Call for Papers

The Making of a World Order: A Reappraisal of the Paris Peace Conference and the Treaty of Versailles

The American University of Paris
May 23-25, 2019

Conference sponsored by the
Center for Critical Democracy Studies
The American University of Paris (May 2019)

Dr. Stephen Sawyer and Dr. Albert Wu, organizers

Upon the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, and the Center for Critical Democracy Studies at The American University of Paris will hold two conferences in the Spring of 2019 in Paris and the Fall of 1919 in Cambridge, MA. Designed as a pair of facing conferences, the first will re-appraise the 1919 Paris Peace Conference from the vantage point of new historical evidence and recent scholarly focus on its global impact, while the second conference will look back upon 1919 from the perspective of their continuing contemporary relevance to both international relations and policy making. Both conferences will be deeply interdisciplinary, including featured speakers and panelists from history, international relations, public policy and diplomacy, in an effort to approach the Paris Peace Conference from multiple, international perspectives.

Call for Papers for the Paris 2019 Conference: May 23-25, 2019 (deadline for paper and panel submissions, October 15, 2018)

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, the Paris conference will explore the Treaty, and the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 more broadly, from the perspective of a new world order it simultaneously did and did not make. In 1994,
on the 75th Anniversary of the Versailles Treaty, leading scholars of European and international history gathered to reassess the Treaty of Versailles and its impact on the trajectory of twentieth-century history. The result was a path-breaking volume that both reassessed the divergent aims of the different Great Powers at the Paris Peace Conference, as well as how the negotiations themselves laid the foundation for its own collapse twenty years later. But the volume remained largely Eurocentric—the rest of the world emerged in the volume as bit players on a European stage. In the past two decades, historians of modern Europe have pushed our understanding of the long nineteenth century toward new borders, asking novel questions and forcing us to recognize the power of movements, processes, trends, and influences on a planetary scale. Indeed, it was this “transformation of the modern world” (Osterhammel) during the global nineteenth-century that ran headlong into the cataclysmic events of the first “World” War. From 1914-1918, the world slipped into a massive military conflict on an unprecedented scale. In the immediate aftermath of the war, the task at hand was little less than constructing a new world order.

Building on the growing interest in World War I as a global conflict that extended far beyond the borders of Europe, the Paris 2019 conference will explore the global political ramifications of the treaties prepared at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. It is hard to overstate the importance of the 1919 Paris Peace Conference for redefining the place of the United States in the world, re-shaping the geo-political configurations of the Middle East, Asia and Europe, the new place of the South Pacific, the need to re-conceive of world relations with a new Soviet Russia, the massive impact on European colonies in Africa, the place of Latin America, and the construction of the League of Nations. Far from a mere cessation of hostilities, the peace treaties signed in 1919 and 1920 marked a massive transformation on local, national, continental and global scales.

Four renowned experts of the First World War have agreed to present keynote addresses at the conference: Margaret MacMillan (Oxford University), Priya Satia (Stanford University), Tze-ki Hon (City University of Hong Kong), and Adam Tooze (Columbia University).

Besides the four plenary speakers, the Paris 2019 Conference will invite panelists in multiple disciplines relating to all aspects of the 1919 Paris Peace Conference. Alongside historians, the conference seeks to include other perspectives from the social sciences and humanities, including, but not limited to, historical sociology, political anthropology, political science, economics, and literature. Since the conference focuses particularly on the global effects of 1919, the organizers encourage the participation of scholars whose area of focus is outside Europe. To this end, there will be some funding available for early-career scholars and those traveling long distances.

The Paris conference organizers will proceed immediately to a broad call for papers, and a simultaneous invitation to specialists in the field to participate. Possible Panel Themes may
include:

- Migration and Minority Rights and the Paris Peace Conference
- The Paris Peace Conference and New International Intellectual Networks
- The Creation of New Regional and Inter-Regional Politics
- The Paris Peace Conference and the Rise of New International Organizations
- Sovereignty, Self-Determination, and De-Colonization
- The “New Woman” and the Paris Peace Conference
- The Paris Peace Conference, International Socialism, and the Specter of Communism

The intention of the organizers of the conference, in alignment with the mission of the Center for Critical Democracy Studies, is to weave the conference preparation and presentation into course work at the American University of Paris, making the Treaty the subject of its annual freshman seminar, Democracy Lab, and summer Democracy Institute. In addition, the Center publishes the Tocqueville Review, which will devote a special two-volume issue to the best papers of the conference.

The Paris Conference will take place on May 23-25, 2019.

Please submit paper or full-panel proposals (300 words) and a brief (2-page) cv to parispeace1919@aup.edu by October 15, 2018.

**Summary of key dates:**

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