Sons of Liberty, 1765

Case Western Reserve University
Model United Nations Spring Conference 2020
Dear Delegates,

My name is Sydney Olney, and it is with distinct pleasure that I welcome you to the Sons of Liberty, 1765 Crisis Committee! Sons of Liberty, 1765 is based on the activity of various chapters of the revolutionary organization, most notably, the Boston and New York groups. This committee will provide delegates with the unique opportunity to exercise their knowledge of revolutionary history in a fast-paced, dynamic, and contemporary setting. As delegates of Sons of Liberty, 1765, you will fight for representation, utilize the power of the mob, and influence the trajectory of the American colonies towards (or away from) revolution. The fate of your countrymen is in your hands!

I anticipate that many of you will be completely new to crisis—that is okay. We will reward research, hard work, and initiative. An involved and inexperienced delegate will have more impact on committee than a disengaged veteran. The committee will also look favorably on well-rounded delegates who are able to balance speaking time, directives, and crisis notes. As such, try your best not to neglect one part of your role for another, as every aspect of delegate performance will be considered when determining awards.

My utmost hope for our two days together is that all of you will be able to learn and grow as delegates. I didn’t start Model United Nations, until college, so I know what it’s like to feel completely out of your depth in a committee. If you have any questions on crisis elements, parliamentary procedure, or anything else before or during the conference, please feel free to email me or any other staff. Questions are indicative of a delegate’s investment in the topic at hand, so no one should feel uncomfortable or embarrassed asking for help.

I am excited to meet all of you, and welcome again to Sons of Liberty, 1765!

Sincerely,

Sydney Olney
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Sydney Olney is a sophomore Japanese Studies and Anthropology major as well as the current Secretary of the CWRUMUN team. She began Model United Nations as a freshman in college and was immediately hooked by the transient nature of debate, policy, and social dynamics on the competitive circuit. Outside of Model United Nations, Sydney is an active member of her sorority, works as a campus ambassador for the Harvard Innovation Labs Startup Ignite Mental Health, and spends her summers teaching immersive Japanese at Concordia Language Villages. Sydney has always loved American history, particularly periods of internal unrest and instability, so she is excited to see what delegates have in store! Sydney spent her Christmas break petting dogs, reading books, playing Dragon Age, and watching The Good Place.

Patrick Lee is a 3rd year Cognitive Science Major at Case Western Reserve University. He is a Residential Assistant and has been a part of the CWRUMUN team for all three years of college. He has cochaired DISEC and chaired a Crisis on China and UNSC before. He likes experimenting in the kitchen whether with baking experiments or cooking new dishes. He really enjoys hiking and rock climbing. During Winter Break he went home to New Jersey to visit family and friends and enjoyed a relaxing few weeks.

Jacob Warmath is a freshman at CWRU from Charlotte, North Carolina. Jacob participated in Model UN throughout high school attending conferences such as HMUN and MUNUC. He has previously chaired for his local high school conference and for the conference at CWRU this fall. He is interested in studying both computer science and data science but for now is unsure in which he will end up majoring. Outside of Model UN most of his extracurricular time goes into playing club ultimate for CWRU’s competitive men’s team. Over Christmas break he travelled to New Zealand for two weeks with his family and spent the rest of the break at home in Charlotte.
INTRODUCTION TO CRISIS

Characters and Crisis Arcs

Every crisis arc begins with a character. Unlike General Assemblies, your crisis character is a living, breathing person prone to subjectivity and self-serving motivations. The best delegates will lean into even the most trivial information in their biographies to create a believable and entertaining character. After you understand your character, it is up to you to create a “crisis arc”—a comprehensive, long-term plan for your actions in committee. Crisis arcs should be kept private to prevent other delegates from interfering in your plans. A good crisis arc, like good crisis notes, consists of a what, why, and how: What is your desired outcome? Why are you pursuing your desired outcome? How will you achieve your desired outcome? Once you have fleshed out your character and your crisis arc, you are ready for committee.

Front Room and Back Room

Crisis Committees are generally broken down into two separate means of influencing committee: front room and back room. Front room, like General Assembly, entails giving speeches and working with other delegates to pass written policy. The role of back room is to push your agenda in ways that you don’t want the rest of committee to trace back to you, for example, sabotaging the plans of committee or investigating other delegates. You should have a clear idea before entering committee of how you plan on pushing your crisis arc both front room and back room. Both front room and back room offer unique ways to exercise your character’s power and carry out your crisis arc.

Directives

Directives will be your means of action in the front room. They are short and often collaborative collections of clauses that aim to address specific obstacles in committee, especially those resulting from “crisis updates”, which will be covered later. Crisis directives follow roughly the same format as General Assembly clauses but should be much more substantive. For example, a longer directive condemning a recent riot but taking no further steps to address the problem will have less impact on committee than a shorter directive that creates anti-mob militias. Crisis directives are voted on in waves by simple majority, typically with for and against speeches.

Crisis Notes

Crisis notes are essential to a delegate’s back room agenda. On the college circuit, crisis notes are typically written in the letter format, addressed to a specific group or individual and signed by your character. As many of you may continue with Model United Nations past high school, we encourage you to use this format. A good crisis note, like a good character arc, needs a who (who you are writing to), what (what you want accomplished), why (why you want it accomplished), and how (how the group or individual you are writing to will help accomplish your goal). It is important to remember that crisis notes are often used for promoting actions that may be frowned upon or go entirely against the agenda of committee, so it is important to cover your tracks in your notes. Ambitious delegates may consider writing joint crisis notes in which the resources of two or more delegates are used to achieve a certain outcome (to be clear, this requires the signatures of all delegates involved on said note). Lastly, remember to get creative! The more fun back room staffers have reading your notes, the better response you will get.

Crisis Updates

The last element of crisis are “crisis updates”, which are random events introduced to committee by the crisis team. Crisis updates are usually the result of delegates’ prior actions in committee, both front room and back room. Delegates should aim to have their arc appear in every crisis update, as doing so is essential to success in committee. While directives are committee-driven and thus common knowledge, your back room actions are not. Thus, while you want your notes to impact the crisis update, you may not always want your name to appear within it. Keep this in mind as you write your crisis notes. Crisis updates are meant to test delegates’ quick thinking, so be sure to address the problems brought up in updates in your directives and crisis notes.
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Introduction

The Sons of Liberty were active in colonial politics before war crimes and human rights were popularized concepts. As such, it will be impossible to avoid topics of torture and mob violence against civilians both in the historical background and in committee. I do ask, however, that delegates approach these topics with the maturity, tact, and grace befitting of young adults. The crisis team will not tolerate gratuitous descriptions of violence in directives, speeches, or crisis notes.

While discussions of torture and mob violence in the context of a revolutionary group such as the Sons of Liberty are unavoidable, there are other contemporary issues that the committee will not address under any circumstances, namely, racism, sexism, and other identity-based discrimination. Abolitionist, and anti-slavery movements by delegates will be allowed, but any efforts to perpetuate race, religion, or gender-based violence in speeches, directives, or crisis notes will be condemned and reported to the delegate’s chaperone by the conference team. The list of unacceptable topics to pursue in committee includes but is not limited to pro-slavery movements, indigenous violence, genocide, sexual assault, human trafficking, and prostitution. I trust that delegates will exercise the appropriate consideration on this front both inside and outside of committee.

The Seven Years’ War

Beginning in 1754 and ending in 1763 the French and Indian War served as a direct predecessor to the American Revolutionary War. The conflict began over a dispute regarding which nation controlled the territory of the Ohio River Valley: the British Empire or the French Empire. 1

In addition to being, for the most part, self-sufficient, the European colonists took part in trade with the Native American peoples along North America’s eastern seaboard. 2 The two parties primarily exchanged furs and tools. 3 Furs could fetch high prices back in Europe, while weapons and tools such as axes and guns allowed the natives to be more effective both in war and in daily life. 4 As trade with Native Americans was quite a profitable business to be in, neither Britain nor France wanted to cede land claims to the other.

The Empires of Britain and France both claimed to control the Ohio River Valley, but with competing claims conflict was imminent. The British claimed to be the rightful owners of the land, for the English government had previously granted royal charters worded such that all land between Canada and Florida was part of British colonies. 5 France, however, had its own claim to all the land in the Mississippi Valley, which included the Ohio Valley. 6 With British colonists slowly making their way further inland in order to trade with Native Americans allied with the British Empire and the French Empire beginning to establish permanent settlements in the northern Ohio Valley, nothing could be done to stop conflict.

The French forced the hand of the British by destroying an important British trading outpost and by the removal of all English-speaking traders through either capture or murder. 7 This sparked British colonial militias to defend their land by attacking the French. 8 In turn, the French retaliated, resulting in the two empires descending into war. This conflict remained localized in North America until 1756, when the two nations declared war on a global scale, beginning the Seven Years’ War (also known as the French and Indian War). In North America

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4 Ann M Carlos and Frank D Lewis, “The Economic History of the Fur Trade: 1670 to 1870”
5 “French and Indian War/Seven Years’ War, 1754–63”
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
each side was aided by Native American allies—the French and the Wabanaki Confederacy fought against the British and the Iroquois Confederacy.

While the British were initially losing, they were able to turn the tide after significant victories in India and Canada. After failed peace negotiations, the Spanish came to the aid of France, joining the fight in early 1762. The conflict ceased in 1763 with the British overtaking all French land east of the Mississippi River and the Spanish colony of Florida. After the war, the British elected to keep a permanent army in their American colonies in order to try to keep peace with native tribes. This led to Pontiac’s Rebellion, an uprising by Native Americans which led to the prohibition of further colonization west of the Allegheny Mountains.

Fighting a global war was in no way cheap. Victory in the Seven Years’ War was Pyrrhic, for the fighting resulted in dramatic increases to the debt of the British Empire. Furthermore, the British were of the sentiment that the colonists should help pay for the army that defended them from the French. In an effort to offset the debt the British parliament began strictly enforcing the 1730 Sugar Act in 1764, raising molasses prices for colonists and upsetting wealthy smugglers. Consequently, the American colonists began to boycott British goods, further angering Parliament. This led Parliament to pass the 1765 Stamp Act, a tax on legal documents and paper produced in the colonies.

The Stamp Act

The Stamp Act caused much discontent in the colonies. The Act was the first passed by the British Parliament directly targeting the colonies and internal sales. As they were dealing with significant debt from the recently concluded Seven Years War, the British Parliament justified the Stamp Act by saying the colonies owed the crown for sending British forces to protect them. There would now be a tax on all paper documents sold in the colonies; all legal documents and printed materials would need to have a certified stamp on them provided once the tax was paid. This would include wills, deeds, newspapers, pamphlets, playing cards, and dice. Additionally, smugglers and those who tried to subvert the tax would not be tried in colonial courts, rather they could be tried in vice-admiralty courts without the presence of a jury. The costs would be in order to pay off their war debts as well as maintain British garrisons in the colonies.

The opposition to this tax was strong as many colonists felt that this was incredibly unfair. There was a sentiment that only their own colonial representative bodies should be able to impose internal taxes. The British claim that all British subjects had virtual representation in Parliament was rebuked because colonies could not vote for representatives. The opposition stoked colonial fears of a start to a tyrannical end where the British would continue to strip away all of the rights of colonists. There were questions as to why garrisoned troops were only to be established in the colonies after the French threat had been dealt with.

Colonial resistance was brushed aside by Parliament and the Stamp Act was pushed through. Many notable figures began rising up to challenge and contest it after its passing. Colonial newspapers spread resolutions from the House of Burgesses in Virginia opposing the Stamp Act. The radical message of Patrick Henry opposing the tyranny and the similar sentiments of his fellow representatives led to an extralegal convention with delegates from nine colonies meeting in 1765 to discuss next steps. Meanwhile, colonists in New York invaded a British arsenal and tampered with the weaponry as an

9 Ibid.
11 “French and Indian War/Seven Years’ War, 1754–63“
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
act of defiance against the Stamp Act.

**The Sons of Liberty**

By August 1765, discontent over the Stamp Act pushed the influential colonial men of Boston to take action. A group known as the Loyal Nine, largely consisting of the future members of the Sons of Liberty, commissioned gang leader Ebenezer Mackintosh to organize mob and protest activity against the Stamp Act. The first of these displays was on August 14th, 1765, when an effigy of stamp distributor Andrew Oliver was hanged from the Boston Liberty Tree. Oliver’s house was ransacked by a mob that same night. After the attacks, several stamp collectors resigned out of fear for their lives. The increasingly violent attacks against loyalists and government officials did not go unnoticed by the Loyal Nine. Mackintosh would continue to sow seeds of discontent for the Loyal Nine until August 26th, when an angry mob raided and destroyed the home of prominent loyalist politician Thomas Hutchinson. While the Loyal Nine supported public demonstrations against the Stamp Act, they condemned unnecessary violence and distanced themselves from Mackintosh. All members of the Loyal Nine later joined the founding chapter of the Sons of Liberty, located in Boston.

Many scholars have argued that the Loyal Nine may have had a hand in founding the chapter, but these claims have never been proven. The revolutionaries in New York soon followed and founded their own chapter in November of that year. It is difficult to tell where exactly the Loyal Nine ends and the Sons of Liberty begins as both groups receive varying levels of credit for the aforementioned protests. Thus, it is reasonable for delegates, particularly those whose characters hail from Boston, to incorporate the history of the Loyal Nine into their speeches and character arcs.

While the Sons of Liberty are often regarded as a formal organization, most historians agree that it was actually a loose movement that encompassed all colonial men with revolutionary sentiments. There were, however, several notable members that organized the movement’s activities and coordinated between colonial chapters. These are the members that will make up committee.

**CURRENT ISSUES**

It is December 1765. The past year has laid witness to several actions against the colonies by the British Empire, ranging from economic restriction to military accommodations. The Stamp Act is only one part of the bigger picture. As a prominent officer of the Sons of Liberty, it is up to your discretion to determine which of these events warrant further action and which to pursue in committee. Finally, note that the Sons of Liberty prioritized control of the mob over all else. They understood its potential to be a source of political capital as well as aimless destruction. Keep this duality of outcomes in mind as you push for action during committee.

**The Stamp Act**

Discontent for the Stamp Act is still rampant among the middle and lower class in Boston with no resolution in sight. Previous actions taken by mobs are inspiring sporadic acts of violence that are quickly becoming uncontrollable. To make things worse, Ebenezer Mackintosh may not work for you anymore, but he has become a hero for many revolutionaries and has been seen calling for further attacks on British officials in the streets.

**The Quartering Act**

One of the most recent acts passed by British Parliament is the Quartering Act, which requires colonists to house British soldiers at their private homes at the behest of local government officials. It is only a matter of time before public discontent erupts over the law, but

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18 Peter C. Messer, *Between Sovereignty and Anarchy: The Politics of Violence in the American Revolutionary Era* (University of Virginia Press, 2015), 120.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid, 129.
whether the outrage will be directed by the Sons of Liberty is in the hands of committee.

Expansion and Communication

The Sons of Liberty can only do so much with two colonial chapters. Even between New York and Boston, there is no formal means of coordination between members. With revolutionary sentiments growing in colonies such as Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island, expanding political efforts and organizing is essential to helping the revolutionary cause. Committee is comprised of both current members and prominent revolutionaries who have yet to formally join the cause due to geographic difficulties, so an expanded base of operation will be in many delegates’ best interest.

Autonomy of the Mob

It is a difficult job to funnel the anger of thousands of colonists into productive political action, but it is the job that you chose. Should the mob become autonomous and escalate conflict further, it is possible that Britain will take military action and douse the embers of revolution before they have had a chance to burn. With the dismissal of Mackintosh, it will be up to you to find other mob captains capable and charismatic enough to fill his shoes. Of course, if the people of the colonies were to learn that the Sons of Liberty were stifling their anger in any way, the anger of the mob could turn on you, the committee.

Espionage

Because of the loose, informal nature of the lower ranks of the Sons of Liberty, it can be impossible to tell where men’s loyalties truly lie. After all, what better way to understand your enemy than to ascend through their ranks and become one of them? While there have been no instances for concern yet, rumors of a mole have made their way all the way up to you, the officers of the organization. There is only so much that one man can do as an ordinary member of the Sons of Liberty, but should the mole work his way up the ranks, there would be extreme reason for concern.

CHARACTER BACKGROUNDS

Samuel Adams: Samuel Adams is a well-educated young Bostonian currently in the early stages of a political career. He comes from a family with a background of significant involvement in both religion and politics. He is a prominent member of both the Boston Town Meeting and the Massachusetts House of Parliament and has served as a tax collector with a history of failing to collect from his peers. With the introduction of the Sugar act in 1764 and the Stamp Act in 1765, Adams feels the rights of the colonists are being infringed by this taxation without representation.

Benjamin Church: Benjamin Church is a native of Rhode Island and comes from a religious family. After moving to Boston Church garnered a reputation as a skillful doctor and surgeon. Church is an ardent supporter of the Whig ideals though there is some question as to whether his loyalty truly lies with the Patriots.

Benjamin Edes: Benjamin Edes, although born in England, moved to the colonies at a young age. He is the son of a blue-collar worker and received only moderate education. Ealey in his adult life Edes moved to Boston where he later came to work at the Boston Gazette, a paper that promoted colonial independence. Writing for the Boston Gazette Edes criticized British policy heavily.

Benjamin Kent: Benjamin Kent is a former minister against whom accusations of heresy were brought due to his questioning of certain aspects of Christianity. Kent later became one of the first practicing lawyers in Boston. As a lawyer, he rose to prominence through representing slaves in efforts to gain their freedom from their masters. Kent is one of the more senior members of the Sons of Liberty.

John Hancock: John Hancock comes from immense wealth having inherited a fortune from his uncle. Hancock began his political career under the tutelage of Samuel Adams. Hancock was critical of the introduction of the Sugar Act on economic grounds, for the similar Molasses Act of 1733 yielded very little profit due to illicit smuggling. Hancock, as a loyal British subject, initially opted for a moderate stance regarding the 1765 Stamp Act though he later chose to become a patriot. Despite Hancock being on the side of the independence movement, he does not approve of the use of violence.

James Otis: James Otis is a prominent Boston lawyer known largely for his lengthy oration in opposition to the Writs of
Assistance. Otis published a pamphlet in 1765 outlining how the Writs are unconditionally under British Law. By choice Otis elects to not to identify as a revolutionary as he is much more cautious than other Patriots such as Samuel Adams. As he was among the first to speak out in criticism of British rule he is among the leaders of the independence movement. Otis coined the phrase "taxation without representation is tyranny"

Paul Revere: Paul Revere is a prominent silversmith and engraver in Boston. After a short stint in the army during the Seven Years' War he gained control of his father's silver shop for his own. The 1765 Stamp Act has had a significant negative effect of the amount of business Revere has been receiving.

Isaiah Thomas: Thomas is a well-respected publisher based in Nova Scotia. Born and appreciated in Boston, he moved to the Canadian colony in 1695 in order to establish himself in the publishing industry. He manages the Halifax Gazette when the English Stamp Act is enacted on the colonies. Thomas landed the Gazette into trouble writing in strong opposition to the Act with the regional government claiming the paper to be seditious. Thomas continues to defy to speak out against the British indignities.

John Crane: Coming from Braintree, Massachusetts, Crane was a soldier in the French and Indian War. He is well respected for his military service and talent. He has ties to groups of anti-monarch disgruntled soldiers that are beginning to appear in the colonies.

John Brown: Brown is a successful merchant, known for his success in the slave trade and China trade. In developing his successful trade businesses, he has made and maintained strong relationships with privateer ship captains. His financial success and his large merchant influences make him an influential figure in Rhode Island. Brown is looking to form a Rhode Island chapter of the Sons of Liberty.

William Ellery: Ellery was a clerk and Customs collector in Rhode Island. Having graduated from Harvard, he has ties to alumni networks. He also has ties to the Rhode Island government as part of his occupation and is beginning to learn and practice law. He also recently has co-authored the charter for Brown University. Ellery is also interested in the founding of a Rhode Island chapter of the Sons of Liberty.

Hercules Mulligan: Mulligan is an American-Irish tailor. He has ties to King’s College’s alumni circles. He runs a tailor shop and haberdashery, serving many British officials. He is exceptionally detailed at keeping records about his clients and oftentimes keeps notes of the gossip and classified details shared with him in confidence.

Joseph Allicocke: Allicocke is a prominent member of the New York City chapter, especially valuable for his status as a trusted colonial merchant to the British Empire. Hailing from Antigua, he was sent to Pennsylvania for his schooling before moving to New York. There is speculation by some on Allicocke’s true racial heritage, although there is no evidence backing these theories.

Alexander McDougall: A Scottish immigrant, McDougall spent his early life in America as a crown-commissioned merchant privateer, capturing ships and plundering their loot in the name of the British Empire. After the death of his wife, he invested in land stocks and became a merchant, soon becoming one of the richest men in New York. After the passing of the Stamp Act, his revolutionary sentiment spurred him to join the New York City chapter of the Sons of Liberty.

Benedict Arnold: After a short stint in the Connecticut militia during the Seven Years’ War, Arnold rose above his previous occupation as a pharmacist and
bookseller and established himself as an international trader and importer, with most of his business in the West Indies. The Stamp Act and the Sugar Act have severely hurt Arnold’s business prospects. Rumors of Arnold’s large debt with creditors have been brought up in circles of high society, but it is uncertain whether it is simply loyalist slander.

Marinus Willet: Although Willet prefers the sword to the pen and misses his days of action during the Seven Years’ War, he has still made himself quite a reputation as a popular leader among the New York Liberty Boys. He is particularly well-liked by the lower and middle-class due to his crude sense of humor and lack of typical upper-class pomposness. He can usually be found brawling with loyalists in his favorite tavern, at least until he gets kicked out.

Charles Thomson: Charles Thomson came to the colonies as a penniless Irish immigrant after his father died on the journey. He was adopted by a Delaware blacksmith, later moving to Pennsylvania and working as a Latin tutor. He enjoyed a brief friendship with Benjamin Franklin during the Seven Years’ War, but the men parted ways after the Stamp Act. Thomson is looking to found a Pennsylvania chapter for the Sons of Liberty.