MITMUNC

Court of King George V: 1930

Chairs:

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<u>Letter from the Chairs</u>

Welcome to MITMUNC XIII, taking place from February 5th to 7th, 2021. We invite you to the court of King George V. We hope all of you gain something whether it be historical knowledge or skills in diplomacy. Our two topics concern serious issues the court faced during the 1930's including Rise of Fascism in Europe (*topic 1)* and strengthening imperialism during the Decline of the British Empire (*topic 2).*

Maya is a freshman majoring in Computer Science, Data Science, and Economics. She is interested in areas where computer science and cyber systems overlap with policy. George, too, is a freshman, and he has been doing Model UN for the last few years. He always enjoyed historical committees and cannot wait to see you all at the conference!

This guide has been written to provide you with a basic understanding of the current circumstances and their historical determinants, but we strongly encourage you to continue your research beyond reading this guide. To this end, all delegates will submit a **single page position paper** on each topic. Please submit your position paper through the following Google Form - **https://forms.gle/85UihbuYc5fvdo2H7**. Additionally, we encourage you to take the time to read up on parliamentary procedures - however, in the interest of time and fruitful debate, we will go over how virtualization affects everything at the start of the conference.

Each of you will be assigned a character, a historical figure from the Court of King George. Some names are very recognizable, and others are not as prominent. You may use the general policies of your character's political party, the issues your character was passionate about, and your individual crisis arc to shape the decisions you make during committee.

We are looking forward to seeing what you design! If any questions arise, feel free to reach out to us in advance of the conference at mitmunc-george-v@mit.edu.

Regards,

Maya Abiram and George Abu Dauod

Chairs, Historical Crisis

Topic 1: Rise of Fascism in Europe

Introduction

The British Empire has been one of the largest empires in history, especially during the 18th and 19th century. The British Empire has managed to secure protectorates, mandates, colonies or territories in six continents. The decline of the British Empire and loss of colonized land began before 1930. The state of the British Empire was still strong, yet it was waning. Britain created alliances with Japan in 1902, France in 1904, and Russia in 1907. However, Germany was emerging as a rival military and industrial power, and the most likely opponent in any future war. In World War I, Germany was in the *Axis Powers* along with Austria-Hungary.[1]

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[1] https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofBritain/Timeline-Of-The-British-Empire/

Following World War I, Britain remained fairly diplomatic with Germany. After the Kellogg-Briand pact reintegrated Germany back into Europe, and the Dawes plan, which paid debt Germany owed back to Britain, there were no significant tensions. The first sign of the relationship worsening between Britain and Germany came in 1933, when Hitler and the Nazi party came into power. In 1934, a secret report by the British Defence Requirements Committee called Germany the "ultimate potential enemy against whom all our "long range" defence policy must be directed." This information, however, was largely kept under wraps, as Britain and Germany continued peaceful relations, such as the Anglo-German-Naval-Agreement in 1935.[2]

However, the treaty that quite possibly started the largest conflict between Britain and the German Nazi Party, in history, is the Munich Agreement in 1938. On the surface level, the Munich Agreement was diplomatic. It served to cede land in Czechoslovakia to the Germans to prevent an imminent war, threatened by Hitler. However, in reality the agreement was done by appeasement, on Hitler's terms. The transfer of land in Czechoslovakia would be pivotal in the fascist, totalitarian regime of the Nazi Party during the 1930s and 1940s.

State of Fascism in Europe

Fascism is a far-right, authoritarian ideology largely characterized by ultranationalism, and forced suppression against any forms of opposition. Fascism in Europe originated after World War I, when Italian Benito Mussolini supported the Axis Powers. Mussolini broke away from the sentiment supporting Allies and rose to national prominence. Mussolini called his first meeting of the newly-formed fascist party in 1915[3].

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[2] https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/greatwar/g2/backgroundcs1.htm

[3] https://www.crf-usa.org/bill-of-rights-in-action/bria-25-4-mussolini-and-the-rise-of-fascism.html#:~:text=Fascism%20arose%20in%20Europe%20after,to%20describe%20his%20political%20movement.

In Germany, the rise of fascism came largely because the people of Germany were dissatisfied with the Weimar Republic. Hitler joined the smaller German Workers Party, which later evolved to the National Socialist German Workers Party, or the Nazi Party. Overtime Hitler formed youth groups and broadened his coalition by appealing to those facing unemployment and poverty after the Great Depression and those who held anti-Weimar Republic sentiment. In 1932 the Nazi party eventually gained 37.4% of the vote in the Reichstag elections to become the largest party and Hitler was appointed chancellor of Germany in 1933.

While the fascist regimes in Italy were largely based on occupying territory and securing ultranationalist sentiment, the goals of the Nazi party were largely based on foreign policy and securing a living space for the German master race. Hitler was generally opposed to the Communist party and his party grew substantially, eventually gaining 44% of the general election vote. After forming the gestapo and banning all political parties except for the Nazi party, Hitler began defying diplomatic treaties and began his process of appeasement to expand territory for the German race[4].

State of British Parliament

By 1930, the power of the British monarch largely shifted over to the prime minister and other parliamentary members, with the monarch signing off legislation as a formality. While King George did not have unilateral power as a monarch, he expressed his political opinions regarding the rising fascist sentiment in Europe, before his death in 1936. King George was concerned by the rise to power in Germany of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party. In 1934, the King bluntly told the German ambassador Leopold von Hoesch that Germany was now the peril of the world, and that there was bound to be a war within ten years if Germany went on at the present rate; he warned the British ambassador in Berlin, Eric Phipps, to be suspicious of the Nazis.[5]

[4] http://blogs.bu.edu/guidedhistory/moderneurope/catherine-shen/
[5] Rose, Kenneth (1983), King George V, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson

The British Parliament is split into 3 sections: the House of Commons, the House of Lords, and the monarch. During King George's court in 1930, the two biggest parties representing the House of Commons were the Conservative Party and the Labour Party. Other parties with reasonable presence included the Liberal Party and the Scottish Unionist Party. Another party that rose due to fascist sentiment in Europe was the British Union of Fascists, but was soon quelled easily due to lack of membership.[6]

Aims of this Committee:

1. Quell the tensions between fascist states such as Italy and Germany, and Britain.

Will treaties be created by appeasement, like how Germany forced the Munich Agreement? Will you work with particular members of the German political scene who may be receptive? In a growing fascist climate, how will you negotiate when you fear that the spread of fascist sentiment might eventually be too great to repress?

2. Prevent the Munich Agreement and the chain reaction spiralling towards World War II.

The final goal, while war might bring economic prosperity to Britain, is to save lives and prevent conflict within Europe. A first step is to establish conditions that protect Czechoslovakia from German ownership. This might be through establishing trade relationships with Germany and coming up with alternative proposals that benefit both countries.

3. Establishing prosperity within Britain.

This could mean economic prosperity, but could also be related to social, cultural, and diplomatic prosperity. War typically brings about positive economic change in a nation such as Britain, but the chair looks favorably upon creating solutions that would improve the well-being of civilians in the country as well.

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[6] https://www.parliament.uk/about/how/role/system/

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Timeline of the British Empire.

> https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofBritain/Timeline-Of-The-British-Empire

> /

The two-House system. https://www.parliament.uk/about/how/role/system/

Topic 2: The Decline of the British Empire

This committee takes place at the end of 1930. The mention of any events that happened afterwards will be disregarded.

Definitions:

- Imperialism: "a situation in which one country has a lot of power or influence over others, especially in political and economic matters." - Cambridge Dictionary

- Decolonization: "the process in which a country that was previously a colony becomes politically independent." - Cambridge Dictionary

- Self Determination: "determination by the people of a territorial unit of their own future political status." - Merriam-Webster Dictionary

- Colony: "a country or area under the full or partial political control of another country, typically a distant one, and occupied by settlers from that country." - Oxford Dictionary. The main difference between imperialism and colonialism is the presence of settlers. Colonialism necessarily involves a group of settlers colonizing an area.

- Dominion: "The territory of a sovereign or a government." - Oxford Dictionary.

Background

Known as the empire on which the sun never sets, by the beginning of the 20th century, the British empire ruled over 20% of the world and was the largest empire in history at 35.5 million km^2 (followed by the Mongol empire with 24 million km^2). As of 1925, it ruled over almost 500 million people, only 10% of which were in the United Kingdom.

However, the empire seems to be facing significant challenges. With a dire economic situation, a weakened military, and the rise of nationalist movements across the empire, Britain's control over its empire was becoming a challenge. In addition, many ideals which Britain championed like democracy, human rights, and right to self determination, were becoming increasingly contradictory to imperialist ideals.
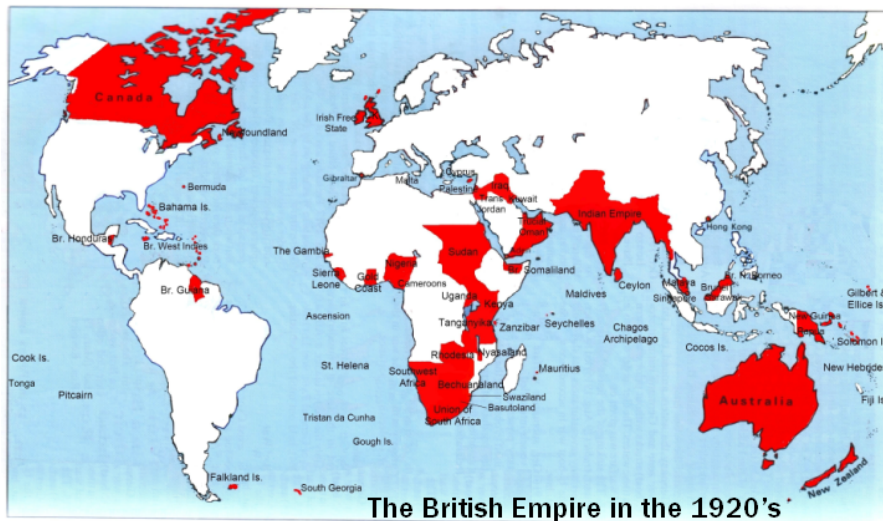
Now, the Court is faced with the question: Should we maintain the empire? If yes, how do we overcome these challenges and keep up with the ever changing world? If not, how do we proceed with the process of decolonization?

Current Situation:

The Great Depression: a period of economic recession caused by the crash of the stock market in 1929. The demand for European exports in the United States dramatically fell, and as a major exporting country, the United Kingdom suffered from high unemployment rates. In 1930, a small ministerial team was created to tackle the issue of unemployment.

Liberation and Nationalist Movements: In India, the Indian National Congress (INC) was gaining traction engaging in civil disobedience. They were demanding that India gain dominion status. In 1919, the British parliament passed the Government of India Act of 1919 as "a step in the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the empire." However, the INC, who viewed the act as an attempt to introduce a British constitution of India, rejected it. In the Free State of Ireland, after gaining dominion status in 1921 as a result of the Irish War of Independence, the IRA split into two groups: those in support of the Anglo-Irish treaty, and those opposing it. This led to the Irish civil war, in which the Irregulars (the IRA faction opposing the treaty) fought against the Free State which was supported by the British. Even though the

Irregulars eventually lost the war, they have neither been disbanded nor disarmed. They continued carrying out attacks and fighting for the cause of the unified republic.

The British Empire in the 1920's

Questions to Consider:

- Is your character a political or an apolitical character?

- What are your party affiliations? What are your party's views on British imperialism?

- How does continued control over the empire's vast lands affect the economy and Britain's international status?

Helpful Resources:

- [Timeline of the British Empire](#)

- [Maps in Time - The National Archives](#)

- [When (if ever) did the Sun finally set on the British Empire?](#)

- [The End of the British Empire in India](#)

- ['An eye for an eye': The IRA's campaign in 1920s Britain](#)

- [The British Empire exhibition (1924)](#)

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