936 and 1938. In this brief period, Blum managed to push through a number of social reform measures, such as the implementation of the forty-hour work week, before his government succumbed to the pressures of its conservative and pro-appeasement rivals.

The outbreak of yet another general war in 1939 marked the beginning of a seven-year hiatus in the development of socialism. When the war ended in 1945, socialist parties found themselves struggling against a number of currents. On the one hand, they were confronted by the spread of communism throughout the greater part of East and Central Europe. The strangle-hold that Joseph Stalin (1879–1953) had secured over the postwar regimes that emerged in this region between 1946 and 1949 effectively smothered the development of any independent socialist movement for the next few decades. Under immense pressure from Moscow, social democratic parties were forced to disband and amalgamate with the communist parties loyal to the Soviet Union.

Except in Great Britain and the Scandinavian countries—where social democratic parties were in the ascendant—circumstances in much of Western Europe also conspired against a general revival of socialism. The right-wing dictatorships in Portugal (Antonio de Oliveira Salazar) and Spain (Francisco Franco) survived the war and both governments maintained their ban on left-wing parties for the next few decades. The postwar difficulties socialism faced elsewhere in Europe were compounded by the onset of the Cold War. Because the political and economic stability of the pro-capitalist nations remained in doubt in the immediate aftermath of the war, socialism was generally viewed with suspicion by the electorate. This was partly because socialists in Italy and France tended to form alliances with the Moscow-oriented communists, and partly because of the growing dependency of many European nations on the economic and military support of the United States. In fact, the United States made it clear to the newly restored postwar regimes that, because Europe was now divided into mutually hostile ideological blocs, it would not tolerate the idea of socialists and communists forming government coalitions outside the Soviet umbrella.

There were further reasons why socialism failed to make inroads into the political arena at this time. One was connected with the cultural and ideological shifts on the liberal and conservative end of the political spectrum that had taken place in Europe since the Great Depression and World War II. The economic problems thrown up by the Depression had caused many liberals to revise their views regarding the state's role in the economy. The mixed economic model for capitalism promoted by the liberal economist John Maynard Keynes (1883–1946) gained currency at this time, and this trend in economic thinking was generally reinforced during the war, when the collectivist practices of the state were deemed both necessary and desirable by the majority of the population. At war's end, the consensus among liberals and conservatives was, at least for the time being, the state would have to play a major role not only in bringing about the political and economic recovery of wartorn Europe but also in sustaining the social welfare of the general population during this critical period of transition.

While the socialists stood to gain much from this development, they failed to win popular backing at the polls for policies with which they had long been identified. This was due in part to their own miscalculations—such as their insistence on forming alliances with the communists—and in part to the fact that the socialists' general political outlook was woefully out-of-date. With few exceptions, social democratic parties in Europe were reluctant to refashion the theoretical content of their political programs. For example, most still looked to the working classes (trade unions) as their main constituency and most retained a nostalgia and even reverence for the Marxist ideological underpinnings of their movement.

Despite these shortcomings, socialist parties continued to occupy an important place in the political arena. This was especially true in countries like Sweden, where the social democrats (SAP) dominated politics for the greater part of the twentieth century, and in Great Britain, where the Fabian style of pragmatic reformism of the Labour Party has won out over other forms of socialism.

The cultural ferment associated with the 1960s and early 1970s helped to inject some new life into socialist doctrine. The left-wing radicals who spearheaded protest movements in this period turned a fresh eye to the historical and ideological roots of socialism. In doing so they helped to resurrect themes that had lain dormant for many years but that now appealed to the intellectually diverse postwar generation of leftists. Perhaps the most important of these was the question of women's role in the socialist movement. From its origins, socialist thinking had been concerned with the fate of both men and women. Yet, apart from Charles Fourier, August Bebel, Friedrich Engels, Edward Carpenter (1844–1929), and a handful of other theorists, socialists tended to ignore specific questions relating to sexuality and gender.

Indeed, all of the classical socialists who addressed the woman question, such as Engels did in his *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884), regarded women as proletarians in the household and thus did not, as twenty-first-century socialist feminists do, view gender as distinct from class. Fewer still thought it necessary to transform socialist practices so that they matched the pro-feminist rhetoric of their movement. It was against this background that a new generation of socialist thinkers began their campaign to infuse socialism with feminist values and beliefs. The research of socialist feminists like Sheila Rowbotham and other historians of gender revealed that women played a much greater role in the development of socialism than had hitherto been acknowledged.

Up until this point, Flora Tristan (1803–1844), Vera Zasulich (1851–1919), Rosa Luxemburg (1871–1919), Alexandra Kollantai (1873–1952), Dolores Ibárruri (1895–1989), Clara Zetkin (1857–1933), Beatrice Webb, and other notable activists had rarely received the kind of historical attention that was commensurate with the contributions they had made to socialist theory and practice. For example, it was not until the late 1960s that the prominent role that Luxemburg played in the key debates and discussions within European socialism during the first decades of the twentieth century became widely recognized by the scholarly community.

Besides making her mark as a theorist during the revisionist controversy in *Reform or Revolution* (1899), Luxemburg became famous during World War I for leading the socialist opposition to the war in Germany. By the time of her death in 1919, the year she helped spearhead an ill-fated coup against the provisional Weimar government, Luxemburg had also

established a reputation as a critic of the authoritarian policies of the Leninist brand of revolutionary vanguard Marxism. While the theoretical differences between her and Bolsheviks such as Lenin and Trotsky should not be exaggerated, Luxemburg always stood for a more open and democratic interpretation of socialism than did her Russian counterparts. No less important was the light that gender-sensitive research cast on the role that anonymous women in the past and present played not only in building socialism through their participation in grass-roots associations but also in broadening female participation in the public sphere.

Besides seeking to revise the historical record, socialist academics, writers, and activists in the women's liberation movement were also interested in changing the attitudes and perceptions that the majority of socialist men held of women. Socialist feminists pointed out that, while most men endorsed pro-feminist principles, they nevertheless tended to see women in sexist terms. For example, few concerned themselves with issues—child care, birth control, sexual expression, among others—that directly affected their wives, sisters, mothers, and female friends. Nor were they alive to the second-class status to which women were consigned in the workplace, where gendered divisions of labor prevailed, and in society generally, where male dominance was both profound and pervasive.

The degree to which socialist feminists were successful in their endeavors is hard to measure. There can be no question that their efforts to place the women's question high on the socialist agenda and their insistence that "the personal is political" contributed in a number of ways to the rejuvenation of the theory and practice of a doctrine that was increasingly out of step with the realities of late twentieth century society. Nonetheless, the legacy of socialist feminism is mixed. Though it failed to bring about the much sought after gender reorientation of a number of socialist parties, socialist feminism can be credited for greatly advancing the ongoing struggle for women's rights. Contemporary feminists are above all indebted to this movement for having raised society's awareness of the multiple ways in which gender relations affect the daily lives of everyone.

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