



HISTORICAL COMMITTEE

First Indochina War

FOR SYNOPSIS, PLEASE SCROLL DOWN!

YEAR:

1945

DELEGATES INVOLVED: (12)

Superpowers:

-  France
-  USA
-  Soviet Union
-  China – Mao
-  China – Kuomintang

Smaller entities:

-  French Indochina
-  Cambodia
-  Laos
-  State of Vietnam

Independence groups:

-  Viet Minh
-  Lao Issara
-  Khmer Issarak

DESCRIPTION:

The committee will start its session right after the Potsdam Conference in July 1945. After the end of the Japanese occupation of Indochina, Ho Chi Minh's communist party took control over Vietnam for twenty days. The British command in Indochina and primarily France were committed to restoring the antebellum status quo, including the French colony in Indochina. In October 1945 French units occupied Saigon. Right after that, to prevent further bloodshed, a special conference convened to solve the Indochina question once and for all. The delegates invited are stated above.

PLEASE NOTE, that the topic is not the Vietnam War (2nd Indochina War) but the 1st Indochina War!

REGISTRATION:

To register, please **contact Karolina Janiková**, the person in charge of our Historical Committee via e-mail: tichakaro@gmail.com. You may register multiple students from one school/delegation.

After registering, feel free to request access to the respective [Facebook group](#) to get to know your chairs and fellow delegates!

YOUR CHAIRS: Katie Duncan & Max Oweyssi

Synopsis

General Information

The First Indochina War began on December 19th, 1946, as long lived tensions between the Viet Minh leader Ho Chi Minh and the French boiled over. Ending on August 1st, 1954, the war lasted seven years. In addition to France and Viet Minh, several other nations became invested in the war including the United States and Great Britain supporting the French side, while the Soviet Union and China supported the rebels with equipment and training. Vietnamese, Laotian and Cambodian rebels combined forces to fight the French colonization of Indochina.

France began their conquest of Indochina in 1859 and by 1885, controlled most of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. Vietnamese resistance to French rule continued discontinuously from this time to the start of World War II. In 1940, Japan invaded Indochina and defeated the French. A Vietnamese resistance rose to rival the new Japanese occupation, and after Japan's defeat in 1945, the French returned. However spurred by previous rebellions against Japan, the Vietnamese Rebellion continued, this time for independence from France.

In the First Indochina War over 490 soldiers and civilians were killed. This does not include the millions and millions of casualties and captures. The immediate effect of the First Indochina War was overwhelming. The Vietnamese Communist victory, division of Vietnam into the Communist North and non-Communist South, and the independence of Laos and Cambodia were all results. Within three years, the Second Indochina War (Vietnam War) had begun, largely due to the unstable victory of the First Indochina War. The sociocultural effects of the First Indochina War are still standing today. As a combined force, India and China would be a power able to match even the United States of America. However there is

distrust between the two countries stemming from the conflict in the 1940-50s. Laos and Cambodia are still sovereign nations today, both in the United Nations.

Questions To Consider

- The First Indochina War included many different entities of different levels of power, resources, and motives. For what reason is this delegation invested in the war, and to what extent? To what level are your fellow delegates involved?
- After the French conquered Indochina in 1859, conflict between France and Indochina remained until the start of the First Indochina War in 1946. Why did it take 87 years for the war to begin? Is there any time war has nearly begun, and if so, how was it prevented? Did your delegation do anything to stop or perpetuate this conflict?
- This conference takes place directly after the Potsdam Conference in 1945. What was debated in the Potsdam Conference and how does it relate to your country or independent group? What did it mean for your fellow delegates and the conflict in this committee?

UN Involvement

- As this is a post World War II period, the United Nations is still in its early stages and thus most influence came from USA and the UK or China and the Soviet Union because tensions were far too high for a direct UN involvement in the situation other than providing a common diplomatic ground.

Helpful Resources

- For general information on the war:
- <http://alphahistory.com/vietnamwar/first-indochina-war/>

- www.historyguy.com/indochina_war_first.htm
- <https://parallelnarratives.com/vietnam-notebook-first-indochina-war-dien-bien-phu-1953-1954/>
- Potsdam Conference:
<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1937-1945/potsdam-conf>
- For those who enjoy foreign movies:
The movie *Indochine* is a fun (historical fiction) way to become familiar with your topic. For those of you who are learning French, this is a great way to ‘kill two birds with one stone.’
- *Embers of War* by Fredrik Logevall is also a fascinating overview of the period.

The delegates of the Historical Committee are encouraged to search for insight spanning the entire expanse of the committee. For any questions please contact:

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