

## Model United Nations Background Guide

### Topic: The French Resistance During World War II

Timeframe: June 1943 – Creation of the Conseil National de la Résistance (CNR)

---

#### Committee Overview

By mid-1943, France is a nation in chains. The Nazi occupation dominates the north, while the Vichy regime collaborates in the south. Yet beneath this shadow, a vast and fractured underground movement has begun to unify—the **French Resistance**.

This committee simulates the clandestine leadership of the French Resistance, convened shortly after the creation of the **Conseil National de la Résistance (CNR)** in June 1943. Representatives from various resistance networks—Gaullists, Communists, socialists, and apolitical patriots—gather to coordinate sabotage, intelligence, propaganda, and preparation for Allied invasion.

Factional tensions, limited resources, and German counter-intelligence threaten their unity. Delegates must collaborate to resist occupation, punish collaborators, and prepare for liberation.

---

#### Major Issues to Address

##### 1. Coordination and Centralization of Resistance Movements

- How can diverse and often rival networks (Gaullists, Communists, Catholics, etc.) coordinate their actions?
- Should the CNR remain politically neutral or support Free France under Charles de Gaulle?

##### 2. Sabotage Strategy and Guerrilla Tactics

- What should the priorities be: railroads, communication, fuel depots, or German troop movements?
- How should urban vs. rural resistance cells operate?

##### 3. Dealing with the Vichy Regime and Collaborators

- Should collaborators face justice now or after liberation?

- What role (if any) should be played by sympathetic individuals within Vichy?

#### **4. Intelligence and Coordination with the Allies**

- How should the Resistance communicate with the British SOE, the Americans, and Free France?
- How can intelligence be verified and securely transmitted?

#### **5. Post-Liberation Governance**

- What vision does the Resistance have for France after Nazi expulsion?
  - Should France restore the Republic, support De Gaulle, or form a new constitution?
- 

#### **Character Roster: French Resistance Leaders**

##### **1. Jean Moulin**

*Unifying figure and representative of Charles de Gaulle's Free France.*

- Sent from London to coordinate the Resistance.
- Key organizer of the CNR.
- Charismatic, brave, and committed to a unified anti-fascist front.

##### **2. Lucie Aubrac**

*Teacher and fierce Résistante, co-founder of Libération-Sud.*

- Carried out daring rescues and sabotage.
- Advocates for moral clarity and action over ideology.
- Strong proponent of involving women in direct action.

##### **3. Raymond Aubrac**

*Engineer and underground commander of Libération-Sud.*

- Skilled at planning attacks and hiding fugitives.
- Works closely with Lucie in coordinating Lyon-based operations.

##### **4. Marie-Madeleine Fourcade**

*Leader of the Alliance intelligence network.*

- One of the few female leaders of a major network.

- Coordinated intelligence to British SOE with remarkable precision.
- Operated under code name “Hedgehog.”

#### 5. **Pierre Brossolette**

*Journalist and intellectual, ally of Jean Moulin.*

- Advocates for strong civilian leadership and Gaullist unity.
- Played key role in connecting networks across northern France.

#### 6. **Henri Frenay**

*Founder of Combat, one of the largest resistance movements.*

- Initially distrusted De Gaulle but came to support Free France.
- Advocates for coordination with Allies, careful sabotage strategy.

#### 7. **Daniel Cordier**

*Young secretary to Jean Moulin and courier between Resistance groups.*

- Former monarchist turned staunch anti-Nazi operative.
- Involved in documentation, codes, and courier missions.

#### 8. **Andrée de Jongh**

*Belgian organizer of the Comet Line escape network.*

- Helped downed Allied airmen escape through France to Spain.
- Operates quietly across borders with extreme courage.

#### 9. **Missak Manouchian**

*Leader of the FTP-MOI (Communist immigrant fighters).*

- Armenian genocide survivor, poet, and fierce antifascist.
- Organized sabotage cells composed of immigrants and exiles.

#### 10. **Berty Albrecht**

*Feminist and co-founder of Combat with Frenay.*

- Defiant in face of capture, advocate for women's leadership.
- Committed suicide rather than betray comrades under torture.

### 11. René Char

*Poet and commander in the Maquis of Provence under the alias "Captain Alexandre."*

- Led sabotage and guerrilla missions in rural France.
- Emphasizes moral resistance as well as strategic efficiency.

### 12. Jacques Chaban-Delmas

*Military liaison for the Resistance and later a key postwar politician.*

- Served as secret envoy between Maquis and London.
- Skilled in logistics and long-term political planning.

### 13. Georges Bidault

*Successor to Jean Moulin as CNR president.*

- Editor of underground newspaper *Combat*.
- Balances Christian democratic ideals with broad resistance goals.

### 14. André Malraux

*Author and fighter with the Maquis in southern France.*

- Deeply philosophical, yet action-oriented.
- Advocates for liberation of thought as much as land.

### 15. Jean-Pierre Lévy

*Founder of Franc-Tireur movement in Lyon.*

- Supported integration of smaller resistance cells.
- Key player in unifying propaganda efforts across occupied zones.

---

## Committee Objectives

Delegates must:

- Coordinate sabotage efforts and establish clear channels of command.
- Debate moral, ideological, and strategic divisions within the Resistance.
- Build consensus around the future of France: democracy, leadership, and justice.

- Respond to real-time Nazi crackdowns, Gestapo raids, and opportunities from Allied progress.

This is a **crisis committee**, and events will unfold rapidly. You'll face arrests, betrayals, Allied coordination demands, and the looming Normandy invasion. Unity is vital—but so is action.

---

### **Guiding Questions for Delegates**

1. Can the Resistance operate as a single front, or must factions retain autonomy?
2. How can cells protect themselves from infiltration while coordinating attacks?
3. What does “justice” look like in a clandestine war—should collaborators be tried or eliminated?
4. How should the Resistance support the Allies without becoming their puppet?
5. What kind of France should rise from the ruins?