

The Peace Treaties (1918-1923): Making Peace against each other

International Conference



Place : Paris

Dates : 21-23 March 2019

Dead-line : 15 April 2018

Organisers: Isabelle Davion (Paris-Sorbonne University, SIRICE, EHNE)

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The historiography of the post-WW1 treaties has evolved significantly in the last 30 years: there is now a general agreement that this less-than-perfect work represented a sincere attempt to rebuild an international system which would apply a number of shared principles and values. The 2019 centennial provides an opportunity to reconsider these treaties which opened a new chapter in the history of international relations.

The conference will be organised in partnership with the Center of Excellence Labex EHNE (Writing a new History of Europe: <http://labex-ehne.fr/en/>) and the joint research groups SIRICE (Sorbonne-Identities, International Relations and Civilizations of Europe: <http://www.sirice.eu/>) and CRHIA (Centre de recherches en histoire internationale et atlantique). This project aims to:

- examine the treaties which were signed between 1918 and 1923 – from Brest-Litovsk to Lausanne- as a whole, in a global perspective, and thus, get away from a “Western-centered” chronology.
- decompartmentalize the national historiographies and reveal collective approaches, even transnational ones.
- consider how the treaties were enforced during the first years of their practical application : during this decisive phase which takes us to the signature of the Lausanne treaty and even beyond, the principles set by the Peacemakers had to be applied in the light of realities on the ground. The treaties contain provisions which allow progressive implementation and adjustments in various fields : territorial (plebiscites), military (occupation regimes), economic (definition of the reparations nature and amount), legal (question of minorities in East-central Europe and Middle East, mandate system, experts, League of Nations)... They were a work in progress, in which Great Powers and Successor states, victorious and vanquished belligerents had equal responsibilities.

From this broad perspective, we would like to set out three main lines of discussion that provide a basis for proposals for papers to the conference:

1. Notions and principles which underpin the 1918-1923 treaties, and amongst them: self-determination and minority status; the idea of a legitimate frontier; the question of responsibilities; moral and financial reparations. In each case, how and to what extent do the treaties reach agreements on these issues? Can we regard them as a consistent structure or should we still highlight national specificities? Or how the European notion of « minority » is applicable in the League of Nations universal logic?
2. The treaties reception in Europe and former Ottoman Empire, as well as in colonial territories and the United States. We intend to favour multinational and transnational proposals in order to avoid case studies and to contribute to a global history of the Peace treaties. What does it mean to make peace? How do people manage the period which runs from the armistice to the treaty? How do hopes raised by Wilsonism respond to the actual content of the treaties?
3. The enforcement of the treaties, during the years immediately following their signing. In an approach at various scales and at various moments, we would like to observe the conditions which accompany the organisation of a plebiscite, as well as the conditions which accompany the implementation of the new international order in Geneva. Old and new actors such as

diplomats, officers, lawyers, experts, NGO, will receive particular attention. The question of the solidarity –or rather the lack of it– among the Peacemakers and victorious nations who were in charge of the treaties enforcement will be looked at: was the eventual failure of these treaties due –at least partially– to the collective resignation of the former allies when confronted with responsibilities involved in victory?

Paper proposals, in French or in English, are to be sent to the conference organisers by April 15 2018. A publication is planned.

To apply, please send a 250 word abstract of the proposed paper, together with a short CV, to: paix.paris2019@free.fr. Travel costs as well as accommodation will be paid for by the organisers.

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