

SECONDARY SCHOOLS' UNITED NATIONS  
SYMPOSIUM 2016

# Britain World War II

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NOVEMBER 10-13, 2016 | MONTRÉAL, QUÉBEC



Hello Delegates!

On behalf of the Dais and the whole Crisis team, I'd like to welcome you to the historical Britain World War II Crisis Committee for SSUNS 2016! My name is David Marchionni and I am serving as the Crisis Director of this committee as we travel back to recreate and experience one of the most trying times in British and world history.

This committee's Background Guide will provide an important foundation for the start of the sessions, detailing the history of both Britain (and her empire) as well as the world in the lead-up to the most monumental conflict in human history. With the Second World War already underway, there is an attitude of distress about the nation, and it will be up to this new government to steer Great Britain away from imminent danger and safeguard not only the British Isles but to do your best to care for and protect all British subjects across the Globe. As the War Cabinet, you have been entrusted with tremendous powers to shape and direct the course of British history, working with the nation's military, propagandists, journalists, and politicians (both national and international) to not only weather the storm but succeed in ensuring freedom and peace for the British Empire.

I cannot say how excited I am to see how our next few days together will unfold. I took an avid interest in Model United Nations my first year here at McGill and since then I've been lucky enough to staff and/or serve on the dais of three Crisis Committees and an SA. This will be my third year here at McGill with dual majors in History and Political Science, and from an early age the history of the Second World War has always fascinated me. My goal is to finish my studies at McGill and return home to the United States to work in the State Department.



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Alongside me in the crisis room is your Assistant Crisis Director Oscar Beghin. Oscar is in his first year at McGill studying Economics and History. His first MUN conference was as a delegate at SSUNS in 2013, as a part of Marianopolis College's delegation. He's since participated around the world, going to cities such as New York, Seoul, or Rome for international conferences. After a first taste of a crisis committee, and the complementary failed coup d'états, mischievous backstabbing, and the feeling of not being utterly lost in a sea of 300 delegate GA, Oscar will be happy to once again return to a crisis at SSUNS.

Your first Co-Chair is the fabulous Priya Dube, a student of political science, whom hails originally from Ottawa. Though she is pretty new to MUN, she has absolutely loved her experiences with it thus far. Some of her favourite pass times include dancing and climbing up Mont Royal, and in the future she hopes to work in international affairs. She cannot wait to meet you all come November!

Finally, your second Co-Chair for this Committee is Alex Sirois. Alex is in his third-year at McGill, studying Sociology and Political Science. He is originally from the far away land of Croatia. He is a member of the McGill Delegations team and an enthusiast of all things MUN related. When he's not MUN-ing, he is usually playing or watching soccer or hockey.

As my last two cents let me just say that I cannot wait to see what our committee can achieve as SSUNS 2016! See you all soon!

Humbly,

David Marchionni

Crisis Director | Britain: WWII



### **Overview**

The committee begins in the spring of 1940 with the world at war. German forces are in firm control of Norway and Poland, and have begun stockpiling forces around the Benelux countries (Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands). The United States has officially declared neutrality, Italy has made a pact with Germany but has not declared war, and the Soviets have their own Non-Aggression Pact with the Germans.

### **Prelude to War**

Adolf Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany on January 30<sup>th</sup> 1933.<sup>1</sup> Conservative forces in German politics believed Hitler and his National Socialist (Nazi) Party, who had become the strongest political party in 1932 due to the Great Depression, could be contained and their massive support manipulated.<sup>2</sup> This was dead wrong. On October 14<sup>th</sup>, Hitler's Germany withdrew from the Disarmament conference, taking advantage of divisions amongst European powers.<sup>3</sup> A week later, Germany left the League of Nations, the underperforming international body envisioned by Woodrow Wilson in order to maintain peace and cooperation among states. In the summer of 1934, after the death of President Paul von Hindenburg, Hitler and the Nazis took full control of Germany, turning it into a dictatorship.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A.J.P Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War*, 68.

<sup>2</sup> R.A.C. Parker, *The Second World War*, 5.

<sup>3</sup> Taylor, 76.

<sup>4</sup> Taylor, 81.



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In January 1935, the Saar region held a Treaty of Versailles mandated plebiscite on rejoining Germany, which passed with 90% of the vote.<sup>5</sup> In March 1935, Germany reinstituted conscription.<sup>6</sup> A year later, German forces retook the formally demilitarized Rhineland along the French border.<sup>7</sup> Hitler's political victories continually accelerated the growth of his popularity. Within a few years after rising to power, Hitler had all but abolished the Treaty of Versailles and returned power and respect to his nation. The death of Versailles was seen as a relief to virtually all but the French; Britain quickly signed a deal with Hitler allowing Germany to rebuild a navy to a maximum size of one third that of Her Majesty's Royal Navy.<sup>8</sup>

In October of 1935, Italy's own Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini invaded Abyssinia. By May of 1936, without serious opposition from the League of Nations, Italy had conquered all of Abyssinia, prompting Mussolini to proclaim the founding of a new Roman Empire.<sup>9</sup> The only League of Nations actions taken were economic sanctions against Italy, which resulted in tightening economic ties between Italy and Germany.<sup>10</sup> In 1936, Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy formed the Berlin-Rome Axis, making them informal allies; this became the Pact of Steel in 1939 when it incorporated Japan.<sup>11</sup> The alliance between Germany and Italy removed the strongest opposition to German domination of Austria, which from late-1936 onwards was little more than a German satellite.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Taylor, 86

<sup>6</sup> Taylor, 85.

<sup>7</sup> Parker, 11.

<sup>8</sup> Taylor, 87.

<sup>9</sup> Taylor, 92, 95.

<sup>10</sup> P.M.H. Bell, *The Origins of the Second World War in Europe*, 239.

<sup>11</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica, Rome-Berlin Axis, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Rome-Berlin-Axis>

<sup>12</sup> Bell, 255.



Within months of Germany's remilitarization of the Rhineland and Italy's victory in Abyssinia, civil war broke out in Spain.<sup>13</sup> A right-wing, monarchist wing of the military rose up in July of 1936 to overthrow the recently elected socialist government of the Popular Front. The right-wing leader Franco asked Hitler and Mussolini for aid, a request which was acquiesced. Germany sent in the Condor Legion of the *Luftwaffe* (the German air force), granting them valuable combat experience in modern aerial warfare.<sup>14</sup> The Soviet Union supported the Popular Front through large shipments of armaments and indirect channels such as Comintern organized international brigades.<sup>15</sup> The war in Spain became in many ways a proxy between the forces of the far right in Rome and Berlin and the forces of the far left in Moscow. Preoccupied with military purges at home, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin pulled Soviet support out of Spain in the autumn of 1938.<sup>16</sup>

The British government's policy throughout these tumultuous times was known as appeasement, or the explicit avoidance of larger wars. In March of 1938, Hitler sent his military into Austria and incorporated the nation into the German republic.<sup>17</sup> Immediately, Sudeten Germans who lived in western Czechoslovakia began to make huge demands of their Czech government. With the French bound by treaty to help the Czechs against Germany, there was potential for a massive global crisis. In negotiations with Hitler, Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's white paper handed Sudeten, the German-speaking region of Czechoslovakia, over

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<sup>13</sup> Bell, 244.

<sup>14</sup> Bell, 246.

<sup>15</sup> Bell, 247.

<sup>16</sup> Bell, 248.

<sup>17</sup> Parker, 12.



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to the Germans with one stroke of a pen in 1938. Chamberlain hailed this settlement as having guaranteed “peace in our time”.<sup>18</sup> However, Hitler had never been an honest man. In March of 1939, German troops occupied what remained of Czech territory, with no immediate retaliation from the Allies.<sup>19</sup>

Berlin’s greed did not end in Czechoslovakia. For months our camp and the Germans met to discuss the status of German minorities in Poland and the return of the Free City State of Danzig to Germany. These discussions reached a boiling point in August of 1939.<sup>20</sup> Our efforts were of less use than we expected as the Germans took the time granted by our foolish negotiations to covertly amass troops on the Polish border as well as sign a non-aggression pact with Stalin’s Soviet Union.<sup>21</sup> The apparent ideological mortal enemies in Berlin and Moscow shocked the world by cooperating. We promised the people of Poland that they would not share the fate of their Czech and Slovak neighbours and signed a pact with Warsaw, guaranteeing their protection. Czechoslovakia had been the final straw. The first German act of war came on September 1<sup>st</sup> 1939.<sup>22</sup> Britain shall always be an honourable nation, and along with our ally France, we declared war on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September 1939.

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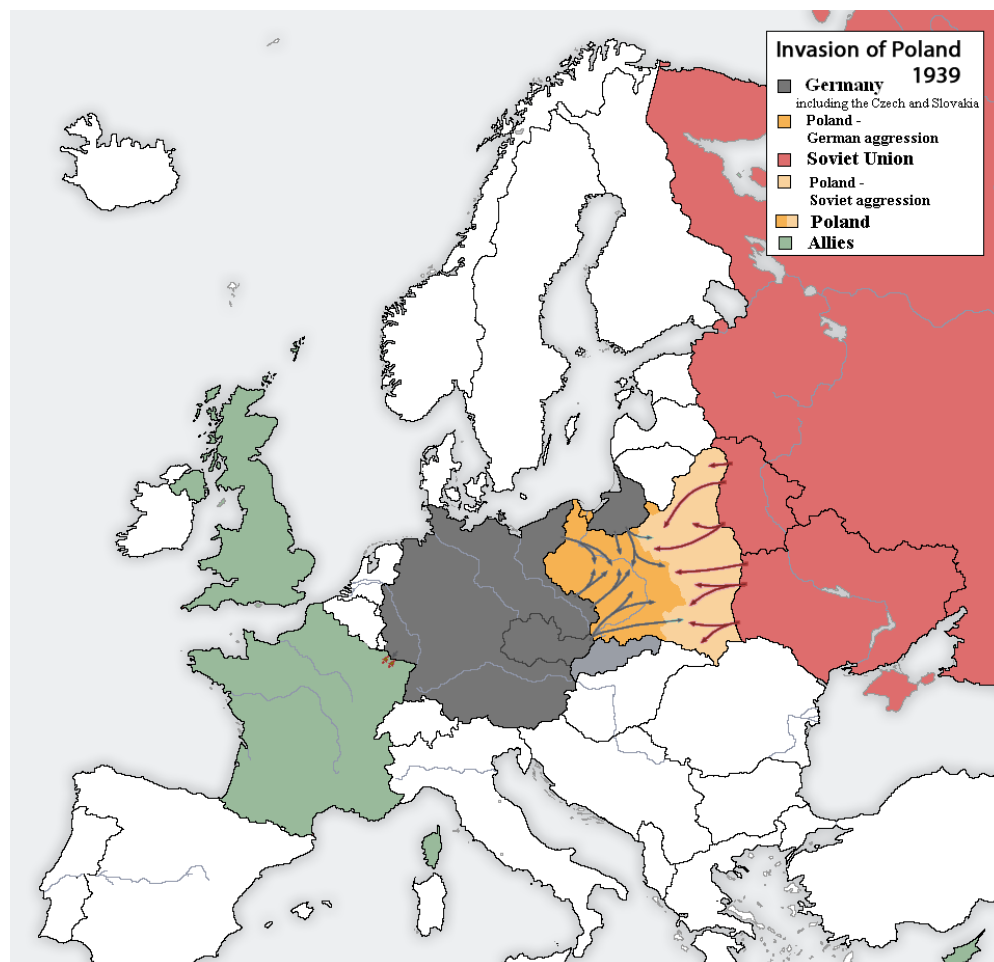
<sup>18</sup> Neville Chamberlain, “Peace in Our Time Speech” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FO725Hbzfls>

<sup>19</sup> Parker, 14.

<sup>20</sup> Taylor, 248.

<sup>21</sup> Parker, 15.

<sup>22</sup> Parker, 20.



## The War Thus Far

In Poland, the Soviet Union also engaged in treacherous behaviour. Stalin has given Hitler a free hand in the west.<sup>23</sup> The German and Soviet Foreign Ministers, Ribbentrop and Molotov, agreed to divide Poland amongst themselves and the illegal occupation of these lands continues.

The Poles were defeated easily by the new and deadly style of German warfare: *Blitzkrieg*. Germany sent in six motorized *Panzer* divisions, comprised of heavy and medium tanks and

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<sup>23</sup> Parker, 23.





motorized artillery.<sup>24</sup> These motorized troops charged through the front lines and were followed up by 24 infantry divisions marching on foot with supplies drawn by horses.<sup>25</sup> The *Luftwaffe* provided overpowering air support. On September 17<sup>th</sup>, when Soviet troops moved into Eastern Poland, we learned of Stalin's betrayal. Since the invasion of Poland, Stalin's Red Army has marched into the three Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) and launched an attack on the sovereign nation of Finland in November 1939—Finland has since surrendered.<sup>26</sup> The malicious dictators on the continent are all conspiring against the free peoples of the world.

In April 1940, Germany invaded Denmark and Norway to protect shipments of iron ore from Sweden, after Allied militaries attempted to cut off the supplies routes that are vital to German industry.<sup>27</sup> Great Britain lost nearly 2,000 fighting the Nazis in Norway, before Prime Minister Chamberlain ordered the withdrawal. After 62 days, Oslo capitulated. This defeat saw the resignation of Neville Chamberlain, after MP Leo Amery famously quoted Oliver Cromwell in the House of Commons saying "You have sat here far too long for any good you are doing. Depart, I say, and let us have done with you. In the name of God, go!"

### **What Now?**

Now it is up to you, the leaders of Britain, the greatest force for good in this world, to withstand and defeat the tyranny of Fascism on the continent or to broker peace with Hitler and save millions of lives. The current Allied strategy has been one of delay. The first months of this year have seen an Anglo-French aircraft production figure of 6,794 planes, a number nearly

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<sup>24</sup> Parker, 21.

<sup>25</sup> Parker, 22.

<sup>26</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica, Russo-Finnish War <https://www.britannica.com/event/Russo-Finnish-War>

<sup>27</sup> Parker, 25.



double that of Germany.<sup>28</sup> The production of tanks is roughly treble that of Germany. However, given that the Soviets are sending minerals and other supplies to Hitler's forces, our naval blockade has thus far been ineffective and there is no guarantee our industrial advantage can be maintained if the Germans mount a successful offensive.<sup>29</sup>

The Atlantic is Britain's lifeline. Britain's vital supplies, from foodstuffs, to metals, to oil come primarily from the New World. Since 1939, over a thousand ships, carrying several million tons of supplies, have been sunk by enemy submarines.<sup>30</sup> Britain imports about 70 per cent of its food, and if the supply ships keep sinking, the Ministry of Food's may have to cut rations to dangerous levels, to the detriment of Home Front morale. If the Atlantic cannot be protected from German submarines, Britain is doomed.

Canada is firmly committed to serving the Allied cause; their neighbour to the south, the largest economy in the world, is going to be the deciding factor in this war. American President Franklin Delano Roosevelt is in regular contact with Britain's authorities, but in 1937 Congress passed comprehensive neutrality legislation.<sup>31</sup> Even if Congressmen change their minds, America is not likely to be ready for war quickly; less than two per cent of the American budget currently goes to military spending.<sup>32</sup>

In the air, the German *Luftwaffe*, under the command of the formidable Hermann Goring, presents a deadly threat. Airpower is essential to German military strategy. The major limitation

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<sup>28</sup> Parker, 23.

<sup>29</sup> Parker, 27.

<sup>30</sup> Richard Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, 26.

<sup>31</sup> Overy, 109.

<sup>32</sup> Overy 190.



of the *Luftwaffe* is that it lacks heavy bombers, given that the Nazi leadership requires all of their planes to be highly maneuverable.<sup>33</sup> The Royal Air Force's (RAF) Bomber Command has at its disposal some 488 light-bombers, though these cannot carry bombs above 250 pounds.<sup>34</sup> Though former Prime Minister Chamberlain was highly reluctant to use bombers strategically, if the continent is lost there may be no other means to mount an offensive against the Nazis.<sup>35</sup>

The stage is set for what may well be the last war for the future of free civilization. The world depends on our leadership; the hope of humanity rests precariously balanced in our hands.

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<sup>33</sup> Overy, 104.

<sup>34</sup> Overy, 107.

<sup>35</sup> Overy, 107.



### Character List

#### **Lord President of The Council: Sir John Anderson**

A strong, well-connected man who holds close friendships with both Winston Churchill and King George VI. He cares deeply about Home Defense and protecting the people of Britain.

#### **Lord Privy Seal: Clement Atlee**

The leader of the Labour Party, he serves as the voice of the government in Parliament and as a de-facto Speaker of the House of the Commons.

#### **Chancellor of the Exchequer: Sir Kingsley Wood**

Responsible for the economic and financial matters affecting Great Britain, Wood is a staunch Keynesian Conservative and economic imperialist.

#### **Foreign Secretary: Anthony Eden**

Handling relations with foreign powers, Eden is an ardent opponent of appeasement, yet averse to warmongering if it can be avoided.

#### **Home Secretary: Herbert Morrison**

Morrison ran the internal affairs of Great Britain, and feuded constantly with Atlee over the position of Leader of the Labour Party.

#### **Minister of Aircraft Production: The Baron Beaverbrook**

Max Aitken is an independent millionaire from Ontario who was selected to push the needs of the RAF over the other departments of the Government. He is also the owner of the Daily Express newspaper and has a close, pleasant friendship with Churchill.

#### **Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs: The Viscount Cranbourne**



Robert Arthur Gascoyne-Cecil is a member of the Conservative party in charge of handling relations with Britain's Dominions. He personally believes in spreading English culture and language across the Dominions while still caring for their wellbeing.

### **Minister Without Portfolio: Arthur Greenwood**

A member of the Labour Party and ally of Churchill's, he holds an aggressive stance towards Germany and battles with any other members of the War Cabinet who hold more conciliatory attitudes towards the war.

### **Secretary of State for India and Burma: Leo Amery**

The Political overseer of British India, Burma, and Aden, Amery is a Conservative politician and journalist. A rapid anticommunist and nationalist, he believes that military strength and preparedness is the key to British supremacy.

### **Secretary of State for War: David Margetson**

The man in charge of advising the Prime Minister in matters of national security and what policies should be undertaken in case of war, Margesson is a Conservative and former Parliamentary Whip who believes in appeasement and governmental cooperation.

### **Minister of Supply: Sir Andrew Rae Duncan**

Duncan is a British businessman with no prior government experience (though he served as Director of the Bank of England), who staunchly opposes any policies from the Labour Party and nationalization of industry.

### **First Lord of the Admiralty: A.V. Alexander**



The titular head of the Royal Navy, Alexander is a member of the Centre-Left who manages to keep the affairs of the navy separate from the direct control of the government.

### **Secretary of State for Air: Sir. Archibald Sinclair, Bt.**

The son of a Scotsman and an American, Sinclair served with Churchill in the First World War, later he joined the House of Commons as a Liberal MP and eventually became the leader of the Liberal Party. His goal is to revitalize the power of the Liberal Party in Congress and use the air force to defend the British Isles.

### **Secretary of State for the Colonies: The Lord Lloyd**

George Lloyd is a member of the “Diehard” branch of the Conservatives, staunchly opposing Home Rule in the colonies and holding an even firmer stance against German aggression.

### **Minister of Economic Warfare: Hugh Dalton**

The head of the Special Operations Executive, Dalton is an economist and Labour MP who opposes pacifism and strongly favours socialist reforms for the nation in opposition to the Conservative stance.

### **Minister of Food: The Earl of Woollen**

In charge of the rationing of foodstuffs and the provision for the general public, Frederick Marquis was the Managing Director of Lewis Department Store who received a knighthood for his services to British Industry. He is a member of the Conservative Party and effectively holds a monopoly over all food sold in Great Britain.

### **Minister of Information: Duff Cooper**



Cooper's department handles the creation and distribution of propaganda, censorship, and the issuing of official news. Cooper is a Conservative politician with connections to most of Britain's upper elite and royalty.

### **Canadian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom: The Hon. Vincent Massey**

The chief diplomat from Canada, Vincent Massey is a lawyer who has a friendship with Mackenzie King. He very much wants to expand Canada's role in the world and the war.

### **Australian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, 1933-1945: The Rt. Hon. Stanley Bruce**

The chief diplomat from Australia, he is an Australian nationalist from an aristocratic family and the former PM of Australia. He feuds with the British government over their policies, but is very much against German and Japanese aggression.

### **Indian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, 1936-1941: Sir Malik Feroz Khan Noon**

The chief diplomat from India, Malik is a Muslim politician who advocates for a balance between Indian nationalism and loyalty to the British Crown.

### **Chief of the Imperial General Staff, 1941-1946: Field Marshal Alan Francis Brooke**

The professional head of the British army, Alan Brooke is a highly respected general who became famous in the First World War for establishing new military techniques. He is a surly man who is frequently combative with his peers and representatives from foreign powers.

### **United States Ambassador to the United Kingdom, 1941-1946: John Gilbert Winant**

The ambassador to the UK and official representative of the President and Congress. Winant favours an active U.S. role in the world and a friendlier relation with the UK.



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