



TOP SECRET

ABOUT

CONFERENCE

PAST COMMITTEES

DELEGATES

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PARTNERSHIP

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PU COYLC QMT (CYC)DLBC: VENONA PROJECT, 1945

Soviets and ciphers and substitutions! Oh my! The Venona project, initiated in 1943 as a counterintelligence group under the US Army's Signal Intelligence Service (SIS), was born from the uneasy alliance between the United States and the Soviet Union. US-Soviet relations had been strained long before World War II, but the high stakes of the war forced US leadership to acknowledge that they did not trust Joseph Stalin not to betray the allied forces. The US desperately needed to up their intelligence game, especially given the volatile nature of the newly-formed Manhattan project. The women (and occasional men) of the Venona project worked secretly to intercept and decipher their ally's communications, revealing the presence of multiple Soviet spy rings in the US and tracing them back to a targeted Soviet espionage campaign. However, the necessity of a US-Soviet alliance forced diplomatic tensions to the back burner.

Now, in 1945, the European theater is closed. US-Soviet relations are worsening by the minute as the US expands its influence in Europe and the Soviets neglect to send aid to US troops in the Pacific. Out of necessity, the Venona project remains highly classified—not even President Truman knows it exists. However, this means that information gathered by the project can seem suspect to US officials, and often cannot be presented outright. As conflict between the US and the USSR escalates, the work of the Venona project has never been more vital; however, a vast majority of project members will be forced to confront the fact that once the war ends they will be expected to vacate their positions and return to the sphere of domesticity. Additionally, the threat of government infiltration looms as the US begins expanding its investments in military technology and brings many new employees into the fold.

Will the project be able to successfully stop Soviet intelligence efforts from its position within a tightly wound bureaucracy? How will the women of the Venona project balance their duties as public servants with the large pushback against women's workplace rights? Should the project expand, and, if so, what is the right balance between secrecy and exposure when working with other intelligence agencies? These are the questions this committee will need to address as we explore this exciting overlap of Washington bureaucracy, espionage, and gender dynamics. Welcome to the Venona Project, 1945.

NEED A HINT?

BACKGROUND GUIDE

JAKE FIEDLER

CHAIR

Jake Fiedler is a fourth-year at the University of Chicago, majoring in Math and Physics. Last year, he was an AC for the Akkadian Empire, and he is extremely excited to serve as a chair for the Venona Project. Although he hasn't competed in a while, Jake is active in the Model UN community on campus, also serving as the Secretary-General of the University of Chicago's high school conference, MUNUC. Jake has lamentably few hobbies outside of MUN, but he is always game for a scintillating conversation about geometric measure theory, Thomistic philosophy, or the Elder Scrolls franchise. If you have questions about this committee or anything else at all, feel free to reach out to him at jacobfiedler@uchicago.edu

KELSEY GILCHRIST

CRISIS DIRECTOR

Kelsey is a third-year triple-majoring in Molecular Engineering, Physics, and Creative Writing. She's from the Washington D.C. Area (Northern Virginia) so she feels right at home in Model UN. For her first (and technically only) ChoMUN, Kelsey was an Assistant Chair for Bell Labs. Last year, while she did not get to live out her dream of moderating the large --Save the Whales!!, she had the absolute privilege of writing the most comprehensive climate change background guide the world has never seen. Kelsey also competes with UChicago's traveling MUN team, where she serves as Vice President.

Kelsey's life outside of MUN revolves around research... and...more research... and...space lasers? In her free time, you can catch Kelsey eating Orville Redenbacher's gluten free microwave popcorn, drinking an iced matcha latte with a double shot of espresso, and re-watching Buffy the Vampire Slayer. If you need 90s TV show recommendations or information about celiac-friendly food options in the Chicago area, please reach out to kgilchrist@uchicago.edu!

GRACE WAGNER

CRISIS DIRECTOR

Grace Wagner is a second year in the college majoring in Molecular Engineering and Astrophysics. Even though she's from Texas, her heart's always belonged in Chicago. In her spare time, she likes to golf and hang out with her house. When she can get somewhere with snow, you'll have to pry her off the slopes. Grace trained as an AC for ChoMUN XXIII, for the American Red Cross committee. Alas, that was canceled (like all of spring) but she is excited to apply that knowledge to this committee. She looks forward to seeing what ideas you have for this committee. If you have any questions, you can email her at gracewagner@uchicago.edu

SECRETARIAT OVERSIGHT:

JOHN BUTERBAUGH, UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL