

SunMUN Joint Crisis Historical Committee

“1894 - The End of the Gilded Age”

Research Guide

2023

Head Chairs: Karl Peterson & Liam Nelson

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Introduction

Delegates of the Joint Crisis Committees,

Welcome to the 14th annual session of SunMUN at Arizona State University. We are pleased to have you here with us! This is Karl Peterson and Liam Nelson, and we will be the head chairs for your committee this year.

I'm Liam Nelson. Currently the Under Secretary-General of this conference as well, I will also be chairing one of the two committees here. I am currently a Junior at Arizona State University majoring in Global Studies and History. Since joining Model UN roughly seven years ago now, I have explored and discovered new paths for myself and thanks to all of my time in MUN, I have developed my passions and am currently working to become a diplomat for the United States government. Whether you wish to pursue a similar path or not, I know that Model UN can be an enriching experience and a great way to stoke passions for history, public speaking, writing, and more, or simply a great way to meet new people! As such, I am here to make this as beneficial an experience as possible!

I'm Karl Peterson. I am currently the Treasurer of SunMUN and I am delighted to be one of the chairs on this committee. I am currently a Junior at Arizona State university studying Economics. My interest in Model UN started when I was made aware of its existence in an international diplomacy summer camp almost 5 years ago now. I worked to bring Model UN to my high school and after coming to ASU I joined the Model UN team here and have been working as an officer to improve the experience for all ever since. Although it may not be my final career choice, working in the Foreign Service of the United States is a career path that I am working towards. Model UN is an experience for all however, and I am working so that everyone can have a fun and fulfilling experience no matter their major or career. I openly welcome all to the 14th Session of SunMUN and I hope you have a wonderful time!

The Gilded Age during American history is perhaps one of the lesser known times, sandwiched between two of the more famous periods, those being Reconstruction and the Progressive Era. However, this age presented undercurrents that would result in incredible changes for the United States between the end of the Civil War and the end of the First World War; the tumultuous and momentous eras that surround the late 19th century cannot be thought of as isolated, but rather the period of intense growth and struggle through the 1870's, 80's and 90's connected these two. Below are just a few of the major issues that the US faced during the Gilded Age, but of course, they are not an exhaustive list.

The Gilded Age had its share of monumental Americans, from giant personalities to giant fortunes. These people, while usually not known with such fame and reverence as founding

fathers or great presidents, had an incredible impact on the direction of American politics and history, for better or for worse. The actions and decisions of a few of these people could have drastically changed our country--within this simulation, such power rests in your hands.

It is a privilege to serve as your chairs and we hope that these committees will function as a captivating simulation and bridge for history and policy. If you have questions, please contact us through email at either lnelso30@asu.edu or kapete31@asu.edu

Thank you,
Liam Nelson and Karl Peterson

Instructions

IMPORTANT NOTES

- Position paper expectations for this committee are DIFFERENT from SunMUN's usual guidelines. The rubric for this committee's papers can be found here: [SunMUN Position Paper Grading Rubric: Historical Committee](#).
- This committee's technology policy differs from the general SunMUN technology policy:
 - All electronic devices are not to be used during formal committee proceedings. Laptops and phones may be used during breaks and unmoderated caucuses should delegates wish to write working papers and directives on them. Delegates should focus on participating in the crisis topics and engaging with other delegates rather than searching online for additional historical information.

Preparation and Position Papers

As this is an unconventional committee, the preparation requirements will differ from other committees. Instead of preparing multiple position papers stating the policy of a given country, delegates will prepare a single, two-paged paper on their character. This will be a four-paragraph paper. The first paragraph will include a description of the character and their life up to the starting date of this committee (1894). The second and third paragraphs will consist of two topics relevant to the committee, describing the history of the issue, government actions, character actions, etc. up until 1894. Because the committee follows a crisis scenario, topics that will be addressed cannot be concretely provided or known, as this is up to the direction of the delegates. The two topics for the second and third paragraphs may be chosen by the delegate during the course of writing the paper. The chosen topics may be one from this research guide with more in-depth research, or delegates may choose other topics, so long as it is relevant to the time period, scope of the committee or the work of the character. The fourth and final paragraph of the paper should include the character's plans, desires and more for the committee.

Delegates are encouraged to mention specific people, places, and events, and embrace their character in how they present their view of committee issues. For additional information about SunMUN's general policy paper guidelines, please refer to our website at <https://sunmun.info/position-papers>.

Committee Mechanics

These committees will follow the same rules for speeches, moderated and unmoderated caucuses. Due to the fast-paced nature of the committee, a larger emphasis will be placed on moderated and unmoderated caucuses over formal speeches, however this will be to the committee's discretion and urgency. Additionally, the traditional substantive debate and voting bloc portion for resolutions (or in this case, directives) will be shortened, with directives being read and voted on as soon as they are received/as is convenient. Amendments will be voted on for a given directive as long as they are received by the Chair before the sponsors have completed reading the directive.

Crisis Updates

Crisis updates will be given in the form of a powerpoint presentation at the beginning of each committee session, or on a more rapid schedule at the discretion of the Crisis Directors. This will include updates on general events and news as well as the change in several factors that will affect the welfares of each committee, listed below:

Quality of Life and Inequality

The quality of life (QoL) of the American people will likely change dramatically over the tenure of this committee. While not directly affecting the people on either of these committees as a whole, QoL will have a large impact on American political and economic choices and will thus be an important metric for each committee to monitor. Ideally, both the business and public committees should wish to raise this factor, but raising QoL will not necessarily always benefit the goals of each committee or member.

As a period of rapid industrialization and financial growth, the late 19th century also saw the social and economic inequalities of the United States skyrocket. If this metric rises too high, it will lead to massive upticks in mass mobilization among the middle and lower classes and thus rapidly shift government composition and desire to reform.

Public Desire for Reform

Should the needs and desires of the people not be met, the public will raise their desire for reform. Raising this metric too high will have drastic influence on both committees, both directly and indirectly. Strikes may become more violent, assassinations may become more popular, the government may be voted out, and should the committees still not address the high desire for reform, coup d'etats and revolution can happen. Both committees should focus on keeping this metric low, although a few individuals may benefit from very high reform desire...

Government Composition

Over the course of the committee, many of the actions that members attempt will rely on the U.S. Federal Government. A portion of, or the entire government will undergo election every 2 years, with presidential elections every 4 years, starting in 1896. The government is ultimately voted into office by the people and there are numerous different factions that exist in the federal government during the gilded age and early progressive era. While there were only ever 2 major political party designations, the makeup within these parties and the factions that held political power changed often. The 1890s saw the rise of the populist movement, anarchism, communism, and a split among social conservatism and progressivism within both parties. To better represent the various powers in government at the time and to more easily understand the general opinion of the government the composition will be reported in these factions instead of their actual political parties. Actions from both committees can increase or decrease the size and influence of these factions. Should the public desire for reform get too high, much of the government may be replaced with those who are more cognizant to the needs of the citizens.

The committee as a whole can take action, while individual delegates can also utilize their own resources and connections to unilaterally make moves without the knowledge or approval of the rest of the committee. These two actions are accomplished through two different directives.

Public Directives

This type of directive must be developed and agreed upon by a majority of the committee members. It functions similar to a resolution, however preambulatory clauses are **not** required, but short ones may still be added. These directives describe actions that will be taken by the whole committee through their combined resources, efforts, networks etc.

In order to pass a public directive, it must have a minimum of **two** sponsors. Once two sponsors have signed onto a public directive, they may deliver the directive to the chair. Any delegate can then call for consideration of the draft proposal(s) held by the chair at any point when motions are appropriate. At which point, the chair will decide if considering the directive(s) is appropriate at the time and will invite the sponsors to read the directive to the committee. Amendments will

be accepted during this time and will be read and voted upon immediately following the sponsors concluding reading the draft. After all amendments have been voted on for an individual proposal, the committee will then vote on the proposal as a whole; it will require a majority vote to pass.

Private Directives

This type of directive, on the other hand, does not require approval from the chair or the committee members in order to be enacted. Each delegate will be supplied with a small notebook which they may use for notes or private directives. The Private Directive should include the name of the delegate sending it and the action they are trying to take, including the resources, network or other factors required. The delegate may then raise their notebook to request the note-taker to deliver this to the Crisis Back Rooms at which point Crisis Staff will evaluate the directive, decide its feasibility, and return it with a note of the effect, which may also be reported in future crisis updates.

Inter-Committee Meetings

Each committee has the power to pass a public directive calling for a meeting between the committees. The committee that asks for a meeting is called the requesting party and the one who is being asked for a meeting is called the receiving party. Meetings may be mandated by the government for the purposes of hearings, subpoenas, and *some* strike negotiations, but any other meeting request is to be voted upon by the receiving party and the decision to accept or deny will be decided by a simple majority vote. An affirmative vote is required for the meeting to take place. The requesting party can choose up to four representatives to send to the receiving party's committee room. All delegates in the requesting party can submit a roster to the chair of up to four delegates they wish to attend the meeting. These rosters are then voted on in the order that they were received by simple majority vote. The first roster to succeed will be the representatives that attend the meeting. Should all roster votes fail, an opportunity to present rosters will be open again to all committee members with voting rules that mirror the first round of voting. Should the second round of voting fail, the meeting invite will be declined by default.

History and Issues

The “Gilded Age” of the United States was named so after historians in the 1920’s started to refer to the period using the name of a Mark Twain book: *The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today*.¹ The

¹ Twain, M. & Warner, C. D. (1902) *The Gilded Age: A Tale of To-Day*. Hartford, Conn.: The American publishing company. [Pdf] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/24022206/>.

Gilded Age, from 1877 to 1896, was certainly a period of unrivaled economic and industrial growth in the United States, however Twain did not intend for the word “gilded” to be complimentary of the time. Indeed, this period was rife with social issues and rapid economic growth was only a gilding over a deeply flawed era.

The election of 1876, with the Republican Rutherford B Hayes versus Democrat Samuel J Tilden, saw one of the closest presidential elections of all time. With a required threshold of 185 electoral votes, Tilden received an uncontested 184 votes while Hayes received 165, with the remaining contested under disputed electoral rosters from four states. Without clear precedent for the situation, Congress passed the 1877 Electoral Commission Act, a 15-member commission which voted by a margin of 8-7 to certify the four states’ electoral submissions in favor of Hayes, thus granting him the presidency with the margin of 185-184 electoral votes. This was, however, contested in the House of Representatives where Democrats attempted to filibuster the certification of the election by claiming interference in the Vermont and Wisconsin electoral choices.

²

In order to overcome these objections, Congressional Republicans struck an agreement with the Southern Democrats, known as the Compromise of 1877. Chief among other provisions, the compromise made arrangements for the final removal of Federal Troops from Southern States and allowing southern states to deal with African Americans without Northern interference.³ Thus, in the opinion of many historians, the Reconstruction Period had ended and the early Gilded Age commenced, or was already underway.

With the end of Reconstruction, many of the social issues that plagued the pre-Civil War United States slowly reemerged while new issues in government, economics, welfare and more also occurred.

Economic Growth

Between 1870 and 1899, the real GDP per Capita of the United States grew by an average of 2.5 percent every year.⁴ This growth and especially the accumulation of large personal fortunes under many of the “Captains of Industry” of the time is largely thanks to new technological innovations in manufacturing, infrastructure and more. Railroads soon stretched across the continent as the main arteries for goods and people with track mileage tripling between 1860 and 1880, trains were fueled with booming coal and eventually oil, new and old cities were built with the upstart American steel industry, surpassing its European peers. During this time, the United

² Tyson, Sue. "Harper's Weekly: 1857-1912 (Harpweek)". CC Advisor. Archived from the original on 2001-01-24. Retrieved 2021-05-14.

³ Woodward, C. Vann (1966). *Reunion and Reaction: The Compromise of 1877 and the End of Reconstruction*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. pp. 169–171.

⁴ Rockoff. (2008). *Great Fortunes of the Gilded Age*. NBER Working Paper Series, 14555–. <https://doi.org/10.3386/w14555>

States surpassed most, if not all of the world in wealth and industrialization; by 1914 the US income per capita was 55% greater than even the second most wealthy country at the time, the United Kingdom.⁵

Government Corruption

Many social issues existed in the wake of the Civil War, such as civil rights for black Americans, workers rights, women's suffrage, and many others. However, with the exception of Ulysses S. Grant, many presidents had a very weak grasp on their political power, relying on slim margins (and sometimes not even the popular vote; two election winners between 1876 and 1896 did not have the popular majority necessary to win) to do anything⁶, if legislation was promoted at all. The Panic of 1873 (with the accompanying recession that would last until 1879) meant that Grant was seen as unelectable in the 1876 election. The Republicans therefore championed Rutherford B Hayes who advocated for “hard money-” currency based solely on the gold standard- and civil service reform, which to this point had been given away largely to friends and political benefactors as a reward. Hayes, and many other Americans, wanted to create a merit based civil service. The Democrats likewise searched for a candidate that would promote reform against growing political corruption and decided upon Samuel J. Tilden. Tilden was the former mayor of New York and had fought against Tammany Hall, one of the largest political machines in the country at the time. Boss William Tweed was later arrested on charges of political corruption. At the conclusion of the election, Tilden had won but only with 184 electoral votes certified (needing 185 to declare a formal victory), with votes from Louisiana, South Carolina, and Florida being highly contentious amidst allegations of voter fraud and intimidation. Through the compromise of 1877, Hayes won and withdrew Union troops from the South, ending reconstruction. However, Hayes did not have a large enough base to pass much legislation, and federal reform stalled while corruption continued to grow. This election set the tone for much of the politics and corruption of the period until the election of 1896. In 1881, James Garfield was assassinated by Charles Giteau after he believed Garfield owed him a government job as recompense for unsolicited campaign work. Because of the lack of popular support, greed of individuals, and lack of transparency, politicians at the time largely catered to business interests in exchange for political support and wealth.

A decade later farmers who faced mounting debts and downward spiraling agricultural prices organized into the Farmers Alliance Movement. Part of the reason prices had been on a decline was the cultivation of more land through increased productivity and better agricultural tools along with global competition, however there was also widespread price manipulation by commodity traders, exorbitant railroad freight charges, and increasing loan prices which farmers relied on in their business model. Farmers from across the country saw their needs not being

⁵ Kennedy, Paul (1987). *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*. New York: Random House. p. 243. ISBN 978-0-394-54674-2.

⁶ *Political corruption in Postbellum America*. Opened CUNY. (n.d.). <https://opened.cuny.edu/courseware/lesson/410/overview>

addressed by the main two parties because of indifference or corruption and decided to form a third major party to challenge them: the Populist Party. However, upon its creation, they discovered that much of the political process was corrupt on both the State and Federal level, with bribes being commonplace and political machines running many municipalities.

By this point, most Americans were fed up with the rampant political corruption in the political system at every level and began to push for change. As the United States enters the final light of the Gilded Age, ready to move on to a more progressive era, corruption remains a large obstacle in that path. The Sherman Antitrust Act was passed in 1890 but it has not been used yet to break up any of the handful of monopolies that wield significant influence over numerous regions. With the people demanding change, there is the necessary force to overturn corruption and cause social change, but can it be organized adequately to overcome the gargantuan force of industrial monopolies? Only time will tell.

Labor Relations

Unprecedented economic growth under the aegis of monopolistic companies and employers inevitably led to tensions between industrialists and the workers by whom their fortunes were created. General dissatisfaction on the parts of workers reached a boiling point in 1877 with the “Great Railroad Strike.” Locomotive workers began to strike on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroads, however their struggle would reverberate across the United States, with railroad workers, coal miners, longshoremen, mill workers and more rising in a ‘labor rebellion’ from Chicago to San Francisco, Galveston to Pittsburgh and many more cities. Some workers even resorted to arson, burning down Pennsylvania Railroad installations. To put down protests, railroad and other companies hired militiamen and even implored the U.S. government to send in National Guard troops to put down the strike and protests.⁷

To advocate for the rights and voices of the workers, several major workers unions began to accumulate and grow across the country. Chief among them, for a time, was the Knights of Labor. Originally founded in 1869 in Philadelphia as a secretive group, it eventually grew to encompass 30,000 members in 1,600 assemblies by 1880, rising to 750,000 members among 15,000 assemblies in 1886. The Knights of Labor provided a haven for a vast array of different social, economic, minority, political and other types of groups among the American working and middle class. Despite a wide diversity of members making a specific set of advocacy or political points difficult to assess, the Knights stood for a generally strong and well-defined vision of the place of labor and capital in society and how to proceed with the industrial and capitalist systems in a beneficial way for all. Furthermore, the large and geographically spaced membership allowed the organization to mobilize workers and conduct strikes flexibly and in many locations.

⁷ Eric Arnesen in *The Gilded Age: Essays on the Origins of Modern America* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007), 53-70.

For this reason and more, the Knights were able to organize quickly and gain significant strike victories, such as against the Union Pacific railroad in 1884 and the Wabash railroad in 1885⁸.

Ultimately, the labor movement and upheaval rests on a transformation of the American economy and the methods through which most workers earned money. By the tail-end of the nineteenth century, wage labor replaced other forms of labor as the predominant form of employment for Americans; according to the 1870 census, 67 percent of people with occupations were working under the “wages system.” This transition was further marked by chaotic economic conditions, including major depressions in 1873 and 1893, which exacted heavy tolls on workers. Losing one’s job in these times could amount to losing one’s entire livelihood and starving, which was not uncommon. The American industrial and economic surge has brought benefits to many workers and raised the standard of living, but it has not been distributed evenly. Furthermore, as corporations and titans of industries accumulate wealth, so do they accumulate power. These figures will seek to protect their power base and their bottom lines while workers, politicians and others will seek to exert their own influence in order to prevent capital from overtaking the republic.

Poverty, Poor Working Conditions

Emphasizing this massive wealth inequality, as of 1890 11 million of America’s 12 million families earned less than \$1200 annually. Within this group, the average annual income was only \$380 dollars, significantly below the poverty line for the time. Rural Americans who had moved to the cities and urban immigrants were increasingly crammed into tenements and boarding houses⁹. Between 1860 and 1910, the number of cities with over 50,000 people had gone from only 16 to 109, with three of these cities hosting over one million residents. Furthermore, these waged workers would face exceedingly dangerous working conditions, long working hours and low pay.¹⁰

Living conditions in large cities were especially poor. Most industrial workers, immigrants and many more lived in tenement housing; multiple-story buildings with little to no plumbing or sanitation and few windows. The cramped spaces gave rise to pollution, litter and the spread of disease. One section of the city of New York was colloquially known as “Lung Block” with every resident of the block being rumored to suffer from tuberculosis. Trash piled up on the streets and rivers, which, along with poor sewage systems, caused Cholera and Typhoid epidemics to become a common occurrence. The poor construction and living quality in cities

⁸ *The Origins of American Trade Unionism*. Digital history. (2021).

https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtid=2&psid=3191#:~:text=At%20its%20height%20in%201885,for%20social%20and%20economic%20change

⁹ Public Broadcasting Service. (n.d.). *The Gilded Age*. PBS.

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/carnegie-gilded/#:~:text=In%201890%2C%2011%20million%20of,teeming%20with%20crime%20and%20filth>

¹⁰ *Urbanization*. UNT. (n.d.).

https://web-clear.unt.edu/course_projects/HIST2610/content/05_Unit_Five/18_lesson_eighteen/03_urbnzn.htm

could sometimes end in mass tragedy, as well. In 1871, a fire engulfed much of the city of Chicago, burning nearly a third of the structures, killing over 300 people and making over 100,000 homeless.

These factors were compounded by poor working conditions for the people that lived in these cities and a general lack of protective law for their surroundings (or creative loopholes and workarounds by land owners). During various inspections and investigations carried out by individual states and the U.S. Department of Labor in the latter half of the 19th century. Industrial, retail, kitchen workers and more commonly worked 14 hour days or longer, often every day of the week. In addition to extremely long working hours for generally low pay, the physical working conditions were also often poor, or had at least a few glaring issues in most workplaces. In an 1875 survey of mills in Massachusetts, two major issues plagued workers' safety. Lack of proper exits and movement space made buildings unsafe and susceptible to fire. Additionally, in operating some machinery, workers had to inhale lint and dust in the process of threading a shuttle, which, within two years, would make most workers sick, leading this procedure to be known as the "kiss of death."¹¹

Of course, various industries and businesses had their own health risks. Phosphorus match manufacturing would slowly destroy the bodies of workers, woodturning and sand papering was too dusty and wool handling often conferred parasitic diseases. Bakeries in New York, for instance, were usually particularly unsafe. Bakers worked excessively long hours, usually over 100 hours a week even when ill. Furthermore, many of the bakeries were inn bake shops, some described as "cellars of the worst description...damp, fetid, and devoid of proper ventilation and light." Working conditions were generally poor during the gilded age, even in the presence of generally "safe" working conditions (for what could be considered safe at the time) health effects inherent to the job were still pervasive.

Immigration

From 1876 to 1900, over 12 million people came to the United States as immigrants¹². Most of these came for perceived economic opportunity and freedom from persecution. Much of the immigration from Europe started in the 1870s because of a continental famine that affected millions of people. The US had many agricultural opportunities in the west due to the acquisition of large swaths of land 30-40 years earlier, but it also had many growing industrial sectors that needed large amounts of relatively unskilled labor. In the west, Chinese immigration continued to rise each year until in 1882 when congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, essentially ending

¹¹ Department of Labor. (n.d.). *State Investigations*. U.S. Department of Labor.
<https://www.dol.gov/general/aboutdol/history/mono-regsafepart01>

¹² *Immigration to the United States, 1851-1900*. The Library of Congress. (n.d.).
<https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/united-states-history-primary-source-timeline/rise-of-industrial-america-1876-1900/immigration-to-united-states-1851-1900/>

all immigration from China. The Act was supported by many labor agencies and activist groups who saw employer reliance on Chinese immigration as a way to undercut salaries and push native born Americans out of the job market. A notable exception to this was the International Workers of the World (IWW) which opposed the Chinese Exclusion Act since its inception in 1905.

Most immigration over this time however came from Europe. Over 7 million immigrants came from Western or “old” Europe in Great Britain, Scandinavia, Ireland, France, and others, but immigration from South and Eastern Europe, such as Italy, the Balkans, and the Russian Empire, was becoming an important force in American Life. Most immigrants from Europe arrive through New York City which became known as “The Golden Door” to the United States. Most arrived through the Castle Garden depot at the tip of Manhattan, but in 1892, Congress opened Ellis Island as a permanent immigration processing center on an island off the coast of Manhattan. There were few immigration restrictions passed by the federal government (such as the aforementioned Chinese Exclusion Act), so many states regulated immigration themselves. Most states welcomed some level of immigration, with varying degrees of restriction depending on the political landscape and the needs of the local economy. While most immigrants ended up in urban areas- somewhere around 70%- certain states pushed for immigrants to come work rural jobs such as farming. Scandinavian and German immigrants came en masse to the midwest and started small farming communities.

Ultimately immigration played a major role in the social change and economic prosperity of the time. Many famous Americans from social activists to various barons of industry were foreign born Americans. By the turn of the century, almost no part of the country was left untouched by immigration. For better or for worse depends on the opinion of those living at the time.

Minority Groups

Despite the passage of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth amendments in 1865, 1868 and 1870 respectively, abolishing slavery and granting citizenship and fundamental rights to *all* Americans, oppression upon and tensions from underprivileged groups, including African-Americans, immigrants, women and others, continued in a very similar form as during the antebellum period. Union general William T. Sherman ordered the redistribution of 400,000 acres of land in the southern Atlantic Coast to newly freed people, however this order was rescinded under the command of President Andrew Johnson in 1865. As a result, hunger and poverty ran rampant across the South throughout the Reconstruction period and kept most southerners, especially African Americans, with no property nor cash. The system of sharecropping, wherein tenant farmers would pay rent for a plot of farmland in the form of a portion of their crop for the year, became a widespread labor arrangement in the South. While allowing farmers to keep some of their labor, this gave landowners a similar amount of power

over their tenants as they would have once held before the abolition of slavery. Such can be observed in the North Carolina Landlord Tenant Acts of 1868 and 1877, which put this power dynamic into an official structure and put farmers, often African Americans, at an even further disadvantage.¹³

The end of Reconstruction and the beginning of the Gilded Age also saw major attacks on the civil rights of African-Americans, especially in the southern states. Starting in the 1870's Southern Democrats began to take control through voter intimidation and other tactics. From this, many states enacted legislation that segregated their societies on the basis of race and offered poorer services, opportunities etc. for African-Americans, ushering in the Jim Crow era. These laws were also upheld in many cases by the Supreme Court of the United States, such as in the 1873 Slaughterhouse Cases which limited the rights protected by the 14th amendment and the 1883 Civil Rights Cases which upheld racial segregation in private affairs.¹⁴

Women also faced a difficult road in securing and protecting their rights. Similar to the "Republican Motherhood" ideology of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, women's roles in society were still stratified and separated into its own sphere in what was sometimes called "Maternal Commonwealth"¹⁵ and they were restricted, if not forbidden from participating in public life. Industrialization and economic growth, while enforcing the separate spheres view, also caused a change from republican motherhood. As opposed to the earlier ways of thinking, maternal commonwealth somewhat advocated for the values of the women's sphere to be shared with and by the rest of society. As such, women became prominent drivers of several influential political and humanitarian movements, including the temperance movement under the purview of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and efforts to house and help immigrants and other destitute people through institutions such as the Hull House, founded in 1889. All of these women's activism movements occurred without women even having the right to vote.

As a result of this, though. The women's suffrage movement also boomed. The National Woman's Suffrage Association (NWSA) and the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) were both founded in 1869 and eventually merged in 1890. They pursued referenda and constitutional change on a state-by-state basis. However, the quest for the right to vote was only marginally successful during the Gilded Age, with only three states granting women the right to vote by 1894: Utah, Wyoming and Colorado. Furthermore, the reasons for these changes were

¹³ Duke Sanford World Food Policy Center. (2022, June 13). *Sharecropping, black land acquisition, and White Supremacy (1868-1900)*. World Food Policy Center. <https://wfpc.sanford.duke.edu/north-carolina/durham-food-history/sharecropping-black-land-acquisition-and-white-supremacy-1868-1900/>

¹⁴ Howard University School of Law. (n.d.). *A Brief History of Civil Rights in the United States*. Introduction - A Brief History of Civil Rights in the United States - HUSL Library at Howard University School of Law. <https://library.law.howard.edu/civilrightshistory>

¹⁵ Independence Hall Association. (n.d.). *Women in the gilded age*. ushistory.org. <https://www.ushistory.org/us/39c.asp>

not primarily for pro-suffrage sentiments.¹⁶ Nonetheless, their efforts also helped bring about other reforms that uplifted women, with several states ending that status of “civil death” for married women as well as granting limited independent property, legal and financial rights.

Different minority groups didn’t necessarily hold common goals or a common opposition to the white, male dominated society and political system at the time. For instance, within the Woman’s Suffrage Movement, disdain for the 15th amendment was not necessarily uncommon, with a common complaint that women were ignored in the amendment. This instilled some tensions between women seeking the right to vote and African Americans who recently gained it, with some resorting to the argument that women were more suited to wield the right to vote. The interests of minority and underprivileged groups were not always concordant and would sometimes damage or oppose each other, rather than lifting each other.

Context Continued

As of the gathering of this committee, it is January of 1894. The Panic of 1893 drastically impacted the American economy and political upheaval is on the horizon. The business dominance of the Gilded Age is now under threat, both by poor economic conditions and increasingly hostile labor sentiment. Without vast and rapid reforms on the part of business interests, massive strikes appear to be just around the corner. Furthermore, the midterm elections for the U.S. Congress are quickly approaching and President Grover Cleveland has not indicated his intent to run for reelection in the 1896 election. Several pioneering politicians, with vastly different visions for the future of the United States, are vying their way into the public sphere. The future of America hangs in the balance of these next few years.

¹⁶ Stacy A. Cordery in *The Gilded Age: Essays on the Origins of Modern America* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007), 119-37.

Committees and Characters

Business Committee, Powers and Responsibilities:

The “Business” Committee is a collection of the foremost business leaders of the era. As captains of industry, or less affectionately as “robber barons,” the interest of these figures is to ensure that the United States of America remains as business-friendly as possible; friendly to *their* businesses, that is. In order to reach this goal, these businessmen will have to work together to persuade the public, deftly put down labor movements and influence Congress to do their bidding, all while working against their competition even within the committee to ensure their own financial success.

[Powers and Responsibilities]

Bribe officials

- Government officials are always looking for some more money, why not give them some in support for one of your policies

Lobby

- If a law is proposed that the business committee likes, money can be spent on lobbyists and advertisement to make it more likely to pass into a law

Attend hearings and answer subpoenas

- Congress may subpoena individuals in either committee to ask questions about activities and policy
- Should the government decide to act on a specific policy there may be a hearing where both committees can send representatives to support their stance and offer alterations and changes on bills

Put down strikes

- Hire strikebreakers or hire a bunch of new immigrants to replace workers that are striking

Journalism

- Use powerful connections and a lot of money to publish articles and books that favor you and your policies in a positive light
- Can also attempt to stop certain stories from being published and promoted by the public committee (requires preliminary investigation to figure out what stories are planning being published in the first place)

Conciliatory measures

- Public discontent rises the longer they have bad working conditions and low standard of living. Business leaders would be wise to concede at least something lest their inaction cause violent strikes or government intervention

Business Delegates:

<u>John D. Rockefeller</u> – Standard Oil Founder	<u>Meyer Guggenheim</u> - Mining industrialist
<u>Andrew Carnegie</u> – Carnegie Steel Founder	<u>J. Ogden Armour</u> - Meatpacking leader
<u>William Randolph Hearst</u> – News Magnate and Owner of <i>San Francisco Examiner</i> and <i>New York Journal</i>	<u>Marshall Field</u> - Department Store Entrepreneur
<u>John Pierpont Morgan</u> - J.P. Morgan and Co. Founder, Banking Magnate	<u>Thomas Fortune Ryan</u> - Public transport and Tobacco business leader
<u>William Kissam Vanderbilt</u> - Railroad and Shipping Magnates	<u>Charles T. Hinde</u> - Railroads, water transport, shipping and hotels
<u>George Westinghouse</u> - Westinghouse Electric Corporation Founder	<u>John Jacob Astor</u> - Real Estate Mogul
<u>Thomas Edison</u> - General Electric Chairman/Stakeholder	<u>William Graham Sumner</u> - Social Scientist, Classical Liberal
<u>Andrew Mellon</u> - Mellon National Bank Owner	<u>John C. Osgood</u> - Coal and Iron industrialist, leader of Colorado Fuel and Iron Company
<u>Richard Warren Sears</u> - Sears, Roebuck and Co. Founder	<u>Henry B. Plant</u> - Railroads and the Plant it System
<u>Jacob Schiff</u> - Continental Bank of New York Founder	<u>Collis P. Huntington</u> - Southern Pacific Railroad President

Public Committee, Powers and Responsibilities:

The “Public” Committee is composed of leaders and activists of various social movements from across the United States. The Gilded Age is rife with social issues, a progressive era of reform is surely on the horizon, and your job is to initiate it. From heads of labor to nascent politicians, muckraking journalists, ardent activists and many more, these figures must work together to ensure an equitable, safe America for the present and future generations either through influencing Congress, mobilizing the public, or other, underhanded methods. Not all reformers think alike; visions of America’s future are just as diverse and disparate as its citizens. While working as a team to better the country is of paramount importance, delegates must also work to promote their own priorities.

[Powers, Responsibilities]

Promote grassroots action

- Call for strikes
- Ask for workers to unionize
- Ask for local branches of social organizations to open
- Support a candidate (local or national)

Negotiate with business leaders

- Namely used for when a “public” committee strike is happening and demands are provided by the committee instead of the people

Investigate corruption

- Use investigative journalism and undercover reporting to look into government employee (or business leader) activities
- Publishing this information and successfully convincing the public of its legitimacy can severely harm the public perception and support of the figure (one assumption that will always hold true for the purposes of this committee is that the public hates corruption and general underhandedness)

Attend hearings and answer subpoenas

- Congress may subpoena individuals in either committee to ask questions about activities and policy
- Should the government decide to act on a specific policy there may be a hearing where both committees can send representatives to support their stance and offer alterations and changes on bills

Journalism

- Expose poor living/working conditions in a variety of areas such as factories, slums, and sweatshops

Public Delegates:

<u>Samuel Gompers</u> — American Federation of Labor President	<u>Henry George</u> - Journalist, Political Economist
<u>Jane Addams</u> — Social Activist and Reformer	<u>Lucy Parsons</u> -Anarcho Communist, founder of the IWW
<u>Joseph Pulitzer</u> – Publisher of <i>New York World</i> , Later Congressman from NY	<u>Robert M La Follette</u> - Wisconsin Politician, Representative
<u>Eugene V. Debs</u> – Socialist, Activist	<u>Ida M Tarbell</u> - Writer, Journalist
<u>Susan B Anthony</u> – Women’s Rights Activist	<u>Mark Twain</u> - Author
<u>Nellie Bly</u> -Undercover journalist and pioneer of investigative journalism	<u>William Jennings Bryan</u> - Politician
<u>Jacob Riis</u> – Journalist, Photographer	<u>Terence Powderly</u> - Knights of Labor Grand Master Workman

<u>Ida B. Wells</u> - Civil, Women's rights activist, Journalist	<u>Edward Bellamy</u> - Author, Journalist, Activist
<u>Clara Barton</u> - American Red Cross Founder	<u>George Washington Plunkitt</u> - Leader of the Tammany Hall
<u>Elizabeth Cady Stanton</u> - Women's Rights Activist	<u>Charles Henry Parkhurst</u> -Clergyman and social reformer