



STUDY GUIDE JCC



Letter from Co-Secretaries-General

Esteemed delegates,

It is with great honor and gratitude that we welcome you all to the second edition of IHSANMUN. To us, this isn't just a conference; it's a community. A community of people who have seen hardship firsthand and emerged from it stronger. This conference impacts us deeply, as it is our opportunity to bring something that shaped us and built our character throughout the years to our own community at Ihsan. It is with great pleasure that we work tirelessly to bring this event to life, as it means educating fellow students about the issues in our world, helping them grasp things they may never learn in school, and developing skills they will need throughout their lives.

This year, our committees highlight a range of crucial topics in our world today. From JCC discussing the Castellammarese War, Marvel addressing the Sokovia Accords, and HUNSC debating the USA invasion of Iraq, to the Arab League focusing on foreign influence in the Arab world. Our committees also tackle pressing global concerns through SPECPOL regulating private military companies and mercenaries, UN Women preventing human trafficking, the World Bank mitigating aid dependency, and DISEC addressing the use of chemical weapons and working toward their elimination.

The world today is riddled with injustice and malice, and the degree of your subjection to such injustice is simply a matter of geographical luck. There is virtually nothing standing in the way of you continuing your everyday life or being forced to flee it in a matter of seconds.

What matters most is that we, as the international community, recognize our privilege and advocate for those who lack it. From this conference, learn that there is power in diplomatic dialogue. There is power in advocacy. There is power in you. We want you to take this opportunity to bring change and impact the world in your own way. The world is ours to live in and shape.

Let us all use that power to balance the scales once again, just as we've done before: only now, on a much bigger and far more impactful scale.

In pursuit of balancing the scales, Nada Alghory & Maizah Hassan
IHSANMUN'26 Secretaries-General

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Letter from the USG and ACAS

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Joint Crisis Committee on the Castellammarese War. New York in 1930 was not controlled only by politicians or the police. Behind restaurants, gambling clubs, docks, and speakeasies, Mafia factions were fighting for territory, money, influence, and survival while Prohibition flooded the underworld with more profit than ever before.

Alliances shifted constantly, rumors spread faster than bullets, and even the most powerful bosses in the city were never completely safe.

This committee is built around that atmosphere.

The Castellammarese War was not simply a conflict between two rival bosses, but a struggle that changed the balance of power inside organized crime entirely. Old traditions began clashing with a younger generation focused more on profit, expansion, and long-term control. Some mafiosi relied on loyalty and fear, others relied on strategy, diplomacy, business, and connections. Throughout the war, crews disappeared, betrayals became common, and neutrality slowly became impossible.

As delegates, your role is not just to know the history, but to understand the people involved in it. Every character in this committee has different goals, loyalties, ambitions, and methods of handling conflict. Some may attempt to dominate through violence, while others may focus on negotiation, manipulation, political influence, or financial control.

Success in this committee will depend on your ability to adapt, think ahead, build alliances, and survive under pressure.

This committee was designed to reward creativity, activity, and strategic thinking. Plans will fail, alliances will break apart, and situations may change very quickly depending on the actions taken inside committee. Some of the strongest delegates in the room may not be the loudest, but the ones capable of controlling information, managing relationships, and staying two steps ahead of everyone else.

Most importantly, you are not here to sit quietly and watch history unfold. You are here to shape it yourselves. The direction of committee will depend entirely on the choices you make and the risks you are willing to take.

The dais has worked hard to create a fast-paced and immersive committee, and we are extremely excited to see the rivalries, negotiations, betrayals, and chaos that emerge throughout the weekend. Good luck delegates.

Sincerely,

Abdulrahman Alhalwagy
Under-Secretary-General
Abo Bake azmi
Academic Assistant

Introduction

The Castellammarese War (1929–1931) was a decisive internal conflict within Italian-American organized crime in New York City marking the collapse of older leadership structures and the emergence of a more centralized system. Rather than being a single continuous war it developed out of a series of escalating disputes between competing factions over territory influence and control of profitable criminal activities especially during the Prohibition era.

The rapid expansion of organized crime in the 1920s is closely tied to Prohibition. The illegal alcohol trade created unprecedented financial opportunities allowing criminal groups to accumulate wealth recruit members and extend their influence across the city. Many groups turned to bootlegging as a major source of income which significantly increased competition between rival factions and made conflicts more likely to happen

By the late 1920s this competition had evolved into a power struggle primarily between the faction led by Joe Masseria and that of Salvatore Maranzano. The conflict also reflected deeper divisions within the Mafia itself particularly between older leaders who followed more traditional structures and younger figures who were more flexible in their approach to business and alliances

The outbreak of violence in 1930 marked the beginning of open conflict assassinations retaliation and shifting alliances become defining features of this period. The war eventually led to a major reorganization of power within organized crime. The instability was not limited to clashes between factions internal tensions within each side also played a major role as individuals reconsidered loyalties and pursued their own interests

One of the key outcomes of the war was the decline of the traditional boss centered system. Younger leaders most notably Charles 'Lucky' Luciano recognized that continuous internal conflict weakened the organization as a whole this led to the development of a more structured and cooperative model which later shaped organized crime in the United States through the creation of separate families and a governing commission

For the purposes of this committee the Castellammarese War should be understood as a period of instability rather than a fixed sequence of events while historical outcomes provide context delegates are expected to analyze the situation assess risks and make strategic decisions that may alter the course of events the focus is not only on conflict but also on how power is organized maintained and challenged within a competitive environment

Key words and phrases:

Cosa nostra directly translates to “our thing”, it refers to the network of Italian-American crime families.

Omertà is an unwritten set of rules, a code of silence which is a fundamental aspect of honor in the mafia.

Castellammarese refers to anyone and anything originating from Castellammare del Golfo, a town in the west of Sicily.

Made men are fully initiated, and baptized individuals who have taken the oath of loyalty (omertà) and are protected by the organization.

A crew is a division of the crime family which is mainly made up of soldiers and is led by a captain.

Mafia Structure

Execution of Family Affairs:

The Italian-American mafia is a hierarchical crime syndicate designed as a way of life with a strict set of rules for Italian, and especially Sicilian immigrants in America. The mafia prides itself in masculinity, pride, honor, and strong family values. The mafia exists to employ criminal and in rare cases noncriminal methods of acquiring funds and influence over territories, industries, businesses, and people. Members of the mafia are absolutely required to serve the interests of the family to the fullest extent of their abilities and adhere to omertà.

Omertà entails:

- complete silence towards authorities, never cooperate, testify, or share information under any circumstances (arrest, imprisonment, etc),
- not admitting the organization exist, not publicly and not to authorities, even pleading guilty in court is considered as admitting the existence of a criminal organization,
- absolute loyalty to La Cosa Nostra, even over family, friends, and country,
- respecting the hierarchy, following orders of superiors no matter what and solving disputes through the chain of command.

Breaking omertà means expulsion, retaliation and in many cases execution.

Hierarchy of Made Men:

The don (boss) of a crime family is the autocratic chief of the family who arbitrates disputes and controversies in his extended group. The don has absolute authority over all major decisions and members.

The underboss acts like a vice president to the don. He runs more day-to-day operations while remaining at the top of the family's hierarchy, answering only to the boss himself.

The consigliere is the don's most trusted confidant and his advisor. Usually an experienced and wise individual who helps the boss in ironing out disputes within the family itself, and in making major decisions retaining the family's business. The consigliere usually extends the boss's orders to other members.

Capos or captains (caporegime), are leaders of their own divisions of the family called "crews", a capo answers to the boss and underboss directly. Each crew usually oversees one main business venture for the family but the general goal of a capo is to use his crew to amass as much power and wealth as possible for the boss and the family.

The lowest ranking members of the mafia that make up the majority of the numbers and crews are referred to as soldiers.

Associates are individuals who work in close proximity with the mafia but are not considered members because they are either not of Italian/Sicilian origin or they simply are not "made" yet.

Membership Criteria:

Taking the oath of silence and honor or omertà along with an initiation ritual is the ceremony held to officiate the addition of a new member into a mafia family. After going through that ritual, the individual is considered to be “made” and takes on the title of soldier or made-man, however, the ritual and oath are only the last criteria for a man to be made.

The individual must be a male associate of the family who is at least born of an Italian father or preferably be of fully Italian descent (this only applies to the Italian-American mafia but the original Sicilian mob requires 100% Sicilian blood specifically). The associate must be highly trusted and proven as a valuable and loyal asset to the family in the long term, and the associate also needs an already made member to advocate for his induction into the family.

Finally, mafia families have a cap or limit to the number of made men in their organization, there is no set universal number, it varies from family to family and a slot can only be opened only in the case of a made man’s death or permanent imprisonment, so only if there is slot opened up, a new member can be admitted into the family.

The highest tier of leadership (usually the don) must approve or deny the candidate based on all of these criteria and only then can the individual take the oath and do the ritual to officially be deemed a made man, gaining the respect and protection of that organization

Ranking Up:

Similar to how slots open up for an associate joining the mafia, a higher ranking member must die, be imprisoned indefinitely, retire due to physical and mental inability to fill his role (age, disease, etc.), or be promoted himself for a lower ranking member to take on his role.

After becoming a made man the next step up is promotion to capo of that crew which requires the soldier to be experienced, to demonstrate leadership skills, to be loyal, to be trusted by other soldiers in his crew, to be an exceptional earner for the family, to have significant networks with associates, and to be well liked by the boss and consigliere so that they finalize the decision on the promotion to captain.

If the slot for either underboss or consigliere is open then a capo takes their place but the reasons for the promotion are slightly different. The underboss position is usually taken by the most powerful and well earning capo, as that capo is usually the most business driven and also a good leader which is reflected by his success in leading his crew, but the decision is still completely up to the don with the consigliere's council.

The consigliere position is probably the most awkward to find a replacement for, since the boss must make the decision completely on his own and he must choose the most level headed, intelligent, experienced politically neutral capo who also has a good personal connection with the boss, however if the don chooses the wrong consigliere he risks internal conflict within the family, and inefficient business.

If the slot of don is empty then either the consigliere or underboss may take his place and usually there is a clear successor, but if there is no clear successor then the capos of the family vote for a new boss to be elected by majority.

Historical background:

Origins in Sicily:

Sicily's people survived over two thousand years of tyranny and suppression under foreign conquerors and feudal overlords. From ancient times until the mid nineteenth century, the island was raided, invaded, and even traded for other territories by foreign rulers. Sicily's strategic and vulnerable location, almost in the center of the Mediterranean Sea, close to southern Italy and North Africa, subjected it to an endless succession of occupation and oppression by Phoenicians, Greeks, Etruscans, Carthaginians, Romans, Byzantines, Normans, Arabs, French, Spanish, Austrian, and finally hostile Italian armies. These adversities formed a culture hinging on two main concepts: contempt for and suspicion of governmental authorities; and tight-knit alliances with blood relatives and with fellow countrymen facing the same perils.

These historical and cultural underpinnings spawned furtive clans, in Sicilian dialect, *cosche*, for self-preservation against perceived corrupt oppressors. Without the security of reliable public institutions to protect them or their property, the clans, which were mainly in the countryside, relied on stealth, compromise, and vendetta to extract private justice.

Eventually, the secret *cosche* became commonly labeled in Sicily by a single name: Mafia. Over hundreds of years, they evolved from guerrilla-like, disorganized bands for self-defense into greedy, terrifying gangs.

In the 1920s, Mussolini waged war on the Sicilian mafia by appointing Cesare Mori, who was known as the "Iron Prefect", with complete authority and freedom to use extra-legal and ruthless methods to expel the mafia from the country and destroy their organization. Mori arrested thousands of people including mafiosi, associates, and the families of mafiosi, in fact he took the families hostage to force the mafiosi to surrender. Mori also used methods such as torture, confiscating property, and destroying mafiosi property like publicly slaughtering livestock, burning businesses, destroying crops. This crackdown greatly reduced the mafia's power in Italy and forced many members to flee to the United States.

Immigration to America:

In the late 1800s to the early 1900s, immigrants from Italy flooded the area of New York City. In the 1880s there were about 250 thousand Italian immigrants, and in the 1910s to 1920s the number increased to over 1 million. About 70%-80% of these immigrants that settled in New York City originated from southern Italy and Sicily, where the mafia is most concentrated.

Although many of these immigrants were upstanding people who came to America in search of economic opportunity and a genuine better future, many mafia members contributed to the mass immigration from Italy to America. These mafiosi came to America for two simple reasons: firstly, America was a gold mine of criminal business opportunities, especially because of prohibition, and the second reason was government crackdowns and pressure on the mafia in their home country of Italy.

Italian mafiosi brought their Sicilian distrust of authorities and rulers with them to America, and because Italian immigrants chose to live together in dense urban neighborhoods, this gave way for small groups and gangs of Italians to live by the ways of the mafia in America. These gangs gained power and influence quickly, especially due to prohibition, and as they grew larger, they became more organized and similar to the Sicilian mafia in their methods of operation, eventually evolving into the five crime families: Gambino, Colombo, Lucchese, Genovese, and Bonanno after the events of the Castellammarese war.

The Prohibition Era

The passage of the 18th Amendment in 1920, which prohibited the production, sale, and transportation of alcoholic beverages in the United States, transformed the landscape of organized crime almost immediately. What had previously been a collection of smaller, localized criminal activities expanded into a highly profitable and large-scale underground economy. Alcohol did not disappear with Prohibition; instead, demand remained extremely high, creating a black market that required organization, protection, and distribution on a level that had not existed before.

Bootlegging quickly became one of the most lucrative illegal industries in the country. Criminal groups took control of the production, smuggling, and sale of alcohol, often working through networks of speakeasies, corrupt officials, and transportation routes that stretched across cities and states. In New York City, this system became especially complex due to its size, population, and importance as a commercial hub. Organized crime figures were able to accumulate significant wealth in a short period of time, which they reinvested into expanding their operations, recruiting members, and securing influence over both legal and illegal institutions.

As profits increased, so did competition. Different groups began to fight over access to key distribution routes, suppliers, and territories where alcohol could be sold safely. Control over these areas meant not only financial gain but also long-term influence. Violence became a common method of resolving disputes, but it was often accompanied by negotiation, alliances, and temporary agreements. Organized crime during this period was not purely chaotic; it involved calculated decisions and strategic planning aimed at maximizing profit while minimizing unnecessary risk.

The economic boom created by Prohibition also exposed weaknesses in existing leadership structures. Traditional leaders who relied heavily on personal loyalty and rigid hierarchies struggled to manage the rapidly expanding operations. At the same time, younger members began to recognize the benefits of cooperation and coordination, especially when dealing with such a profitable market. This tension between old and new approaches to leadership contributed to instability within organizations and made large-scale conflict more likely.

Joe Masseria had already established himself as one of the most powerful Mafia bosses in New York before the war officially began. His influence came from his control over major criminal operations, his connections throughout the city, and the loyalty of powerful capos and enforcers under him. Masseria represented the old guard of the Mafia. He valued loyalty, personal authority, and territorial dominance above almost everything else. His organization relied heavily on intimidation and maintaining direct control over crews and rackets. To many older mafiosi, Masseria represented stability and strength, especially at a time when the underworld was rapidly expanding and becoming more competitive.

However, Masseria's leadership also created enemies. His aggressive expansion into other territories, his growing paranoia, and his refusal to fully adapt to the changing criminal landscape caused tension even within his own faction. Younger members especially began to view his methods as outdated. They believed endless internal wars hurt business and attracted unnecessary attention from authorities. Figures like Charles Luciano, Frank Costello, and Meyer Lansky were more interested in efficiency, cooperation, and long-term profit than old Sicilian rivalries.

On the other side stood Salvatore Maranzano and the Castellammarese faction. Maranzano arrived in New York with strong support from Sicilian immigrants connected to Castellammare del Golfo, a town in western Sicily with deep Mafia ties. Many members of his faction shared similar cultural backgrounds and viewed themselves as protectors of traditional Sicilian Mafia values. Maranzano was highly disciplined, ambitious, and deeply obsessed with structure and hierarchy. Unlike Masseria, who ruled more through personal dominance, Maranzano attempted to organize his faction almost like a military chain of command.

Ultimately, Prohibition did not just increase the size of organized crime—it changed its nature. It created a system where wealth, influence, and power were closely linked, and where control over economic resources became the primary objective. This environment set the stage for larger conflicts, as groups sought to secure dominance over a market that was both highly profitable and constantly contested.

The Castellammarese Wars: Two Rival Factions

By the late 1920s, organized crime in New York was no longer controlled by small isolated gangs. Prohibition had transformed the underworld into an enormous and highly profitable business, and with that money came competition over territory, political influence, alcohol distribution routes, gambling operations, and control over crews across the city. As different groups expanded, two major factions gradually emerged at the center of this growing conflict: the faction of Joe Masseria and the Castellammarese faction led by Salvatore Maranzano.

Although both groups were part of the Italian-American Mafia, they represented two very different approaches to power and leadership. The rivalry between them was not simply personal; it reflected deeper tensions inside the Mafia itself regarding tradition, authority, and the future of organized crime in America.

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The Castellammarese faction quickly gained influence as more Sicilian mafiosi aligned themselves with Maranzano's leadership. Some joined because of shared origins and loyalty, while others simply believed Masseria had become too powerful and unpredictable. Maranzano also positioned himself as a defender of traditional Mafia order against what many saw as Masseria's increasingly reckless expansion.

As tensions between the two sides increased, neutrality became harder to maintain. Smaller crews and independent figures were slowly forced into choosing sides, either for protection, profit, or survival. Assassinations, betrayals, and territorial disputes began spreading throughout New York. By the end of the 1920s, the conflict was no longer avoidable. The struggle between Masseria and Maranzano had become a battle over who would control the future of organized crime in America.

Rising Tensions (1928–1929)

The Castellammarese War did not begin with one assassination or one meeting gone wrong. The conflict developed slowly over several years as rival factions expanded their influence across New York during Prohibition. By the late 1920s, organized crime had become far more profitable than it had ever been before. Bootlegging networks stretched across entire neighborhoods, speakeasies operated almost openly, and Mafia groups were making enormous amounts of money from gambling, protection rackets, labor unions, and alcohol distribution. As profits increased, so did the pressure to control more territory and more political influence.

At the center of this growing instability stood Joe Masseria. By 1928, Masseria had become one of the most feared and influential Mafia bosses in New York. He had absorbed weaker gangs, forced smaller crews into submission, and built a powerful criminal organization that controlled major operations throughout the city. Many mafiosi viewed him as the dominant force in the underworld even before the war officially started. His ambition, however, also created tension with other leaders who feared that Masseria was attempting to place himself above all rival organizations.

One of the biggest threats to Masseria's dominance came from the growing influence of Sicilian mafiosi connected to Castellammare del Golfo. Over time, these groups became increasingly organized under the leadership of Salvatore Maranzano. Unlike Masseria, Maranzano operated carefully and methodically. He focused heavily on discipline, loyalty, and strengthening connections between Sicilian crews. While Masseria relied on intimidation and aggressive expansion, Maranzano spent much of this period quietly building alliances and consolidating support among mafiosi who distrusted Masseria's growing power.

The rivalry became even more dangerous because New York's underworld was not cleanly divided into two stable camps. Many figures maintained relationships with both sides, while others attempted to stay neutral entirely. Independent bosses and capos often cooperated financially with one faction while negotiating privately with the other. This created an atmosphere where almost nobody fully trusted anyone else. A single rumor or accusation could completely shift alliances overnight.

At the same time, generational tensions inside the Mafia were becoming more visible. Older bosses remained loyal to traditional Sicilian structures built around personal loyalty and absolute authority. Younger figures, however, had grown up during Prohibition and were thinking differently. Men like Charles Luciano and Frank Costello saw organized crime increasingly as a business rather than simply a territorial hierarchy. They worked closely not only with Italians but also with Jewish and Irish criminal groups, especially in gambling and bootlegging operations. To them, constant internal conflict threatened profits and weakened everyone involved.

These differences became especially important as Masseria's behavior grew more aggressive. He demanded larger payments from allied crews, interfered more heavily in outside operations, and reportedly became increasingly suspicious of possible betrayal. Several independent figures began fearing that Masseria would eventually move against them as well. This fear pushed some mafiosi closer to Maranzano, even if they were not fully loyal to him personally.

One of the clearest examples of this growing instability involved Gaetano Reina. Reina had long maintained a relatively independent position and attempted to avoid fully committing himself to either side. However, neutrality during this period became increasingly dangerous. Masseria began suspecting that Reina might eventually align himself with Maranzano or at least refuse to fully support Masseria's expanding ambitions. In an underworld already filled with paranoia and shifting loyalties, suspicion alone could become a death sentence.

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By the end of 1929, violence between rival groups was increasing rapidly. Smaller shootings, disappearances, intimidation campaigns, and retaliatory attacks became more common throughout New York. Many of these incidents never became public knowledge, but inside the Mafia they contributed to an atmosphere of constant fear. Crews started arming themselves more heavily, alliances became unstable, and discussions about betrayal spread through nearly every major organization.

The underworld was beginning to divide into two competing power blocs, but the war had not fully exploded yet. Many leaders still hoped that negotiations, intimidation, or selective violence could prevent total conflict. In reality, however, the system had already started collapsing. Too much money, too much ambition, and too much distrust had built up inside New York's criminal world. By early 1930, only one major spark was needed to turn the rivalry into open war.

Outbreak of Conflict (1930)

By 1930, the accumulated tensions between rival factions erupted into open conflict. What had previously been a series of smaller disputes turned into a more direct and widespread struggle. Assassinations became more frequent, and acts of retaliation followed quickly, creating a cycle of violence that was difficult to control.

The conflict spread across multiple areas of New York City, affecting various operations and networks. No longer limited to isolated incidents, the war began to disrupt the overall structure of organized crime. Both sides attempted to weaken the other through targeted attacks, while also trying to protect their own positions. This required careful planning, as reckless actions could lead to significant losses.

Despite the increase in violence, the conflict was not purely chaotic. Strategic thinking remained important, and leaders had to consider the long-term consequences of their actions. Eliminating a rival could create new opportunities, but it could also provoke further retaliation or destabilize existing arrangements. As a result, decisions were often made with both immediate and future outcomes in mind.

The outbreak of the war also placed pressure on individuals within each faction. Members had to decide where their loyalties lay and whether it was in their best interest to remain aligned with their current leadership. This environment created opportunities for betrayal, as well as for the formation of new alliances. The conflict was therefore shaped not only by external actions but also by internal shifts in power.

As the war continued, it became increasingly clear that the existing system could not sustain itself under such conditions. The scale and intensity of the conflict highlighted the need for a more stable and organized structure, setting the stage for the transformations that would follow.

Escalation

As the war intensified, trust within factions weakened. Leaders began to suspect betrayal from within, and individuals sought opportunities to advance their own positions. Violence increased, and the stability of both factions became uncertain.

This phase of the conflict was marked by a noticeable shift from controlled and targeted actions to more frequent and unpredictable violence. Earlier disputes had often been limited in scope, but escalation brought a wider range of actors into the conflict, including lower-ranking members and associates who were now directly affected by decisions made at the top. As a result, the war became more difficult to contain, and its consequences spread across multiple operations and areas.

Internal suspicion became one of the defining features of this stage. Leaders could no longer rely fully on the loyalty of their own members, as the pressure of the conflict forced individuals to reconsider their positions. The possibility of betrayal was not limited to a few key figures; it became a constant concern that influenced decision-making at every level. Orders were questioned, communication became more cautious, and actions were often delayed or altered due to uncertainty.

At the same time, ambition played a significant role in driving the escalation forward. As the authority of established leaders weakened, opportunities emerged for others to gain power. Individuals who had previously operated within the structure of the organization began to act more independently, forming new alliances or shifting their loyalties based on changing circumstances. This further destabilized both factions, making it increasingly difficult to maintain unity.

The increase in violence also had strategic consequences. While aggressive actions could weaken an opponent in the short term, they often provoked retaliation, creating a cycle that intensified the conflict. This made it harder for either side to achieve a decisive advantage, as each gain was often followed by a loss. The overall effect was a prolonged period of instability, where neither faction could fully secure control.

By this stage, it became clear that the conflict was no longer sustainable in its current form. The combination of internal divisions, external pressure, and continuous violence placed significant strain on both factions. The escalation highlighted the limitations of the existing system and set the stage for a turning point in the structure of organized crime, as the need for a more stable and coordinated approach became increasingly evident.

The Fall of Maranzano (1931)

After Masseria's death, Salvatore Maranzano briefly became the most powerful Mafia figure in New York. Many crews accepted his authority because the war had exhausted nearly everyone involved, and Maranzano appeared to have restored order after months of violence. He reorganized the New York underworld into five separate crime families, creating a clearer structure that later became known as the Five Families system. He also assigned official leadership positions and attempted to establish a strict hierarchy with himself at the top as capo di tutti capi, or "boss of all bosses."

At first, this system seemed successful. The war had ended, major violence temporarily slowed down, and several mafiosi believed Maranzano could stabilize organized crime after the chaos of 1930. However, tensions quickly started appearing beneath the surface. Maranzano's leadership style reminded many younger mafiosi of the same old system they had just fought against under Masseria. He demanded absolute authority, expected complete obedience, and viewed ambitious younger figures with increasing suspicion.

Charles Luciano especially became concerned about Maranzano's intentions. Luciano and his allies had supported the removal of Masseria partly because they wanted to end the endless cycle of internal Mafia wars. They believed organized crime should operate through cooperation and shared profit rather than domination by one all-powerful boss. Maranzano's attempts to place himself above every family threatened those plans almost immediately.

At the same time, Maranzano reportedly started receiving information that Luciano and several younger mafiosi were becoming too powerful. According to later accounts, Maranzano began secretly planning to remove Luciano, Vito Genovese, Frank Costello, and other influential figures before they could threaten his authority further. Whether all of these assassination plans were fully organized remains debated by historians, but Luciano and his allies clearly believed they were in danger.

Rather than waiting to be targeted, Luciano decided to act first. On September 10, 1931, several gunmen disguised as government agents entered Maranzano's office in Manhattan. After disarming his guards, they assassinated Maranzano inside the building. His death marked the true end of the Castellammarese War and effectively destroyed the old "boss of all bosses" system that had dominated the Mafia for years.

Unlike earlier killings during the conflict, Maranzano's assassination represented more than just another shift in power. It marked a generational change inside organized crime itself. The old leadership style based entirely on personal dominance, rigid hierarchy, and Sicilian factionalism was beginning to disappear. In its place emerged a younger generation that focused more heavily on business, national expansion, political influence, and cooperation between criminal organizations.

Aftermath and the Creation of the Commission

Following Maranzano's death, the Mafia entered a period of major reorganization. Many mafiosi feared that without structural changes, another large internal war would eventually break out. The Castellammarese War had weakened organizations across New York, attracted police attention, and caused the deaths of numerous important figures. Younger leaders especially believed the old system encouraged instability because too much power depended on a single boss attempting to dominate everyone else.

To prevent future wars, Charles Luciano and several allies created a new governing structure known as the Commission. Instead of one supreme leader ruling over all families, the Commission acted as a council made up of major Mafia bosses who could negotiate disputes, approve important decisions, and maintain balance between organizations. The goal was not to eliminate violence entirely, but to reduce the chances of another destructive internal conflict like the Castellammarese War.

Under this new system, New York remained divided into five major Mafia families, each controlling its own territory and operations while still cooperating through the Commission. This structure allowed organized crime to become far more stable and profitable throughout the 1930s. Gambling, labor rackets, bootlegging, loan sharking, and political corruption continued expanding, but now under a more coordinated system.

The younger generation of mafiosi also changed the way criminal organizations operated. Figures like Luciano, Costello, Lansky, and others worked more closely with non-Italian criminal groups and focused heavily on profit rather than old Sicilian rivalries. While traditional Mafia rituals and hierarchy still existed, business became increasingly important. Cooperation often replaced unnecessary violence when money could be made more efficiently through alliances.

The effects of the Castellammarese War lasted far beyond 1931. The conflict permanently reshaped organized crime in the United States, transforming the Mafia from a loose collection of rival factions into a more organized national system. Many of the structures created after the war remained influential for decades and helped establish the Mafia's power throughout the mid-twentieth century.

Character Matrix

Masseria side:

Joe Masseria (January 17, 1886 – April 15, 1931) also known as Joe “the boss” Masseria was the boss of what in his time was called the Masseria crime family, and now known as the Genovese crime family. Joe was very old-school and stubborn in his ways and one of his main goals was territorial control and ranking as high as possible among America's mafiosi.





Charles Luciano (November 24, 1897 – January 26, 1962) nicknamed Charles “Lucky” Luciano acted as Joe Masseria’s underboss before and initially during the Castellammarese war. He was extremely intelligent and relatively young which gave him a more modern view on how the mafia should operate.

Frank Costello (January 26, 1891 – February 18, 1973) was nicknamed “The Prime Minister” due to his high rank and influence in New York’s organized crime world. He acted as consigliere to Masseria due to his diplomatic inclinations, he specialized in gambling schemes and corruption of authorities also due to these inclinations.



Vito Genovese (November 21, 1897 – February 14, 1969) was a ruthless and ambitious capo of the Masseria crime family during the Castellammarese war. He was an exceptional enforcer for the Masseria family due to his loyalty and his tendency to use violence. After the war Vito eventually became the boss of the Genovese family.





Albert Anastasia (September 26, 1902 – October 25, 1957) was a capo known as “The Lord High Executioner” because he was highly revered for his murder operations, hits, and mafia executions. After the Castellammarese war he was even part of a group called Murder Inc. which acted as a nation wide mafia enforcement force, and he also became boss of the Gambino family.

Thomas Gaetano Lucchese (December 1, 1899 – July 13, 1967) was a disciplined and diplomatic capo who often prioritized the efficiency of his operations over flash or recognition. In 1930, Masseria ordered Thomas’s mentor’s death due to suspicions of disloyalty, and along with his more modern views this was one of the factors that contributed to Thomas's alignment with Marnanzano fter Masseria’s death. He eventually became boss of the Lucchese crime family.





Meyer Lansky (July 4, 1902 – January 15, 1983) was not a made man or a member of the mafia since he was of Polish-Jewish descent, so although he was just an associate, he was an extremely relevant and valuable associate. He was nicknamed “The Mob’s Accountant” because he strayed away from violent operations, and involved himself in management of funds and gambling schemes. His connection to New York's Jewish underworld also proved valuable to the Italian-American mafia.

Joe Adonis (November 22, 1902 – November 26, 1971) was a powerful capo of the Masseria family who later worked for Lucky Luciano as a capo as well. Adonis was a charming young mafioso, but he was also extremely ruthless when necessary. Adonis sided with Luciano even after the betrayal of Masseria and Mornanzano, and he was an advocate for the Mafia’s transition away from traditional Sicilian traditions.



Marnanzano side:



Salvatore Marnanzano (July 31, 1886 – September 10, 1931) immigrated to America from the town of Castellammare del Golfo, and brought with him a very strict traditional and authoritarian mindset. He led what is now called the Bonanno crime family, which was the Marnanzano crime family during his time. Throughout his time as boss, he was obsessed with power and the idea of becoming capo di tutti capi (boss of all bosses), which is why he was nicknamed “little Caesar”.

Joseph Bonanno (January 18, 1905 – May 11, 2002) was a very disciplined and intelligent capo. He proved to be an exceptional strategist and leader, and this led him to eventually becoming the boss of the Bonanno crime family, after aligning with Charles Luciano’s system and the commission post Castellammare war.



Marnanzano side:



Stefano Magaddino (October 10, 1891 – July 19, 1974) was an especially secretive capo of the Marnanzano mob, secretive to the point that he used a funeral home as a front for his criminal operations; an unusual practice which earned him the nickname “The Undertaker”.

Tommy Gagliano (May 29, 1883 – February 16, 1951) was capo under Marnanzano and later became the boss of the Lucchese family. Gagliano was particularly quiet and cautious when it came to the public, he avoided recognition, and was not even publicly known by any nickname, this caution made him a pillar of internal stability in the family.





Vincent Mangano March 28, 1888 – disappeared April 19, 1951, declared dead October 30, 1961) was a rigid minded and traditional capo. Mangano disliked and often had bad relations with young and ambitious mafiosi because they threatened changing the balance of power and system of La Cosa Nostra.

Gaetano Reina (September 27, 1889 – February 26, 1930) is technically the founder of the Lucchese family, but before that he acted as capo for Marnanzano. Reina was a very cautious and independent man and a good leader.





Gaspar Milazzo (April 25, 1887 – May 31, 1930) was a strategic and highly respected capo, he maintained and mediated alliances between mafia groups, and was very loyal and close to Marnanzano. Milazzo highly valued traditional Sicilian mafia conduct, like most members of Marnanzano's faction.

Vincent Coll (July 20, 1908 – February 8, 1932) nicknamed "Mad Dog" was a young Irish hitman and gangster who was recruited by Marnanzano. Being a non-Italian associate of the Marnanzano family provided much value because he could perform an assassination without having to deal with the internal drama it would create in the Italian mafia. He was competent enough to get away with his hits and had the protection of the Irish mob and the Marnanzano family when his safety was in Marnanzano's interest.



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