

HIMUNC VII BACKGROUND GUIDE

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Chicago's Underworld Unleashed



Dear Delegates

Welcome to the seventh iteration of the Henrico Invitational Model United Nations Conference! We want to thank you for joining us this year. As your chairs, we are committed to ensuring that this committee is a welcoming, approachable, and accepting environment for every delegate.

We are pleased to welcome you to the Mafia committee focusing on organized crime's role in addressing two pivotal issues: "Bootlegging Boom" and "Blood Red Valentine's". This guide will provide you with essential background information and context to help you better understand the historical context, key stakeholders, and possible actions you may take as delegates representing organized crime during this critical period.

The HIMUNC VII Secretariat, chairs, and vice chairs have put a lot of effort into making a committee that is both engaging and entertaining. If there are any questions, please refer to the dias below, and email your questions to the chairs, or our Under Secretary-General of Crisis Simulations, Sirjan Kaur. We hope to bring you an exciting and interactive committee, and we cannot wait to see you all at HIMUNC VII.

Best,

Mafia Dias

Sirjan Kaur | Under Secretary General of Crisis | hcps-kaurs2@henricostudents.org

Sriya Nallaparaju | Co-Chair | hcps-nallapars@henricostudents.org

Ella Chandler | Co-Chair | hcps-chandleg1@henricostudents.org

Deepak Saravana | Vice-Chair | hcps-saravanad@henricostudents.org

Topic One: Bootlegging Boom

History

The Prohibition Era of 1920 started due to the banning of alcoholic consumption in the United States following the newest 18th Amendment. This type of prohibition was started by Protestants who believed the ban on alcoholic beverages would heal and ail the sick.¹ At the moment, an uprising clan of mobsters/organized crime units called “La Cosa Nostra,” took advantage of the United States and its emergency state of anti-alcohol. Due to the smuggling of the externalized product of alcohol, La Cosa Nostra was able to obtain a large grasp on the United States’ illegal trading system, and a system against Consumers who would buy their products.² The Prohibition Era led to speakeasies becoming illegal, the rise of organized crime, the tax revenue loss, and

the increase of corruption in law enforcement. Speakeasies became very popular due to those places being social scenes for drinking alcohol. La Cosa Nostra would smuggle in alcohol, which ended up making organized crime very popular during that time period. There was a loss of tax revenue after the ban on alcohol because alcohol was one of the main sources of tax due to so many people buying it. There was a lot of corruption in law enforcement because many people who worked in law enforcement would be easily bribed to not report illegal alcohol consumption. Globally, the Prohibition Era led to higher international organized crime and the smuggling of alcohol from other countries to the United States. The international organized crime rate spiked during this time because many groups of organized crime would help with the smuggling of alcohol to

¹ HISTORY. 2009. “Prohibition: Years, Amendment and Definition - HISTORY,” October 29, 2009. <https://www.history.com/topics/roaring-twenties/prohibition?srlybrkr=c773eac4>.

² “Prohibition.” n.d. Khan Academy. <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/us-history/rise-to-world-power/1920s-america/a/prohibition>.

the United States because of the amount of money people were willing to pay to get alcohol.

The IRS (the treasury department) was in charge of regulating the prohibition laws across the country. Later on, the Department of Justice had a holding on the National Bureau of Prohibition. The United States Coast Guard was also placed in the capture of bootleggers. "The Bureau of Prohibition mounted a massive offensive against organized crime in Chicago." Individuals / Officers called "Untouchables" were placed in charge of these areas of protest since they were unable to be bribed.³

This committee features strictly in the United States. The 18th Amendment of the Constitution placed a nationwide ban on the consumption of alcohol. This was initially enforced by the IRS, which was later handed over to the Department of

Justice. Some ways that the department was able to manage this issue were increasing penalties for individuals caught smuggling alcohol, public awareness, and the Volstead Act, which was made to push regulations of the 18th Amendment.

Current Status:

During the Prohibition, prohibitionists were one of the main opposing forces. Prohibitionists were people who supported the laws on the ban on the sale and production of alcohol. Prohibitionists supported the laws and believed that alcohol consumption was the reason for social problems. Because of these people who supported the laws, the Prohibition Era continued for many years before people realized what a problem these laws were for the United States. Laws were placed by the IRS, Department of Justice, and Countrywide through the United States government.

³ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "How was Prohibition enforced?". Encyclopedia Britannica, 3 Aug. 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/question/How-was-Prohibition-enforced>. Accessed 11 September 2023.

Future:

The main reason for the lack of resolve was the Mafia's control of bootleggers and smugglers who were bringing in alcohol. Speakeasies, distribution networks, and political influence were all controlled by la Cosa Nostra, (the American version) during the prohibition era. The grasp that the mafia held on during the prohibition era, was due to the large amount of corruption within the government, distribution, and trading ports across countries. There were laws in place to prevent the consumption of alcohol, which Prohibitionists supported, but people who did not like the alcohol ban were secretly smuggling alcohol and attempting to find a way to unban the use of alcohol.

Questions to Consider:

1. How can international collaboration prevent the rise of organized crime during periods of prohibition?

2. What measures can be taken to address corruption within law enforcement agencies during anti-alcohol campaigns?
3. How might the lack of global governance, as seen during the Prohibition Era, contribute to the rise of transnational organized crime?
4. What role could the UN have played in weakening the impact of organized crime during the Prohibition Era?
5. How did the government's response to the Prohibition Era influence public perception of law and order?

Topic Two: Blood Red Valentine's Day

History:

Topic Two focuses on the St. Valentine's Massacre. The St. Valentine's Day Massacre occurred on February 14, 1929. It took place in a parking garage on 2122 North Clark Street in Chicago.⁴ The purpose of the St. Valentine's Day Massacre was to eliminate George "Bugs" Moran, the leader of the North Side Gang, a rival of Capone's in the bootlegging business. Al Capone and his gang, the Chicago Outfit, sought to dominate the illegal business and wanted to eliminate competition. The massacre was a move to weaken Moran's gang and establish dominance in Chicago's criminal underworld.

Moran was the primary target of the massacre. He managed to escape the attack because he arrived late to the scene.

Capone's men posed as police officers to

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lure members of the North Side Gang into the garage. Capone is suspected of planning and ordering the massacre. Although he was in Florida at the time and was not directly present at the scene, he was considered the mastermind behind the operation. It took place in Chicago, the center of organized crime during the Prohibition era. Targeting Moran caused many problems. Locally, it intensified the power struggle, leading to more instability and volatility in Chicago's Underworld. Globally, it drew a lot of media attention to organized crime in Chicago and pointed an unwanted spotlight on the illicit activities taking place. The federal government faced pressure to address organized crime. They were ill-prepared and outgunned to combat the surging national crime wave. The FBI created the fingerprint system in an effort to help fight crime.

The brutal nature of the massacre shocked the public and law enforcement. The massacre became an example of the

extreme violence in organized crime and the necessity for international collaboration to take the organized crime networks down. There were also legal consequences as a result of the massacre. Locally, it led to increased crackdowns by the government and law enforcement. For instance, investigations were launched and the FBI got involved. They were desperately trying to bring the people behind this tragedy to justice. Al Capone was known to be involved with the planning and ordering of the St. Valentine Massacre, but there was nothing tying him to the scene. He was in Miami, Florida at the time. The fake policemen were Fred Burke and James Ray, members of a St. Louis Gang called Egan's Rats. Jack McGurn, a known associate of Capone's was said to have hired them for \$10,000 apiece.

Current Status:

The North Side Gang, run by Moran, wants to expand its operations in bootlegging and other illegal activities. They consistently resisted Capone's efforts to become a powerful monopoly in illegal trade and fought to protect their turf and criminal operations. Moran did not give up after the death of his members, in fact, his anger and growing need for vengeance was fueling his attempts to take down the Chicago Outfit. The growing rivalry and conflict between Moran's gang and Capone's Chicago Outfit is creating more violence, assassinations, and illegal activity. The Prohibition (18th) Amendment tried to prohibit the sale of contraband, but instead just fueled the rise of organized crime and competition between the rival criminal organizations.

The FBI investigated and actively fought against organized crime. Their goal was to dismantle organized crime and enforce Prohibition Laws, specifically the Prohibition (18th) Amendment and the

Volstead Act. They conducted extensive investigations into criminal networks, disrupted bootlegging operations, gathered evidence, and took legal action against anything and anyone involved in illegal activities.

The Bureau of Prohibition was a federal agency with the primary role of enforcing Prohibition laws (18th Amendment). They regulated and observed alcohol-related activities and were responsible for investigating any and all violations. They played a major role in the fight against illegal alcohol trade, bootlegging, and other criminal activities.

The Chicago Police Department dealt with crime in Chicago on a more localized level, but they enforced federal

laws as well as local ones. They combated crime and tried their best to maintain law and order in a city infested with criminal organizations and illegal activities.

Future:

The issue of organized crime is still ongoing and challenging to completely get rid of due to the ability of organized crime to evolve in response to law enforcement efforts.

Agencies against organized crime should collaborate in an effort to eradicate it. The issue of Moran's gang is still ongoing because Moran is still alive and won't back down. The Outfit needs to gather support for the underworld and other allies to completely eliminate the threat of the North Side Gang

Questions to Consider:

1. How can international law enforcement agencies collaborate to dismantle organized crime networks effectively?
2. What strategies can be used to prevent the escalation of violence and illegal activities in the rivalry between criminal organizations?
3. In what ways can legal measures and law enforcement adapt to the innovative and evolving tactics of organized crime?
4. How did the St. Valentine's Day Massacre impact the perception of organized crime on an international scale?
5. What role does the media play in shaping public perceptions of organized crime, and how can it be leveraged to combat criminal activities?

Bibliography: