

League of Nations

*Specialized
Advanced*



TOPICS: The Japanese Invasion of Manchuria,
Responding to Violations of the Treaty of Versailles

CHAIRS: Leilani Song and Max Zhang

LAIMUN XXXI

December 6-7



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Letter from the Secretaries-General

Dear Delegates,

On behalf of our entire staff, it is our pleasure to welcome you to Session XXXI of the Los Angeles Invitational Model United Nations (LAIMUN) conference. LAIMUN XXXI will take place on Saturday, December 6 and Sunday, December 7 of 2025 at the Mira Costa High School (MCHS) campus.

Our staff, composed of over 200 MCHS students, has been working tirelessly to make your debate experience the best it can be. You will find your dais members to be knowledgeable about the issues being debated and MUN procedure. We pride ourselves in hosting a conference that is educational and engaging, and we hope you take advantage of that as you prepare and debate.

At LAIMUN, we value thorough research and preparation. We ask that delegates write position papers following these directions. The deadline to submit position papers to be considered for Committee and Research Awards is Friday, November 21st at 11:59 PM PT. The deadline to submit to be considered for Committee Awards is Thursday, November 28th at 11:59 PM PT.

We also encourage all delegates to read the LAIMUN Rules of Procedure for conference-specific information and as a reminder of points and motions that can be made during committee.

Feel free to reach out to our staff with any questions or concerns you may have. Delegates can find their chairs' contact information next to their committee profile and the Secretariat's email addresses on the staff page. Any member of the LAIMUN staff will be happy to assist you.

We look forward to seeing you in December!

Sincerely,

Katie Anderson and Isabel Borocho
Secretaries-General, LAIMUN XXXI
secretarygeneral@mchsmun.org



Letter from the Undersecretary-General

Hello Delegates!

Welcome to LAIMUN XXXI! My name is Collin Tarnay, and I am very excited to be your Under-Secretary General of Specialized Committees. This is my 4th year of Mira Costa MUN, and I am thrilled to be your USG.

This year for Specialized, we have chosen a set of current, pressing, and unique topics and committees ranging from IMO to Ad Hoc. I'm looking forward to seeing creative solutions and engaging debate in all of your committees! Our chairs have worked extremely hard this year to prepare for LAIMUN XXXI, and we hope you can return that same level of respect and effort.

With Specialized's variety of relevant topics means that uncomfortable discussions can be created. We would like to ensure that everyone feels safe and heard in committee, and we hope that all delegates remain respectful, diplomatic, and civil. Please ensure you are following LAIMUN's guidelines for committee conduct, and I would like to reiterate that the use of plagiarism, AI, or pre-written operatives is strictly prohibited.

Whether you are in a novice committee or an advanced one, I hope you will have an amazing debate experience. Don't forget to submit your position papers, prepare for debate, and research your topic! If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact your chairs, our SGs, or me at specialized@mchsmun.org. Committee information and conference resources will be available at the LAIMUN XXXI website at <https://www.laimun.org/>. See you in committee and I hope you will enjoy what is, in my unbiased opinion, the best branch at LAIMUN!

Best of Luck,
Collin Tarnay
USG of Specialized Committees.



Introduction to the Dais

Hello Delegates!

My name is Leilani Song, and I'm thrilled to be your chair in the League of Nations! As a senior, I'm entering my fourth year in the Mira Costa MUN Program and my first year as a Teacher's Assistant for our Intro classes. MUN has brought me so many fond memories, friends, and new knowledge, and I cannot wait to pass on the MUN experience to my freshman class!

I look forward to seeing a lively and competitive debate as we travel almost 100 years back in time to the League of Nations. As debate approaches, I encourage all delegates to come with a collaborative attitude, enthusiastic speeches, and stand-out solutions. Although delegates are encouraged to be accurate within the time period, please make sure to be respectful as we debate sensitive topics. Take this as a firm reminder that no hate speech will be tolerated.

Outside of MUN, you can almost always find me at a local cafe sipping ceremonial matcha and with a book in hand (Mary Wollstonecraft or Jane Austen, of course). When I'm not wearing W.B.A, you'll catch me rocking vintage thrifted fits with a Trader Joe's tote bag slung over my shoulder—though my posture may be slouched under the weight of my Clairo vinyls, various Labubus, stacks of money, and sheer empathy that I carry for others. In my free-time, when I'm not untangling my wired-headphones, volunteering at female-owned animal shelters, or just *thinking* existentially, you'll find me writing haikus about my lovely fellow staff members. I'll give you some examples:



To the lovely, lively head chair of AD-HOC:

Oh Ava Herczeg,

So lovely, let's get sushi!

Del dance soon? Say yes!

And for my special USG of Specialized, Collin Tarmay.

Oh Collin Tarmay

Special you are, you're my star

Baja Club next year!

And another haiku, because I know you want one! This one goes out to the ECOSOC

USG Harper Santos.

Harpeepeepoopoo

Cinderella lattes soon?

Don't eat an almond!

Lastly, to calm your debate nerves, I'm dedicating this last haiku to my delegates of LN:

Delegates get hyped

You're in the Big League (get it?)

Debate here we come!

I can't wait to see your performativ—I mean performances, and I look forward to a strong debate! If you have any questions (or poems), feel free to reach out at

lon.adv.laimun.xxxi@gmail.com.



Hello Delegates!

My name is Max Zhang, and I will be one of your co-chairs for the League of Nations this year. I'm a junior here at Mira Costa and I've been in Model UN for 3 years now. Last year I was the legal for the 4th SPD novice committee, and I also had the opportunity to go to Canada for a conference in Vancouver and it was super fun to hang out with new people (and have an extended week to procrastinate studying for AP tests)—though, I'm not quite sure that Canadians are nice after seeing a middle-aged woman try to shove one of us out of an elevator at our hotel.

Due to the special nature of the League of Nations, I hope to see everyone coming in diplomatic and willing to compromise during negotiations: resolutions require a unanimous majority to pass! Make sure your facts are historically accurate, but be creative in developing plausible solutions to avoid solely re-enacting history. To further emphasize Leilani's reminder above, we will absolutely not tolerate any form of hate speech or discrimination during discussions. I implore all delegates to bring a passionate attitude and their best energy coming in to keep debate lively!

Outside of MUN, I am the president of the art club at Mira Costa, and I take art classes every week. I'm currently working on improving my color sense—don't even try me on how annoying color theory is. My favorite music genre is K-pop, specifically LE SERRAFIM and TXT. Besides K-pop, I also listen to Charli xcx and SOPHIE occasionally, and I listen to Japanese ambient music whenever I need to meditate or reconnect with nature after getting my



grade back on an essay—if you want the playlist let me know. If you have any questions, don't be afraid to reach out to us using our committee email on the LAIMUN website!

Best regards,

Max Zhang

For Research Award and Committee Award consideration, email your position paper to your dais by Friday, November 21 at 11:59 PM PT

For Committee Award consideration, email your position paper to your dais by Friday, November 28 at 11:59 PM PT



Committee Description

The League of Nations (LN) is a Specialized committee at LAIMUN XXXI. It was the first intergovernmental organization created with the goal of promoting international peace and security, and it is often considered the predecessor to the United Nations.¹ In the aftermath of World War I, the LN was created when the Treaty of Versailles, which ended the conflict and included the LN's founding document (the Covenant of the League of Nations), officially came into effect on January 10, 1920.² Unlike diplomacy in the past—which focused on national self-interest rather than considering ethics—the LN's duties incorporated several of US President Woodrow Wilson's ideals that serve as the foundation for diplomacy today: having the right to sovereignty and self-determination for all nations (especially in the context of decolonization), deterring aggression from other countries, and establishing international law with regards to human rights and justice.³ While the LN is focused on preventing and peacefully arbitrating conflicts, the Covenant also promoted international collaboration in non-security related fields like health and trafficking.¹

The LN was composed of three main organs: the Assembly, which was the main representative body and included all member states; the Council, which had permanent and non-permanent members (think U.N. Security Council); and the Secretariat, which oversaw the

¹United Nations, "The League of Nations," The United Nations Office at Geneva (United Nations, 2023), <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/about/league-of-nations/overview>.

²"Historical Background," UN GENEVA, n.d., <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/about/league-of-nations/background>.

³"Wilsonian Idealism | Academic Block," Academic Block, January 23, 2025, <https://www.academicblock.com/world-affairs/modern-diplomacy/wilsonian-idealism>.



work conducted by the LN. In the Assembly, the organ delegates will be simulating, all member states had one identical vote and substantive decisions required a unanimous decision—all members present had to either vote in favor or abstain. Delegates should note, the Assembly has the power to amend the Covenant without requiring approval from the Council in resolutions, unlike in the United Nations which requires approval from the five permanent members of the Security Council to amend the UN Charter.⁴

The League of Nations worked to promote multilateral cooperation and international peace through collective security.⁵ As the first international body with member states dedicated to settling disputes peacefully, the League of Nations attempted to renounce secret diplomacy, reduce armaments, and comply and create international law.⁶ Though positive in its intentions, the League saw mixed results when its efforts were put to the test. The LN achieved success in mediating and preventing international conflict on various occasions, such as in October 1925, when the LN successfully de-escalated conflict between Greece and Bulgaria in the War of the Stray Dog.⁷ However, just two years prior, the League failed to properly intervene during the Corfu Incident, in which Italian dictator Benito Mussolini both occupied and ordered a naval bombardment on the Greek island Corfu.⁸ The LN's failure to prevent the Italian invasion despite

⁴United Nations, "Main Organs of the League of Nations," UN GENEVA, n.d., <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/about/league-of-nations/organs>.

⁵United Nations, "The League of Nations," The United Nations Office at Geneva (United Nations, 2023), <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/about/league-of-nations/overview>.

⁶United Nations, "Main Organs of the League of Nations," UN GENEVA, n.d., <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/about/league-of-nations/organs>.

⁷"War of the Stray Dog," Balkan Military History, n.d., <https://www.balkanhistory.org/war-of-the-stray-dog.html>.

⁸"League of Nations – the Past Changes a Little Every Time We Retell It," Igbis.edu.my, 2025, <https://stg.igbis.edu.my/the-past-changes-a-little-every-time-we-retell-it/league-of-nations/>.



Greece's appeal for help highlights prominent weaknesses of the League in its failure to protect vulnerable populations. In all, though the League was created with the purpose of promoting international security, its inadequacies and lack of power highlight key flaws within its structure. As League of Nations members, delegates are encouraged to keep in mind the structural differences between the United Nations and the League of Nations when acting in committee, and may consider addressing structural issues within the LN to increase enforcement effectiveness.

*Please note: as the League of Nations is a Specialized historical committee, debate will be set in a corresponding time period. Topic A (The Japanese Invasion of Manchuria) will take place directly following the Mukden Incident on September 18, 1931.⁹ Topic B (Responding to Violations of the Treaty of Versailles) will take place on March 6th 1936, directly succeeding the German remilitarization of the Rhineland.¹⁰ Although we expect delegates to create solutions that are feasible within the given time periods, we hope that delegates will use their creativity and not be constrained by re-enacting history. Furthermore, in order to allow for a more rounded debate, Japan and Germany *will* still be included as delegations, despite the countries' historical departure from the League of Nations. The League of Nations Committee may take small departures from historical accuracy as needed to ensure for a smooth-running, multifaceted debate. Other than its historical setting and potential crisis updates, debate will primarily

⁹Harry S. Truman Library & Museum, "Invasion of Manchuria," Trumanlibrary.gov (National Archives, 2019), <https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/education/presidential-inquiries/invasion-manchuria>.

¹⁰The National Archives, "German Occupation of the Rhineland," *Nationalarchives.gov.uk* 1, no. 1 (2019), <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/default.htm>.



function like a traditional committee, and delegates are not expected nor permitted to use crisis arcs. Additionally, actions and resolutions from Topic A will not carry into Topic B, and the committee will generally reset between topics. Lastly, in efforts to maintain historical accuracy, resolutions in the League of Nations will require a unanimous majority by all member states to pass.



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Topic A: The Japanese Invasion of Manchuria

I. Background

Located in Northeast China, Mukden (presently known as Shenyang) is one of several cities in South Manchuria. Manchuria has been a highly contested and sought out territory due to its geographically isolated position, strategic trade location, and richness in natural resources such as coal and iron. For this reason, several countries staked claims on Manchuria throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, most prominently by Japan, China, and Russia. In the 19th century, Russia annexed Outer Manchuria from the Qing Dynasty through the Treaty of Aigun (1858) and Convention of Peking (1860), colonizing the area and establishing warm water ports and railroads.¹¹ Decades later, however, when conflict broke out between Russia and Japan over imperial ambitions in the Pacific, Japan gained a decisive victory in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). The defeat of Russian troops led to Japan gaining control over the Korean Peninsula and southern Manchuria through the Treaty of Portsmouth.¹² Japan continued to exert influence over Manchuria for several decades, until its official invasion of the territory beginning with the Mukden Incident.

On September 18, 1931, an explosive detonated on the tracks of the South Manchurian Railway, a Japanese-owned railroad located near the city of Mukden, China. Though minimal

¹¹Julian McBride, "A Century Later, China Might Want Outer Manchuria Back," International Policy Digest, June 10, 2025, <https://intpolicydigest.org/a-century-later-china-might-want-outer-manchuria-back/>.

¹²"The Treaty of Portsmouth & the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905," State.gov, 2022, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/ip/87725.htm>.



damage was sustained in the explosion, the deemed “Mukden Incident” was no accident; rather, it was a strategically planned “white flag” operation by the Japanese military to justify an invasion of the Chinese mainland.¹³ In the operation, junior Japanese officers deliberately sabotaged a small section of the railway eight hundred meters from the Chinese garrison of Beidaying, allowing Japan to blame Chinese troops stationed nearby as the perpetrators of the explosion. Immediately following the incident, Japanese troops surrounded and attacked the garrison, triggering intense political outcries from both sides. Though the Japanese prime minister ordered the Kwantung Army—the Japanese command stationed in Manchuria—to return to base and de-escalate the situation, Kwantung Army activists overrode orders, launching an offensive near the city of Changchun and triggering the official invasion of Manchuria.¹⁴

The sudden Japanese invasion of Manchuria and rapid expansion of territory came as a shock to much of the Western world. Many countries still viewed Japan as a relatively weak nation, visualizing the country prior to the Meiji Restoration. Following centuries of isolationism and traditional feudal society, the Meiji Restoration marked a turning point in Japanese history as the Empire converted from a feudal shogunate into a centralized military government.¹⁵ Due to external pressures of Western trade and internal shifts with the restoration of power to the Meiji

¹³Todd DePastino, “The ‘Mukden Incident’ of 1931 That Started World War II in Asia,” Veterans Breakfast Club, September 14, 2023,

<https://veteransbreakfastclub.org/remembering-the-mukden-incident-of-1931-that-started-world-war-ii-in-asia/>.

¹⁴“Manchurian Crisis | Facts, Summary, Consequences & Outcome,” School History, 2019, <https://schoolhistory.co.uk/notes/manchurian-crisis/>.

¹⁵James Huffman, “The Meiji Restoration Era, 1868-1889,” Japan Society, June 11, 2021, <https://japansociety.org/news/the-meiji-restoration-era-1868-1889/>.



Emperor, by the early 20th century, Japan faced radical changes in its government, economy, and social structure. By the death of the Emperor in 1912, Japan had already fully transformed into a highly centralized nation with rapidly developing industrial and military sectors.¹⁶

Armed with a newfound economic independence, strong military, and a civic ideology loyal to the empire, Japan sought to expand its influence and wealth through acquiring colonies. In the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), Japan successfully defeated China in battle over control of the Korean and Liaodong Peninsulas, strategically important territories for trade and natural resource extraction. Japan's victory in the Sino-Japanese War not only gave it strategic dominance over the Peninsulas, but further shifted the balance of power in East Asia to reflect Japanese regional dominance.¹⁷ Concerned with Japan's rapid territorial growth, in 1895, France, Russia, and Germany formed the Triple Intervention—a diplomatic intervention protesting Japanese expansion and forcing Japan to give up their claims to the Liaodong Peninsula.¹⁸ Though Japan complied, this act angered the Japanese public, creating tensions that eventually led into the manifestation of the Russo-Japanese War. Defeating Russia in 1905, Japan had now successfully fought off two major world powers, instilling the confidence needed to further its colonial expansion and secure a spot as a growing world power.

¹⁶Asia for Educators, "The Meiji Restoration and Modernization | Asia for Educators | Columbia University," afe.easia.columbia.edu (Columbia University, 2025), https://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/japan_1750_meiji.htm.

¹⁷"UK Government Web Archive," Nationalarchives.gov.uk, 2025, <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20250613144551/https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/the-first-sino-japanese-war-and-the-kowshing-incident/>.

¹⁸Frank W. Ikle, "The Triple Intervention. Japan's Lesson in the Diplomacy of Imperialism," *Monumenta Nipponica* 22, no. 1/2 (1967): 122, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2383226>.



Although Japan had undergone intense economic growth and industrialization, by 1929, Japan's economy and population had been devastated by the Great Depression. As the world struggled to deal with the near-spontaneous economic crash, Japan was no exception. Dealing with a rapidly falling economy, Japanese citizens began to view the government as weak, leading many citizens to turn their devotion toward the Japanese army. Armed with public support, senior army figures decided that the best way to address the economic crash would be to expand the physical territory of the Japanese Empire, and an invasion of Manchuria soon fell into view. With nearly 200,000 square kilometers of resource-dense land, Manchuria became the primary target of Japanese expansion, not only to continue asserting dominance across Asia, but also to pull Japan out of economic stagnation.¹⁹

In all, the Japanese invasion of Manchuria was a multifaceted issue stemming from economic, political, and social motivations. Manchuria's fertile natural landscape and profitable untapped resources provided incentives for expansions to support Japanese industrialization and economic needs. Furthermore, Manchuria's proximity to major empires and shifting political legacy made the Japanese invasion of the territory not only physical, but symbolic; it reflected the growing Japanese nationalism and domination over Asia. As the League of Nations convenes for its conference at LAIMUN XXXI, member-states must grapple with the international turmoil that the invasion has caused, and work to create solutions to promote international stability.

II. L.N. Involvement

¹⁹“Manchuria 1931,” historylearning.com, n.d., <https://historylearning.com/world-war-two/causes-of-ww2/manchuria-1931/>.



Following the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, the League of Nations created the Lytton Commission in order to investigate and respond to the turmoil in Manchuria. In September 1931, shortly after the Mukden Incident, China appealed to the League of Nations to investigate the conflict, leading to the official creation of the Lytton Commission. Composed of delegates from the League of Nations as well as unofficial delegates sent from the United States, the Lytton Commission issued the *Report of the Lytton Commission of Inquiry* (commonly known as the Lytton Report) in October 1932.²⁰ The Lytton Report decisively split the blame for the invasion of Manchuria between both China and Japan, declaring that the League of Nations would equally divide blame between Chinese nationalists and Japanese militarism. However, although the Lytton Report did formalize blame, the Lytton Report did not recognize the sovereignty of the newly created Manchukuo, claiming that its establishment would violate Chinese territorial sovereignty.²¹

When the time came to ratify the Lytton Report, Japan was neither willing to accept partial blame for the invasion, nor the League of Nations' unwillingness to view Manchukuo as an independent state. Despite Japanese Chief Delegate Yosuke Matsuoka's plea to the Assembly, the League affirmed its decision and condemnation of Japan, prompting Japan to cut ties with the League. On March 27, 1933, Japan officially withdrew from the League of Nations, marking a significant turning point in the League's unity and international relations across Asia. Now free

²⁰“Situation in Manchuria: Report of the Lytton Commission of Inquiry,” Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540 USA, 1932, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2021666890/>.

²¹Office of the Historian, “The Mukden Incident of 1931 and the Stimson Doctrine,” State.gov, 2019, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/mukden-incident>.



from international political constraints, Japan's withdrawal from the League of Nations resulted in increased militarism and Japanese aggression in Manchuria, as well as a decline in popular approval of the League of Nations. The League's inability to address the occupation of Manchuria, along with the departure of a prominent member state, portrayed the League as weak and unable to handle important issues, ultimately contributing to the League of Nations' collapse in the following years.²²

III. Topics to Consider

A. Manchuria's Strategic Location

As a geographically isolated island-state, Japan sought after Manchuria for both its strategic location and vast natural resources. Lying on the Pacific Coast of Northeastern China, Manchuria gave Japan both a buffer territory between the Russians and a launchpad for military attacks and expansion into East Asia and Eurasia, all while providing ample natural resources and land. With the Manchurian colony, Japan would be able to prepare for military expeditions across Asia, account for its growing population with the addition of unused fertile land, and extract natural resources such as lumber, coal, iron, and fertile farmland.²³ Therefore, delegates should not only consider the political implications of Japanese acquisition of the territory, but also keep in mind its implications to international security and resource depletion.

B. Impact of Conflict on Manchu and Local Civilians

²²Louis Perez, "Japan Withdraws from the League of Nations | EBSCO," EBSCO Information Services, Inc. | www.ebsco.com, 2023, <https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/history/japan-withdraws-league-nations>.

²³"Manchuria 1931," historylearning.com, n.d., <https://historylearning.com/world-war-two/causes-of-ww2/manchuria-1931/>.



As do most external influences from colonizing powers, the Japanese invasion of Manchuria and its subsequent dominance of the region led to harmful effects on the native and local populations living in Manchuria at the time. With the reallocation of resources away from local civilians and toward Japanese industry, many civilians were left helpless as Japan stripped them of their property and ways of life. Furthermore, the external cultural influence led to increased divide and hostilities between ethnic groups, resulting in class divides based on ethnicity and nationality. Delegates may look to find solutions to address the cultural and socioeconomic divides, as well as consider the cultural and social implications of colonization.²⁴

C. The Power (or lack thereof) of the League of Nations

The Japanese invasion of Manchuria created a significant challenge for the League of Nations, as it struggled to balance international sovereignty with international security. Due to economic turmoil, the League failed to impose sanctions on Japan, leading to minimal consequences in response to increased Japanese aggression. With Japan revoking its membership from the League of Nations following the Lytton Report, the League faced a serious dilemma as Japan walked away unscathed despite a near-unanimous agreement that it was partially to blame. Therefore, delegates should consider the extent of power that the League of Nations holds when in debate, as well as how the League can respond to international issues when constrained by its lack of enforcement.

D. Economic Turmoil as a Catalyst for Conflict

²⁴“Life in Occupied Manchuria: A Legacy of Struggle and Resistance,” Pacific Atrocities Education, 2021, <https://www.pacificatrocities.org/blog/life-in-occupied-manchuria-a-legacy-of-struggle-and-resistance>.



The 1929 New York Stock Exchange crash had catastrophic impacts on the global economy, hitting Asian markets significantly and impeding Japanese economic progress and industrialization. With limited natural resources on the island—as Japan imported nearly all commodities such as oil, iron, and steel—the Great Depression caused detrimental strain on Japanese resources and halted military progress. Furthermore, as foreign markets began to isolate themselves, such as with the United States’ increase in tariffs to protect domestic industries, Japan’s economy contracted further, leading to increased territorial aggression.²⁵ When examining the causes of Japanese colonization and Japan’s invasion of the Chinese mainland, it is imperative to keep in mind the historical context of the era, as the Great Depression significantly exacerbated economic turmoil.

IV. Case Study: The Kwantung Army and the Establishment of Manchukuo

At the center of Japanese military action in Manchuria lay the Kwantung Army, a prestigious command in the Japanese Imperial Army which helped establish the Japanese puppet-state of Manchukuo. Organized in 1919 from the Kwantung Garrison, the Kwantung Army rapidly grew in size and power to dominate Manchuria and promote Japanese expansion through militant force. Stationed along the South Manchurian Railroad, the Army acted semi-independently in the territory and arranged assassinations, strategic attacks, and famously coordinated the Mukden Incident.²⁶

²⁵Scholastic, “Pearl Harbor Timeline | 1929: Great Depression Begins,” [teacher.scholastic.com](https://teacher.scholastic.com/pearl/timeline/time4.htm), n.d., <https://teacher.scholastic.com/pearl/timeline/time4.htm>.

²⁶Kent G Budge, “The Pacific War Online Encyclopedia: Kwantung Army,” [Kgbudge.com](http://pwencycl.kgbudge.com/K/w/Kwantung_Army.htm), 2015, http://pwencycl.kgbudge.com/K/w/Kwantung_Army.htm.



Less than a year after the Incident and invasion, Manchuria fell entirely under control of the Kwantung Army, where the puppet government of Manchukuo was established by March 1932. Led by Emperor Henry Puyi, Manchukuo was a monarchy that acted under Japanese control, with representatives and officials under high-surveillance and subject to Japanese advisors who instructed them in decision making.²⁷

Civilian conditions in Manchukuo were adverse; the Japanese Empire prioritized the Empire's development over citizens' wellbeing, leading to widespread exploitation, suffering, and a myriad of atrocities committed against the local people. In the nearly fifteen years that Japan had control of the region, local civilians were subject to forced labor, food shortages, and stripped of land and property rights. Workers faced grueling conditions in Japanese factories and infrastructure projects, and came home to a lack of food and basic necessities due to Japanese control over the economy. Despite Manchu and local populations making up the majority of the labor force, Japanese landlords and business owners controlled production and business, allowing them to gouge prices beyond what was affordable to the average civilian.

A multiethnic state, Manchukuo was home to several ethnic groups, with the most prominent being native Chinese and Koreans, Manchus, Japanese colonizers, and Russian exiles. During the reign of Japanese control over Manchukuo, socioeconomic inequality was pervasive along ethnic lines, with Chinese, Korean, and Russian civilians facing severe income inequality and poverty, while Japanese colonizers held a disproportionate share of wealth. Although

²⁷“Establishment of Manchukuo,” Pacific Atrocities Education, n.d., <https://www.pacificatrocities.org/establishing-manchukuo.html>.



Koreans were often favored over their Chinese counterparts, maintaining higher positions in local politics and receiving slightly more advantageous conditions, all non-Japanese ethnic groups were treated as second-class citizens and fell victim to Manchukuo's corrupt economic system, leading to militant movements and ethnic tensions. Furthermore, non-Japanese residents in Manchukuo were expected to follow Japanese rules, traditions, and governmental policies. Shortly after establishing dominance over the region, Japan began a process of assimilation to Japanese culture, requiring the adoption of Japanese names and the abolition of non-permitted traditional and ethnic norms and values.²⁸ Later on, as international relations strained and World War II intensified, non-Japanese residents of Manchukuo would see their conditions worsen, as Japan sought to enhance their military control of the region in attempts to maintain power in the Pacific.

²⁸“Life in Occupied Manchuria: A Legacy of Struggle and Resistance,” Pacific Atrocities Education, 2021, <https://www.pacificatrocities.org/blog/life-in-occupied-manchuria-a-legacy-of-struggle-and-resistance>.



V. Guiding Questions

1. Should imperialism be pursued to advance countries' spheres of influence, or is it an ideology that should be abolished? How should the League of Nations (if at all) regulate imperialistic practices?
2. What country(s) do you believe should have control over the Manchurian Territory? How should the League of Nations ensure that they can maintain control without violating civilian rights?
3. What actions should be taken against Japan for their invasion of the territory? Was it an invasion and violation of sovereignty, or was it a response to the attack on Japanese railroad assets?
4. How can you ensure that Manchus are represented under the entity that is governing them? Should Manchuria be allowed sovereignty?
5. How can you address the violence and systemic inequalities against the Manchu and Chinese citizens? What actions might be taken to ensure the safety of everyday citizens?
6. How can you ensure international security and law is upheld to prevent invasions in the future? What actions might be taken against countries that violate international agreements?
7. What powers (or lack thereof) should the League of Nations be granted? How might you address the lack of enforcement power that the League holds?



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Topic B: Responding to Violations of the Treaty of Versailles

I. Background

The date is now March 7th, 1936, 17 years after the Great War had ended: Germany just boldly violated the Treaty of Versailles and re-occupied the demilitarized Rhineland. This aggressive behavior on the international stage was a culmination of numerous factors originating from the failed Treaty of Versailles: resentment, instability, and lack of administration. As a result of new military technology like the machine gun and biochemical weapons, The Great War was one of the most devastating conflicts in modern history, with millions of soldier and civilian casualties. In its aftermath, the world feared another large-scale conflict.²⁹ Significant anti-war efforts can be seen in the protective policies of various governments, none clearer than in the Treaty of Versailles. The terms were intended to permanently prevent future German hostility; however, when it was drafted, Germany had no say in the stipulations, an error which would breed discontent among the nation's people. Many citizens viewed the terms as excessively punitive.³⁰

Specifically, Germany was heavily punished from three key areas: militarily, territorially, and monetarily. The maximum capacity of Germany's army was restricted to 100,000 soldiers, along with restrictions on the development of tanks, submarines, or an air force. The German

²⁹United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "Treaty of Versailles." Ushmm.org, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2025, encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/treaty-of-versailles

³⁰"How Europe Went to War in 1939." Imperial War Museums, 2023, www.iwm.org.uk/history/how-europe-went-to-war-in-1939



Rhineland region became a buffer as a demilitarized zone occupied by the Allies—US, Britain, and France. The economically important, industry-heavy territories of Alsace-Lorraine and Upper Silesia were given to France and Poland respectively;³¹ several other countries also received territories from Germany. Overall, territorial losses decreased Germany's size by 13% and population by 10% (6.5-7 million people).³² Lastly, Germany was forced to accept blame for starting the war, a term which many Germans viewed as a national embarrassment, and owed an insurmountable sum of reparations and war debts.

On October 24, 1929, the US stock market crashed, starting the Great Depression, which immediately spread to European nations after the US demanded loans to be repaid. As a result of the fallout, by 1932, nearly 6 million Germans were unemployed.³³ The rapidly deteriorating living conditions for the German people had opened an opportunity for Hitler and his extremist Nazi ideology to gain traction.³⁴ The Great Depression had impacted policy-making in multiple key ways such as cutting military budgets and creating an overall lack of will to supervise Germany. Even before the Great Depression impacted military sizes, nations were attempting to prevent an arms race. The Five-Power Treaty was signed at the Washington Naval Conference in 1922 by the US, Britain, Japan, France, and Italy to prevent naval buildup by setting limits on

³¹*The Terms of the Treaty of Versailles.*

³²United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "World War I: Treaties and Reparations." Ushmm.org, 2019, encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/world-war-i-treaties-and-reparations

³³Llewellyn, Jennifer, and Steve Thompson. "The Great Depression in Germany." Weimar Republic, Alpha History, 9 Oct. 2019

³⁴United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "The Great Depression." Ushmm.org, 2019, encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-great-depression



capital ships (battleships and aircraft carriers)—Germany was excluded since it was already restricted by the Treaty of Versailles. This was further reiterated in the London Naval Conference which set a fixed ratio of 10:10:7 for cruisers, destroyers, and submarine weight. These disarmament attempts would ultimately end up fruitless, even hindering British efforts to keep Germany in check once the Anglo-German Naval agreement was signed.³⁵

As part of a larger effort to stabilize Europe, the Locarno Treaties were signed in October 1925, where Germany, France, Belgium, Britain, and Italy guaranteed to preserve Germany's western borders with France and Belgium (previous front of the Great War). Britain and Italy pledged to help defend against any country who violated this; however, the eastern border of Germany was not included in the Locarno treaties, which left Poland and Czechoslovakia insecure.³⁶ Keeping the optimism of peace, in 1928 war was "officially outlawed," an act that appeared promising, though in practice was unenforceable. France feared conflict after the Great War and, still uneasy about its neighbour Germany, proposed an agreement with the US to outlaw war. Stemming from this initial agreement, the Kellogg-Briand Pact was established: an international agreement that forbade armed conflict, signed by 62 nations, including major countries such as Japan, Germany, and Italy.³⁷ There was one major flaw in this pact—lack of

³⁵Office of The Historian. "The Washington Naval Conference, 1921–1922." State.gov, 2019, history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/naval-conference

³⁶Dr Luke Gibbon. "What's the Context? 1 December 1925: Signing the Locarno Treaties - History of Government." Blog.gov.uk, Dec. 2015, history.blog.gov.uk/2015/12/01/whats-the-context-1-december-1925-signing-the-locarno-treaties

³⁷Office of The Historian. "The Kellogg-Briand Pact, 1928." State.gov, 2019, history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/kellogg



enforcement. This pact became irrelevant as evidenced by the invasions in Manchuria (1931) and Abyssinia (1935).

II. L.N. Involvement

The Inter-Allied Military Control Commission (IACC) was an organization which oversaw Germany's compliance to the Treaty of Versailles. There were three commissions: military, naval, and air. Their job was to enforce the disarmament of Germany under the treaty. Specifically, inspecting military facilities to ensure compliance with the 100,000 limit on the number of troops and prohibition of tanks, submarines, and aircraft. Inspectors were able to access any German facility, at any time—directly reporting to the LN. The German public considered the IACC intrusive which continued to fuel resentment. In 1927, the IACC dissolved, leaving Germany without direct supervision. This was because Germany had been cooperating with the Treaty of Versailles—paying back reparations under the Dawes Plan and joining the LN in 1926. France wanted the IACC to continue operations; however, many believed that Germany did not pose an immediate military threat as by 1927 most weapon stockpiles had already been destroyed.³⁸

While not directly addressing Germany, the failure of the League of Nations's ability to manage and address the illegal actions of member states can be seen in the LN's involvement in the Second Italo-Ethiopian War. On October 3rd, 1935 Italy violated international law by invading the independent state of Abyssinia (known as Ethiopia today), aiming to expand its

³⁸“Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, the Paris Peace Conference, 1919, Volume XIII.” Office of the Historian, 2025



colonial holdings. Economic sanctions—that were ineffective—were the only actions taken, due to concern that Italy would begin to work with Germany. Also, even if the LN pushed further sanctions onto important resources like oil, several countries outside of the organization (like the US) could provide it. Furthermore, using military force to protect Abyssinia was not an option: the LN did not have a standing army it could use. This highlights multiple shortcomings of the LN that were commonplace when it handled crises. The LN was weak without major powers like the US and Japan (left in 1933 after the Lytton Report³⁹). Additionally, the LN did not protect Abyssinia, one of its own members. LN members like Britain and France prioritized their own interests over the LN’s collective security policy. Abyssinia showed both Italy and Germany that the LN was hesitant, and ultimately helpless, to enforce its own principles when a major power was the aggressor.⁴⁰

While the LN was plagued with significant problems, there are still notable instances of success in mediating conflicts. For example, one of the clearest successes was when the LN resolved a dispute between Germany and Poland in 1921. As mentioned earlier, Upper Silesia was given from Germany to Poland in the Treaty of Versailles, and it contained both Germans and Poles, making it difficult to grant sovereignty of the region to one side. Because of this, the LN created a commission to oversee a fair election in the region where residents could vote for the region to join either Germany or Poland. In the final result, there was a slight majority

³⁹Perez, Louis. “Japan Withdraws from the League of Nations | EBSCO.” EBSCO Information Services, Inc. | www.ebsco.com, 2023

⁴⁰Goodwin, Clayton. “When Italy Invaded Ethiopia... 70 Years Ago.” *New African*, no. 444, Oct. 2005, pp. 32–33. EBSCOhost



favoring Germany; nevertheless, there were still large areas heavily in favor of joining Poland.

Ultimately the LN decided to partition Upper Silesia with the West joining Germany and the East joining Poland; both Germany and Poland accepted this solution without disagreement.⁴¹

III. Topics to Consider

A. German Reparations and Economic Conditions

The Treaty of Versailles initially set a total reparation cost of 132 billion gold marks—a stable currency compared to the depreciating German marks—on Germany (around 3 trillion USD today). Many Germans saw these reparations as unfair and unpayable: a deliberate attempt to cripple Germany to prevent it from regaining its status as a major power. In 1923, Germany defaulted on a payment, which caused France and Belgium to occupy the Ruhr Valley—the industrial heartland of Germany, rich in coal and iron—to force payment. France and Belgium met heavy passive resistance from the citizens that included strikes and non-cooperation backed by the government. In the end, this occupation harmed Germany more as the government had to print more money to compensate for the lack of capital coming out of the Ruhr Valley.

Worsening its economic woes, inflation in Germany began to spiral into hyperinflation as the German currency's value collapsed, savings were wiped out, and reparations could not be paid.

To restabilize the German economy, the US presented the Dawes Plan in 1924. This plan would restructure Germany's debt payments to spread them over a longer period and inject US loans

⁴¹“History: From One Student to Another - the League's Role in Peacekeeping.”
Historyfromonestudenttoanother.com, 2024,
www.historyfromonestudenttoanother.com/international-gcse/igcse-international-relations/the-league-of-nations/the-leagues-role-in-peacekeeping



into Germany to stabilize the currency and continue reparations to France and Britain (who in turn paid war debts back to the US). The Young Plan was introduced in 1929 to further help Germany, reducing the total amount of reparations that Germany had to pay down to 121 billion gold marks with another loan. Recovery seemed to be succeeding, until the Great Depression began to devastate European nations. By 1933, all debtor countries in Europe defaulted on their US debts except Finland.⁴² To resolve this, Allied powers convened in the Lausanne Conference of 1932 which suspended all reparations payments; nevertheless, the effects on Germany's severely weakened economy could not be undone.⁴³

B. The German Diaspora

The territorial losses for Germany from the Treaty of Versailles created a large German diaspora across Central and Eastern Europe in states like Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Austria. These minorities would become a pretext for Germany's aggressive expansion in the late 1930s (post-remilitarization of the Rhineland). Austria was a German-speaking state, with many Austrians hoping for a union between their country and Germany; nonetheless, the Anschluss (Austrian reunification with Germany) was forbidden under the Treaty of Versailles. Austria was, however, eventually annexed in 1938 by Germany after repeated failures by the Allies and LN to deter German aggression.⁴⁴ Another volatile territory, The Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia

⁴²Office of The Historian. "The Dawes Plan, the Young Plan, German Reparations, and Inter-Allied War Debts." State.gov, Office of the Historian, 2019, history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/dawes

⁴³"Lausanne Conference of 1932." DBpedia, 2025, dbpedia.org/page/Lausanne_Conference_of_1932. Accessed 6 Sept. 2025

⁴⁴United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "Nazi Territorial Aggression: The Anschluss." Encyclopedia.ushmm.org, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2018,



contained more than three million Germans, who often complained of economic and political discrimination. After the Anschluss, Germany demanded the Sudetenland, receiving it without many difficulties and eventually occupying all of Czechoslovakia in March of 1939.⁴⁵ One heavily contentious term of the Treaty of Versailles was the creation of the Polish Corridor, which gave Poland access to the sea and left one million Germans inside Poland. This territory would eventually become one of the major justifications for Germany's invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939.⁴⁶ All of these German minority territories could not be given back as per the Treaty of Versailles; however, at the same time for the host states, they would serve as sources of instability and future conflict.

C. Aims of Major Powers

Most nations prioritized different goals, making collaboration difficult. To start off, Germany's main objective was to restore Germany as a great power, rebuilding the military and reclaiming lost territories, in direct violation of the Treaty of Versailles. Inadvertently enabling Germany's ambitions, Britain had a policy of appeasement which involved making small concessions to Germany in hope of avoiding another war, even when this violated clauses of the Treaty of Versailles.⁴⁷ Meanwhile, France was centered on preventing another German invasion

⁴⁵Cartwright, Mark. "Hitler's Occupation of Czechoslovakia." World History Encyclopedia, 30 Oct. 2024, www.worldhistory.org/article/2555/hitlers-occupation-of-czechoslovakia/

⁴⁶United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "German Foreign Policy, 1933–1945." Ushmm.org, 20 Sept. 2019, encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/german-foreign-policy-1933-1945

⁴⁷United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "THE BRITISH POLICY of APPEASEMENT toward HITLER and NAZI GERMANY." Encyclopedia.ushmm.org, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 4 Aug. 2023, encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/neville-chamberlain.



after the Great War. To do so, they began to form a web of alliances across Europe, forming an alliance with Poland in 1921, one with Czechoslovakia in 1924, and one with the Soviet Union in 1935; however, all of the alliances depended on France being willing to act when necessary—France was very hesitant on doing so without British support and failed to do so when Germany occupied the Rhineland.⁴⁸ Italy, a former victor of the Great War, had a more complex stance. They were promised large territorial rewards, but came out of the Treaty of Versailles feeling betrayed after minimal territorial gains. Initially, Italy opposed Germany and worked with Britain and France, signing the Locarno Treaties and becoming part of the Stresa Front (collective opposition to German expansion). Even though the fascist leader Mussolini had already been in power for over 10 years, he had still been working with Britain and France as late as 1935. The turning point came during the Second Italo-Ethiopian War when the LN imposed sanctions, pushing Italy towards an alliance with Germany; Germany supported the invasion and used the distraction to remilitarize the Rhineland.⁴⁹ The Soviet Union aimed to prevent Germany from expanding towards the East and expand its own influence. Though many Eastern European countries feared Germany, they also viewed the USSR as a threat equal to that

⁴⁸Aggarwal, Mamta. “History of France between the Wars.” History Discussion - Discuss Anything about History, 13 Mar. 2014, www.historydiscussion.net/history/history-of-france/history-of-france-between-the-wars/1748

⁴⁹“Discussion of Italian Claims Begins at Paris Peace Conference” HISTORY, 16 Nov. 2009, www.history.com/this-day-in-history/april-19/discussion-of-italian-claims-begins-at-paris-peace-conference



of Germany.⁵⁰ Finally, across the ocean, the US at this time was in an isolationist policy and was opposed to intervening into European affairs, weakening the LN.⁵¹

IV. Case Study: German Rearmament

The Geneva Disarmament Conference in 1932 was aimed at reducing armaments after the Great War, especially in the midst of the Great Depression. The LN held this conference once a year, and it even included non-LN members like the US and, at that time, the USSR—the Soviet Union joined the LN later in 1934. Many countries had conflicting goals, however. France wanted US and British defense guarantees against Germany. By contrast, the UK wanted French disarmament and the US wanted defense guarantees for all of Europe against Germany. Furthermore, the US hesitated against permanently reducing arms, while Germany demanded all other countries to disarm to German levels or else they had the right to rearm. Negotiations broke down leading to Germany leaving the Geneva Disarmament Conference on October 14, 1933 and the LN one week later.⁵² The British tried convincing Germany to return to the conference; however, this angered the French who saw them as betraying their position, causing France to withdraw from the negotiations in 1934.⁵³ The failure of this conference eventually helped Germany to secretly rearm.

⁵⁰“Stalin - Aims and Policies.” International School History, 2020, www.internationalschoolhistory.com/stalin---aims-and-policies.html

⁵¹Office of the Historian. “American Isolationism in the 1930s.” State.gov, Office of the Historian, 2019, history.state.gov/milestones/1937-1945/american-isolationism

⁵²“Geneva Disarmament Conference | Research Starters | EBSCO Research.” EBSCO, 2022, www.ebsco.com/research-starters/history/geneva-disarmament-conference

⁵³“HITLER’S REARMAMENT - and ITS SUCCESS.” Johndclare.net, 2023, www.johndclare.net/RoadtoWWII3_rearmament.htm



In 1934 Germany signed a non-aggression pact with Poland, which set a duration of ten years. This benefited Germany in a few important ways. First, this secured Germany's eastern border from threat of invasion, giving Germany time to rearm. Second, Poland began to rely less on the LN and its measures of collective security after this pact thinking they were defended. Ultimately though, this pact was never one Germany intended to preserve in the first place: just 5 years later Poland would be invaded by Germany. In 1932, Germany began to classify its officer lists, hiding the infracting surplus of officers and secret pilot training program. Germany was able to construct airfields in covert areas after the disestablishment of the IACC (1927). In 1935 Germany shifted from covert to overt militarization. In February, Germany officially announced the existence of the Luftwaffe (German airforce).⁵⁴ Later in March, Germany publicly reintroduced conscription, increasing the size of the German Army to over 500,000 men, a direct violation of the 100,000 limit outlined in the Treaty of Versailles. Additionally, following the collapse of the disarmament committee, Germany signed a secret agreement with the British, known as the Anglo-German Naval Agreement. Germany could maintain a navy up to 35% that of the British Royal Navy's size.⁵⁵ At this time, the Royal Navy was locked proportionately with both the US and Japan's navy from the prior disarmament agreements. Britain could not expand the Royal Navy to match that of the Germans without also having the US and Japan grow their navies.

⁵⁴J. Gordon, Brian. "Long-Term Deception: The Rearmament of the German Air Force, 1919–39." Cia.gov, Mar. 2018, www.cia.gov/resources/csi/static/Long-Term-Deception.pdf

⁵⁵"Anglo-German Naval Agreement." Ushmm.org, 2022, encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/timeline-event/holocaust/1933-1938/anglo-german-naval-agreement



This naval agreement was a major success for Germany. It legitimized German militarization and openly allowed Germany to violate the Treaty of Versailles. Furthermore, Britain had signed this treaty without consulting the French who were enraged upon learning of the agreement. Not only were they furious because of the agreement, but Britain was also resolving tensions outside of the LN, which the French saw as subverting Allied unity. Germany now held greater influence and leverage over Britain: they could threaten to cancel the treaty when pressed and questioned about other violations. Britain and France's failure to stop German rearmament encouraged continued violations of the Treaty of Versailles, leading to the present day remilitarization of the Rhineland in 1936.⁵⁶

⁵⁶Othman, and Nagham Salam Ibraheem. "Anglo – German Naval Agreement 1935." *Pakistan Journal of Life and Social Sciences (PJLSS)*, vol. 22, no. 1, 1 Jan. 2024, <https://doi.org/10.57239/pjlss-2024-22.1.00223>



V. Guiding Questions

1. How should the LN respond to Germany's remilitarization of the Rhineland? What are the costs of escalation vs. the costs of inaction?
2. What are your country's beliefs on how the balance of power should be conducted in Europe, especially considering disarmament and security guarantees?
3. Consider the fact that the Rome-Berlin Axis was established after the remilitarization of the Rhineland on October 25, 1936. Regarding Italy's invasion of Abyssinia, does your country wish to prevent pushing Italy towards supporting Germany? Or does your country wish to uphold the collective security of the LN?
4. What are the best ways to enforce the Treaty of Versailles without overstepping sovereignty in light of the failures of the Locarno Treaties, Kellogg-Briand Pact, and Geneva Disarmament Conference?
5. What measures should be taken concerning the German minorities dispersed across Central and Eastern Europe? How should these territories be governed? More autonomy? LN oversight?
6. What are the best ways to revise and improve the LN's enforcement mechanisms? Should the LN's Covenant be revised to include one? Or should the LN rely on collective economic pressure or mobilization?
7. If Germany decides to violate the Treaty of Versailles again after the remilitarization of the Rhineland, what should trigger an immediate response, and how major should it be?



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