



Boston University Academy Model United Nations Conference III

Saturday, January 31 to Sunday, February 1, 2015

Boston University Academy

Boston, MA



Bolshevik Cabinet 1917 Historical Crisis Committee

Background Guide

Dear Delegates,

My name is Reuben Stern, and I am a junior here at BU Academy. While we'll be spending the better part of a weekend getting to know each other in just a few months, I'd like to take the time to introduce myself! While I haven't been actively involved in BUA's Model UN club since freshman year, I've chaired and co-chaired a standalone crisis for both BUAMUN conferences. Now, at BUAMUN III, I'm extremely excited to be your chair as part of the Bolshevik Committee! In school, I'm really a math and science type; outside of school, my artistic side shines through. As a classical musician, I have played for three years with the Boston Youth Symphony, one with the National Youth Orchestra of the USA. I'm also a budding photographer.

But enough! Comrade, over the weekend that you and I must anxiously be awaiting, I will assume the role of Vladimir Lenin, famed politician, revolutionary, and political theorist, and you, other high-ranking members of the Bolshevik Party. Unlike joint crises, this committee is the only one in our specific mini-crisis. That is, no delegates other than you will be making decisions. Furthermore, the crises we throw at you will be dependent on the current flow of debate, while they may be planned in advance. For those of you reading this and thinking, "*joint* crisis? *Mini*-crisis? I don't even know what a *regular* crisis is!"—do not fear! Before debate commences, we will spend time in committee going over the rules and regulations of a crisis committee. For now, just know that you must be quick-witted, knowledgeable about your position, and able to work with and against others.

One other thing to keep in mind is the time frame of our committee. As we are assuming the roles of figures in history, every event that has happened in real life up to **November 16, 1917**, is valid for use in your research. Anything after, however, must be disregarded. The

moment we begin debate, you know nothing of “future” events, nor have you ever known of them. We are, in some senses, rewriting history, if for a brief period of time.

In your preparation for committee, I encourage you to research what your figure actually did, what positions or actions (s)he took, in order to be equipped with an arsenal of possible solutions. Do not, however, expect any of them to come to fruition. The crisis may unfold in a manner *drastically* different from what has happened historically.

General Assemblies expect delegates to write position papers; I, too, expect you to write a “policy paper,” the details of which will be fleshed out below. You must submit this paper in order to be considered for awards, and the paper helps you organize your thoughts and me keep you on the right track. While this background guide will attempt to be as thorough as possible, inevitably, you may need to do outside research. Thus, I have included a list of good sources to use. There are no real restrictions on sources, but please, for the love of Communism, cite your sources!

Last but certainly not least, I will not be alone in running this committee. My capable vice-chair is Albert Fung, a sophomore here at the Academy. This is his second year working at BUAMUN, and he is a knowledgeable MUNer. We really look forward to working with you all!

I know that this and what is to follow is quite a bit to digest, so do not hesitate to email me your questions! While I strive to keep debate as constructive and organized as possible, it is my priority to ensure that you have fun at the conference and learn a lot. I hope you’re as excited as I am to get into committee, and hopefully make some change!

I’ll see you after Red October!

Reuben Stern

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Crisis Committee Flow of Debate:

Adapted from Phill Giliver, 2013

Crisis committees at BUAMUN and other conferences work differently from “regular” General Assembly (GA) committees. Crises follow a less formal flow of debate, and generally remove many of the elements of parliamentary procedure. Delegates must still raise placards to speak, and must follow the standards of diplomatic politesse; however, elements of debate such as speakers’ lists and moderated/un-moderated caucuses are mostly done away with. Motions for caucuses on specific topics are encouraged, but crisis debate generally runs like a never-ending moderated caucus. This structure is adopted because during a crisis simulation, events and crises can progress rapidly, and a full implementation of parliamentary procedure would only slow delegates’ ability to respond to fast-paced happenings.

There are 3 general measures that delegates in a crisis committee can perform:

1. **Directives:** formal action undertaken by a committee or an individual on a committee.

Directives can contain any *reasonable* action and may be drafted by any delegate on a crisis committee (for example, a directive can declare war on another nation; however, it may also ask the other nation to attend bilateral treaty negotiations). After a draft is written, delegates submit directives to the chair. The chair will then read the directive, at which point delegates can motion to alter the directive or to vote on it.

In some cases, delegates may send private directives to the chair, also known as **portfolio action**. This type of directive depends on the purview of the delegate’s position. For example, the chief of a nation’s intelligence agency may order the secret detainment of a known terrorist. Likewise, the minister of energy for a nation may choose to cut energy agreements with another nation. Conversely, a minister of culture may not unilaterally

declare war, nor may the minister of education impose economic sanctions on another nation, etc.

2. **Press Releases:** formal statements from a committee detailing an action or a committee's stance or opinion. For example, if a committee representing the United States decided to attack Canada (absurdity intended), the committee could issue a Press Release telling the world that they have chosen to break all economic and trade ties with Canada and launch full scale war. Similarly, if the US waged war on Canada, a committee representing the United Kingdom could issue a Press Release condemning the US's action.
3. **Communiqués:** informal communication between individuals or committees. For example, if a committee representing Iran chose to send information to the leader of Hezbollah (a terrorist organization represented on a Lebanese committee), it could do so in a communiqué, and only the addressee would receive the information. Similarly, two economic ministers (for example, of Australia and the UK) could be communicating without anyone else's knowledge through communiqués.

The crisis chairs and crisis staff will inform you of any additional actions that you may take; they will also make sure that no delegate's actions are out of order.

Crises occur rapidly and often throughout the course of crisis simulations—be prepared to think on your feet and to enact whatever measures you and your fellow delegates feel are necessary, and most importantly, have fun!

Position Paper Information

All of the BUAMUN crisis committees require a position paper from each delegate. Position papers are short pieces of writing indicating a delegate's stance which contribute to a chair's perspective regarding awards. You should probably conduct additional research to write this paper. See the "References" section at the end of this guide, for helpful researching resources. A position paper should be approximately 1-2 pages, double spaced, and should include the delegate's reaction to each of the topics.

Delegate: Reuben Stern

School: Boston University Academy (Your school here, not ours.)

Committee: Bolshevik Party 1917

Position: Vladimir Lenin

There should be one position paper from each delegate touching on all topics, with a focus on that delegate's position in the committee.

Historical Background:

That the October Revolution really occurred in November may seem unintuitive, but the 7th of November in the Gregorian calendar actually corresponds with the 25th of October in the Julian calendar.¹ A major event in modern Russian history, it was a revolution within a revolution, coinciding with the whirlpool of destruction caused by the First World War. To understand the events leading up to and ultimately causing the uprising, we must gain an understanding of Russia's sociopolitical standings and her involvement in the War.

In the early 19th Century, Russian infrastructure was suffering. Other European powers fared much better, and so Russia had to invest much more of her earnings toward structural

¹ Although it would be more historically correct to list dates in their Julian (old calendar) form, to avoid confusion, we will be using the Gregorian (new calendar) dates in committee and in this guide.

development than others, leaving the nation hurting economically. With the aid of the French, Russia did indeed rebuild, by 1914 allowing a balance of power between most of Europe and the ever-stronger German Empire. Russia's involvement in the War grew steadily through 1916, fighting battles at Sarikamis, Lodz, and the Vistula River, to name a few.

Russia's journey into the 20th Century brought with it long-standing tensions and failures. It was of the utmost importance to the Imperial government to modernize the older socioeconomic structures in place in society, while attempting to keep all her people loyal to the Tsar, Russia's autocratic monarch. Failure came fast, and quickly, the Tsar Nicholas II became divided from his subjects. The Revolution of 1905 encouraged this divide, especially for economic reasons. Time and again, an attempt at mixing archaic, even medieval systems (such as fiefdom and open-field farming) into a modern, *laissez-faire* capitalist system proved futile and even destructive.

The Tsar further divided himself from his people with his opinion on fighting in the First World War. Overwhelmingly, most social classes supported Russia's entering the war, but, after a few minor victories, the alarmingly high casualty rate (about 6,000,000) led to frequent mutiny, with morale hitting its lowest point. To make matters worse, the replacements called up to fill the spots of mutinous troops were often of minimal training, verging on incompetency. In an attempt to fix this plunge in confidence, Nicholas II announced his decision to take on the role of Commander-in-Chief of the army personally, although a majority of his advisors told him otherwise. This made matters worse for three reasons:

1. Nicholas himself was not a competent chief
2. The autocracy was now publicly supporting the unpopular war
3. He left his post as Tsar vacant while serving as Commander-in-Chief

Nicholas appointed his wife, Tsarina Alexandra, as interim monarch, who in turn proved an incapable governess.

The people were furious with the Tsar's decisions and inept rule, even more so with the German Tsarina, and protests broke out among students, teachers, and some workers. Protesters chanted, "Down with the Tsar!" "Down with the war!" and "Down with the German woman!" After no more than two years as Commander-in-Chief, Nicholas returned to his post as Tsar on March 7th, 1917. He held this position again for just over a week, when, on March 15th, at the behest of his ministers, he abdicated the throne.

These protests became known as the February Revolution, and serve as a major turning point in Russian history: when monarchy first gave way to an increasingly leftist government. The regime to succeed the monarch was an arrangement of "Dual Power" between the Provisional Government (meant to replace the Tsar) and the Petrograd (now modern-day Saint Petersburg) Soviet.² Upon the formation of this system, the Soviet released its Order No. 1, ensuring the Soviet's control of the Dual Authority agreement.

After the February Revolution and its immediate consequences, Vladimir Lenin came to Petrograd, preaching ideologies of what would soon become Marxist-Leninist Communism. He emphasized the importance of Soviets having complete power, especially in the particular case of the Dual Power/Authority. In July of 1917, Lenin organized a massive, peaceful protest in the streets of Petrograd, bringing around 500,000 demonstrators into the square. Unfortunately, he proved incapable at organizing and directing such a crowd, and the protest was quickly disbanded. In fact, a warrant for his arrest was posted, forcing him to hide for quite some time.

² A Soviet is nothing more than a council, generally representing workers; it provides a democratic side to the Dual Power system.

A brief lull followed, until General Kornilov, Commander-in-Chief of the Russian army, marched on Petrograd on August 27th. Prime Minister Alexander Kerensky pushed hard to stop Kornilov's invasion, but lacked the forces to do so. Kerensky thus asked the Petrograd Soviet for help, and eventually, Bolsheviks and other revolutionaries stopped the progress of Kornilov's army. After Kornilov's defeat, Bolshevik popularity skyrocketed, and Soviets from across the nation began to join their party.

The events constituting the October Revolution followed shortly after. The 23rd of October brought with it a resolution passed by the Bolshevik's Central Committee that an armed uprising would be inevitable. On November 5th, Bolshevik revolutionaries rose up in Tallinn. A few days later, Bolshevik forces led an uprising in Petrograd, mostly bloodless, which eventually turned Petrograd to the Bolshevik side. Bolshevik power spread rapidly throughout the nation, taking Tver, Gomel, Perm, and, by November 15th, the large city of Moscow. Thus have we reached the beginning of our committee session. No further history applies to your research or debate, though you may look into your delegate's actions after, in order to inform possible decisions during committee. Be sure, though, that you do not expect any event that happens historically after November 16th to come to fruition in committee. It is necessary, then, to understand not just what your person's actions were, but *why* they were.

Philosophical and Political Background:

The development and bifurcation of communist thought is crucial to understanding the events and possible ways to rectify them.

One of the most revolutionary thinkers in recent history was Karl Marx, who developed the sociopolitical theory of Communism as a response to the then-current ideal of Capitalism.

One major tenet of the Marxist theory was the *Labor Theory of Value*, that “the value of a commodity can be objectively measured by the average number of labor hours required to produce that commodity.”³ Let’s unpack that a little bit. Consider two cobblers, each selling their own leather oxford (a type of shoe). Cobbler A tans his own cowhides, crafts each shoe to the specifications of his customer, and charges a premium for it. Cobbler B buys pre-tanned hides and crafts his shoes to pre-defined specifications. For the sake of simplicity, let’s assume that both cobblers have the same knowledge, they just each choose to do things differently. Which shoe will be the most valuable? Of course, the one produced by Cobbler A will cost more. The Labor Theory of Value says that because Cobbler A put more hours into working on one pair of shoes, it will be more valuable than the shoes crafted by Cobbler B. How does this theory apply to Marxism? Marx believed that the value of *every* commodity could be explained by the Labor Theory of Value, which he called “Labor Power.” He believed that a fundamental inequality between worker and employer existed in a Capitalist system, that the employer, seeking personal monetary gain, would exploit his employees beyond the hours needed to achieve their labor power, in order to turn a profit. He also believed that competition in a Capitalist society, while intended to drive progress and innovation, ultimately and inevitably led to monopolies, which he was fervently against.

In *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx describes “Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinct feature: it has simplified class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other — Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.”⁴ Again, this statement needs some unpacking. In Chapter 1 of his groundbreaking work, Marx explains “the history of class struggles,” the fight

³<http://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/Marxism.html>

⁴Engels and Marx, *the Communist Manifesto*.

between the **Bourgeoisie**—in many contexts, the middle class, but in the Marxist theory, the class which controls most of the wealth—and the **Proletariat**—the collective term for workers or working-class citizens. Marx believed in the power of the proletariat, in the equalizing of both classes. He argues that “he bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation”—searching for equality throughout society. Indeed, Marx’s vision was for a Communists society free of classes and states, where society stands on common ownership, hence the name. In theory, this seems very nice, but pure Marxist theory cannot be put into practice and stay unadulterated. Thus do other political ideologies arise.

From Marxist thought came two key sociopolitical outlooks, Marxism-Leninism and Marxism-Trotskyism, named for their respective founders, Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky. It is thus very important to understand the divisions between the ideologies, as every member of the Committee is either Leninist or Trotskyist.

Lenin believed that the proletariat (working-class) should and could seize state power, developing a mixed economy with attributes of socialist and capitalist economics. The Bolshevik party sided overwhelmingly with Lenin, and the ideology of Leninism became associated with Bolsheviks. Leninism focused on keeping this mixed economy, though gradually transitioning more towards socialism than capitalism. Another key belief of Lenin and the Bolsheviks is that the proletariat could lead the bourgeoisie-democratic revolution successfully, without bourgeoisie taking over the government.

Trotsky and Lenin agreed on many fronts, making the dichotomy between their ideologies less clear. The main difference, however, is that Trotsky believed the proletariat unable to seize state power and maintain the sought-after mixed economy. In his view, social

stratification in society also existed within the Bolsheviks; that is, there were Bolsheviks who associated ideologically with the peasants and some who aligned with the proletariat. Trotsky backed the Marxist conception of “Permanent revolution,” that socialist revolutions could occur in countries even without developed Capitalist societies. This contrasts slightly with Lenin’s view of why socialist revolutions originate.

Focus Questions (to use in preparation for committee):

- Your position has been denoted either as a Trotskyist or a Leninist, although the two (especially at the time of the October Revolution) are not mutually exclusive. Given your knowledge of your character’s previous involvement in government, what political ideology does (s)he hold? How could that influence his/her decisions and relations during our debate?
- Inevitably, everyone has some opinion on the righteousness and necessity of every action. How does your character view the events leading up to the start of the conference (November 16, 1917)?
- With whom in our committee would you have the best relationship with respect to sociopolitical ideology? The worst? How do you imagine yourself strengthening or breaking bonds?
- What do you want the ultimate outcome of debate to be? How would this affect Russia’s condition internally and externally, with the whole world at war? Is there any peaceful solution? Do you *want* a peaceful solution?

Positions:

1. **Mikhail Kalinin** is the Leninist mayor of Petrograd. He works closely with Vladimir Lenin.
2. **Nikolai Bukharin** is a close companion of Lenin and Trotsky who lived with them in exile and a leading editor of *Pravda*. He is also a leading member in Moscow's City Committee and the Regional Party Committee.
3. **Mikhail Tomsky** is a Leninist who was born into a lower class family and took a leading role in the October Revolution. He was also the Secretary of the All-Union Central Council on Trade Unions and a union leader.
4. **Leon Trotsky** is a Marxist Trotskyist revolutionary who founded the Red Army. He also acted as Commissar for Foreign Affairs.
5. **Lev Kamenev** is the Leninist First Head of State of the RSFSR. He was initially opposed to the October Revolution and voted against it but went along with it. He works closely with Grigory Zinoviev.
6. **Yevgeni Preobrazhensky** is the Trotskyist President of the Ural Regional Committee and a member of the Central Committee. He is trained as an economist. He opposes peace with Germany.
7. **Grigory Zinoviev** is a Leninist member of the Central Committee who also led the Communist International. He works closely with Kamenev and Rykov.
8. **Iosef Stalin** is a Leninist who opposed Trotsky on many issues. He was a member of the Bolshevik Central Committee and the Commisar for Nationalities' Affairs. He is also a military commander in the campaign against the White Russians.
9. **Yakov Sverdlov** is a Leninist who played an important role in planning the Revolution. He also Chaired the Central Executive Committee.

10. **Grigory Ordzhonikidze** is a Leninist, Commissar of Ukraine and the Chairman of the Caucasian Bureau of the Party. Also a Commander during the Campaign against the White Russians in the Caucuses.

11. **Elena Stasova** is a Leninist Secretary of the Central Committee.

12. **Vyacheslav Molotov** is a Leninist Professional Revolutionary who led *Pravda* during the revolution and directly after. He is a Military commander and member of the Military Committee.

13. **Anatoly Lunacharsky** is the Leninist Commissar of Enlightenment which put him in charge of, among other things, Education and Censorship.

14. **Alexey Rykov** is a Leninist member of both the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets. He is also the Commissar on Internal Affairs, the agency in charge of policing the RSFSR and managing the Gulag.

15. **Georgy Pyatakov** is the Trotskyist leader of the Kiev Military Revolutionary Committee and an opponent of Lenin on many national issues such as peace with Germany.

16. **Pavlo Dybenko** is the Leninist Commissar of the Navy. He was ordered to defend Petrograd from German advances.

References

Please feel free to use the following list of sources for your own research, but don't feel limited by it! Read as many outside sources as you'd like, quote them to your heart's content, and cite them! If you have a question as to whether or not a source is acceptable, please email me. At the same time, I don't expect you to read entire books on Leninist theory, or every paper written on Trotsky. Just do your best!

- <http://www.marxist.com/>
 - A wonderful compendium of various explanations, defenses, and treatises of and on Communist thought. In particular, the History>Russian Revolution tab is pertinent to our discussion.
- <http://www.marxists.org/archive/reed/1919/10days/10days/index.htm>
 - John Reed's *10 Days that Shook the World*. A 1919 recount of the events of the October Revolution. Quite possibly biased, as Lenin himself endorses the book, but a fascinating and detailed reference.
- Victor Serge, *Year One of the Russian Revolution*.<http://www.marxists.org/archive/serge/1930/year-one/index.htm>
 - Similar to Reed's book, a detailed history of one of the most turbulent times in Russian history.
- <http://www.yale.edu/annals/Steinberg/golosa.htm>
 - A compendium of images from the Revolution. Less informative, more just an interesting site to look at.
- I would also recommend checking your local library for books on the Revolution, your position, Lenin, and Trotsky. Primary source documents especially are useful!