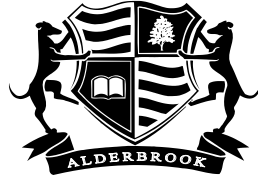
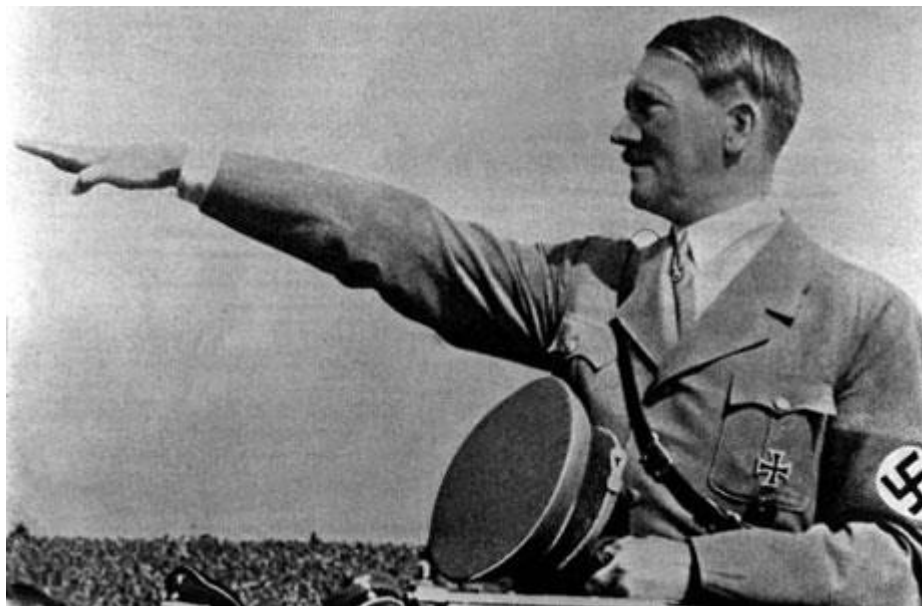


ALDERBROOK SCHOOL



HISTORY DEPARTMENT

Revision Booklet: Conflict and Tension

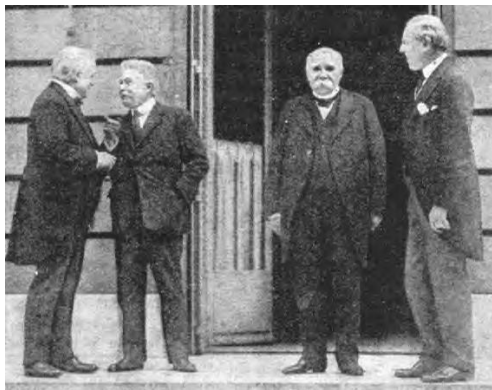


The Treaty of Versailles

The Versailles Conference

The First World War (1914–1918) had been bad. 10 million people died. The part of France where there had been fighting – the 'Western Front' – was totally destroyed. In November 1918, Germany had signed a cease-fire. It was called 'the Armistice'. The Germans could not fight any longer. But they did not think they had surrendered! In January 1919, delegates from 32 countries met at Versailles, near Paris, to make treaties to end the war. The meeting was known as the Versailles Conference.

The Aims of 'the Big Three'



The three most important men at the Versailles Conference – 'the Big Three' – were:

- Georges Clemenceau, the Prime Minister of France.
- Woodrow Wilson, the president of America.
- David Lloyd George, the Prime Minister of Britain.

All three men wanted to stop a war ever happening again, but they did not agree about how to do this. They wanted different things from the peace, and they did not get on well.

Georges Clemenceau

He was the Prime Minister of France. The French had suffered badly. He wanted **revenge**, and to **punish** the Germans for what they had done. He wanted to **make Germany pay** for the damage done during the war. He also wanted to **weaken** Germany, so France would never be invaded again.



Woodrow Wilson

He was President of America.

He was a History professor. He wanted to **make the world safe**.

He wanted to **end war** by making a **fair peace**. People in the USA had not suffered in the same way as the French or British –they were more detached and wanted to stay more impartial.

In 1918, Wilson published '**Fourteen Points**' saying what he wanted. He said that he wanted **disarmament**, and a **League of Nations** (where countries could talk out their problems, without going to war).

He also promised **self-determination** for the peoples of Eastern Europe.

Wilson's Fourteen Points – January 1918

1. No secret treaties
2. Free access to the sea for all
3. Free trade between countries
4. Disarmament by all countries
5. Colonies to have a say in their own future
6. Russia to be free of German troops
7. Belgium to be independent
8. Alsace-Lorraine to go to France
9. New frontier between Austria and Italy
10. Self-determination for people of Eastern Europe
11. Serbia to have access to sea
12. Self termination for people in Turkish Empire
13. Poland to be independent with access to the sea
14. League of Nations to settle disputes



David Lloyd George

He was Prime Minister of England.

He *said* he would '**make Germany pay**' – because he knew that was what the British people wanted to hear.

He wanted '**justice**', but he **did not want revenge**. He said that the peace must **not be harsh** – that would just cause another war in a few years time.

He tried to get a '**halfway point**' – a compromise between Wilson and Clemenceau.

The Terms of the Treaty of Versailles

The main points of the Treaty

After the war, the victors met at the Palace of Versailles, near Paris, to tell Germany the terms of peace.

Defeated Germany was not allowed to send any delegates, and had no choice but to accept whatever was decided.

Most of the delegates wanted revenge.

Only President Woodrow Wilson of the United States wanted a better world.

1. Germany had to accept the blame 'for causing all the loss and damage' of the war. Guilt clause 231.
2. Germany was forbidden to have submarines or an air force. She could have a navy of only six battleships, and an army of just 100,000 men. In addition, Germany was not allowed to place any troops in the Rhineland, the strip of land, 50 miles wide, next to France.
3. Germany had to pay £6,600 million, called reparations, for the damage done during the war.
4. Germany lost land in Europe (*see map, below*).
 - Alsace-Lorraine to France
 - Saar to France (15 years)
 - Malmedy to Belgium
 - North Schleswig to Denmark
 - West Prussia and Upper Silesia to Poland
 - Danzig made a 'free city'
5. Germany's colonies were given to victorious powers as mandates:
6. Germany could not join the League of Nations.

Source A

A map showing Germany's loss of territory by the Versailles Treaty.



The Germans and the Treaty

When the Germans heard about the Treaty of Versailles, they felt 'pain and anger'. They felt it was unfair. They had not been allowed to take part in the talks – they had just been told to sign. They called it a '**diktat**' (dictated peace). Few of Wilson's fourteen points had been adopted. At first they refused to sign the Treaty. Some Germans wanted to start the war again.

The Germans were angry at **Clause 231**; they said they were not to blame for the war. The soldier sent to sign the Treaty refused to sign it – 'Such a confession in my mouth would be a lie', said Count Brockdorff-Rantzau.

The Germans were angry about **reparations**; they said France and Britain were trying to starve their children to death. At first they refused to pay, and only started paying after France and Britain invaded Germany (January 1921). It would have taken until the 1980's to pay.

The Germans lost pride without their armed forces and were angry about **their tiny army**. They said they were helpless against other countries who refused to disarm. At first they refused to reduce the army, and the sailors sank the fleet, rather than hand it over.

The Germans also thought the **loss of territory** was unfair. Germany lost a tenth of its land. They were therefore not capable of paying the annual requests because they had lost many of their most productive areas of natural resources and industry: Farm land (W Prussia) and industrial land (Saar).

Other nations were given self-determination – but the Treaty forced Germans to live in other countries. Germans were also angry that they could not unite with the Austrian Germans.

Results: riots in Berlin/the *Deutsche Zeitung* attacked 'the disgraceful treaty'/ Kapp Putsch (1920) to try to overturn the Treaty.

Verdicts on the Treaty

Clemenceau:

Liked the harsh things that were in the Treaty:

- Reparations (would repair the damage to France),
- The tiny German army, and the demilitarised zone in the Rhineland (would protect France),
- France got Alsace-Lorraine, and German colonies.

But he wanted the Treaty to be harsher. In 1920 he was voted out in a French general election.

Wilson:

He was very disappointed with the Treaty. He said if he were a German he would not have signed it.

Wilson got self-determination for the peoples of Eastern Europe, and a League of Nations, but he hated the Treaty because:

- few of his 'Fourteen Points' got into the Treaty,
- when Wilson went back to America, the Senate refused to join the League of Nations, and even refused to sign the Treaty of Versailles!

Lloyd George:

Many British people wanted to 'make Germany pay', but Lloyd George hated the Treaty. He liked:

- the fact that Britain got some German colonies,
- the small German navy (helped British sea-power).

But he thought that the Treaty was far too harsh. He described the treaty as 'a great pity' and indicated that he believed another war would happen because of it.

Reactions to the Treaty

No one liked the Treaty – Lloyd George and Wilson thought it wouldn't work, and Clemenceau was criticised because many French people thought it wasn't harsh enough.

Some people thought the Treaty was FAIR:

- 1) The war had caused so much death and damage.
- 2) Germany had to be stopped from doing it again.
- 3) People in France and Britain wanted revenge – politicians listened to them so that they could stay in power.

Others thought the Treaty was too HARSH:

- 1) The treaty was unfair on Germany – the punishment was too severe.
- 2) The Germans were left weak and resentful – this could lead to anger and cause future trouble, like another war.
- 3) The treaty wouldn't help rebuild European trade and wealth – Germany couldn't afford the reparations, and many of the new countries were poor.
- 4) The Peacemakers faced problems and pressure from the people at home.

Future Problems

- 1) Europe couldn't recover properly while countries like Germany remained poor.
- 2) Self determination would be difficult in new countries like Poland and Czechoslovakia where many people from different nationalities had been thrown together as an artificial country.
- 3) German resentment would lead to trouble in the future.
- 4) Without Germany, Russia or USA in the League of Nations, it would be hard to keep the peace.



This cartoon by Will Dyson was published in a British newspaper in 1919. The 'Big Four' are seen leaving Versailles. Dyson shows Orlando, the Italian prime minister, as well as Lloyd George (at the back), and Wilson (far right), while Clemenceau, the prime minister of France (in front) stops as he hears a child weeping. The child represents 'the class of 1940'. Dyson thought that the terms of the Versailles would lead to further war in 1940. He was wrong by only four months!

AFTER 1919: DATES LIST

28 Jun 1919	Treaty of Versailles signed.
19 Feb 1920	US Senate refuses to sign the Treaty of Versailles.
17 Mar 1920	Kapp Putsch (rebellion) in Germany, against the peace treaty, it fails.
6 Apr 1920	French troops invade Ruhr in Germany after the German govt had sent troops into the Rhineland to stop rioting.
8 Mar 1921	French, British and Belgian troops invade the Ruhr to force Germany to agree to reparations.
11 Jan 1923	French and Belgian troops invade the Ruhr to force Germany to pay reparations.
9 Apr 1924	Dawes Plan: gives Germany longer to pay reparations, and grants huge loans to get the German economy going.
16 Oct 1925	Locarno Pact: peace agreement between Fr., Br., Belgium, Italy & Germany.
8 Sep 1926	Germany admitted to the League of Nations.
27 Aug 1928	Kellogg-Briand Pact: 65 nations (inc. Fr/Br/USA/Ger) promise to abolish war.
7 Jun 1929	The Young Plan reduces reparations.
9 Jul 1932	Lausanne Agreement: USA, France and Britain suspend reparations payments.

The League of Nations

INTRODUCTION

The League of Nations was set up because President Wilson wanted this more than anything else. He wanted the League to be a kind of 'world parliament', where nations would sort out their arguments. He hoped this would **stop wars**. But Wilson wanted to do more than just stop war; he wanted to make the world a better place. He wanted the League to do things to **improve people's lives and jobs**. He wanted to improve public health, and to end slavery.

Wilson also hoped that the League would persuade the nations to agree to **disarmament** – to put down their weapons. That would make war impossible.

Finally, Wilson thought that the League of Nations could **enforce the Treaty of Versailles**, and persuade countries to keep the promises they had made.

REVISE:

FOUR AIMS OF THE LEAGUE [memory word: SIDE]

1. **S**top war – (Article 10 of the Covenant = 'collective security')
2. **I**mprove people's lives and Jobs – Encourage co-operation in trade/
Economic and social agencies.
3. **D**isarmament
4. **E**nforce the Treaty of Versailles

League's Powers:

1. **Covenant** - was the rule book of the League of Nations (in the League's Covenant, especially Article 10, all members had *promised* to keep the peace).
2. **Condemnation** (the League could *tell* a country it was doing wrong).
3. **Arbitration** (the League could *offer* to decide between two countries).
4. **Sanctions** (*stopping trade*).

The League's powers were weak:

- Moral condemnation was just ignored by powerful nations.
- Theoretically, the League was allowed to use military force, but **the League did not have an army** of its own – so if a country ignored it, in the end, there was nothing the League could do.
- People found ways round sanctions. Trade sanctions damaged the countries of the League as well as the country that had gone to war.

Cartoon below shows the League's 'powers' were little more than going 'tut-tut'.

Organisation of the League

ASSEMBLY

The League's main meeting, held once a year.
All League nations could attend.
Decisions only by unanimous vote.

COUNCIL

Met 4-5 times a year and in crises to solve international disputes.
5 permanent members
(Br, Fr, It, Jap & Ger after 1926).
Permanent members had a veto.

SECRETARIAT was supposed to organise the League, but failed.

Conference of Ambassadors

Informal meetings of the more important countries.
Not part of the League, but often made decisions.

THE AGENCIES AND COMMISSIONS

COURT OF INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE

15 judges meeting at the Hague in the Netherlands.
Gave decisions on, e.g., fishing and shipping disputes.
Only made decisions when asked.
Had no power to enforce decisions.

SLAVERY COMMISSION

To abolish slavery.

HEALTH COMMITTEE

To improve public health world-wide.

MANDATES COMMISSION

Made sure that League countries were ruling the mandates properly.
Administered League-controlled areas such as the Saar and Danzig.

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION

Met once a year.
Invited government, employers and workers representatives.
To improve working conditions.

REFUGEES COMMITTEE

To help refugees and disaster victims.

Weaknesses of the organisation of the League of Nations

- The League's organisation was a muddle.
- The different parts of the League were supposed to act together; but in a crisis, no-one could agree.
- The Assembly ONLY met once a year. Its main problem was that decisions had to be unanimous, which was very difficult to achieve and made it very hard to get anything done. However, the council members were not the most powerful countries in the world, and were not prepared to use their armies. Also sometimes council members were involved in the trouble.
- The Secretariat was too small to handle the vast work of the League. It was supposed to co-ordinate the different functions of the League but with too few secretaries to do the work it was slow and inefficient
- The Court of Justice had no powers to make a country act. It could advise on international law and arbitrate in disputes, but had no power to enforce its decisions. Arbitration only worked if both sides agreed.

Membership of the League.

Forty-two countries joined the League at the start. In the 1930s about **60 countries were members**. This made the League seem strong.

However, **the most powerful countries in the world were not members**. The USA *did not want* to join. The Russians *refused* to join – they were Communists and hated Britain and France. Germany *was not allowed* to join. Without these three big powers, the League was weak.

Britain and France were the main members, helped by Italy and Japan; they were quite powerful countries.

America Pulls Out

But when Wilson got back home to the United States, the American Senate refused to join the League.

Americans did not want to get dragged into other countries' problems. This damaged the League a lot



↑ Source B

'The Gap in the Bridge' – a British cartoon of 1919 – shows America refusing to join the League.

Reasons why the USA never became a member:

- 1) The people of America hadn't liked the Treaty of Versailles and refused to accept it. They thought the League of Nations was connected to it.
- 2) They believed it would be too expensive – many people wanted to stay out of Europe, and wanted only to worry about USA affairs. This attitude was called isolationism.
- 3) Many thought that all people should be free under democracy and weren't willing to be dragged into wars to help countries like Britain and France to keep undemocratic colonies.
- 4) Wilson's political enemies wanted to make him unpopular and get rid of him.

Was the League successful in the 1920s? (SUCCESSES)

- **SILESIA 1921**

The Treaty of Versailles had given the people of Upper Silesia the right to have a referendum on whether they wanted to be part of Germany or part of Poland. In this referendum, 700,000 voted for Germany and 500,000 for Poland. This close result resulted in rioting between those who expected Silesia to be made part of Germany and those who wanted to be part of Poland. The League was asked to settle this dispute. After a six-week inquiry, the League decided to split Upper Silesia between Germany and Poland. The League's decision was accepted by both countries and by the people in Upper Silesia.

- **AALAND ISLANDS 1921**

These islands are near enough equal distant between Finland and Sweden. They had traditionally belonged to Finland but most of the islanders wanted to be governed by Sweden. Neither Sweden nor Finland could come to a decision as to who owned the islands and in 1921 they asked the League to adjudicate. The League's decision was that they should remain with Finland but that no weapons should ever be kept there. Both countries accepted the decision and it remains in force to this day.

- **MOSUL 1924**

The League resolved a dispute between the [Kingdom of Iraq](#) and the [Republic of Turkey](#) over the control of the former Ottoman province of [Mosul](#). According to the British, who were awarded a League of Nations [A-mandate over Iraq](#) in 1920 and therefore represented Iraq in its foreign affairs, Mosul belonged to Iraq; on the other hand, the new Turkish republic claimed the province as part of its historic [heartland](#). A League of Nations' Commission was sent to the region in 1924 to study the case and found that the people of Mosul did not want to be part of Turkey or Iraq but if they had to choose would pick Iraq. The League Council adopted the recommendation and it decided on 16 December 1925 to award Mosul to Iraq. Turkey accepted this decision.

- **Greece and Bulgaria (1925)**



- **Source A**

A British cartoon of 1925 shows Greece and Bulgaria fighting – like Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-dee in the story *Alice in Wonderland*. The League, like the dove of peace, stops the fight.

Both these nations have a common border. In 1925, sentries patrolling this border fired on one another and a Greek soldier was killed. The Greek army invaded Bulgaria as a result. The Bulgarians asked the League for help and the League ordered both armies to stop fighting and that the Greeks should pull out of Bulgaria. The League then sent experts to the area and decided that Greece was to blame and fined her £45,000. Both nations accepted the decision.

- **Austria Hungary (1922-1923)**

In 1922-3 Austria and Hungary faced bankruptcy. Their economies had not recovered after the war, and now burdened with reparations payments; it seemed that they would simply collapse. The League arranged international loans for the two countries, sending commissioners to supervise how the money was spent. In effect, the League took over the economic management of the two countries. With this help, both Austria and Hungary were able to begin economic recovery.

- **Kellogg-Briand Pact, 1928**

The pact was signed by 23 nations and supported by 65, to outlaw war and to solve all disputes by peaceful means. This marked a high point in international relations and the world appeared a safer place.

SUMMARY

SIX SUCCESSES OF THE LEAGUE IN THE 1920s **[memory word: SAMBOK]**

1. **Silesia, 1921** – Germany and Poland agreed to partition after a plebiscite.
2. **Aaland Islands, 1921** – said the islands should belong to Finland; Sweden and Finland agreed.
3. **Mosul, 1924** – the Turks demanded Mosul, Iraq. The League supported Iraq; Turkey agreed.
4. **Bulgaria, 1925** – Greece invaded Bulgaria, but withdrew when Bulgaria appealed to the League.
5. **Austria and Hungary** – League assisted with their economic recovery.
6. **Kellogg-Briand Pact, 1928** – signed by 23 nations and supported by 65, to outlaw war.

SIX FAILURES OF THE LEAGUE IN THE 1920s

• **VILNA 1920**

Many years before 1920, Vilna had been taken over by Russia. Historically, Vilna had been the capital of Lithuania when the state had existed in the Middle Ages. After World War One, Lithuania had been re-established and Vilna seemed the natural choice for its capital.

However, by 1920, 30% of the population was from Poland with Lithuanians only making up 2% of the city's population. In 1920, the Poles seized Vilna. Lithuania asked for League help, but the Poles could not be persuaded to leave the city. Vilna stayed in Polish hands until the outbreak of World War Two. The use of force by the Poles had won.

• **INVASION OF THE RUHR 1923**

The Treaty of Versailles had ordered Weimar Germany to pay reparations for war damages. These could either be paid in money or in kind (goods to the value of a set amount). In 1922, the Germans failed to pay an instalment. They claimed that they simply could not rather than did not want to. The Allies refused to accept this and the anti-German feeling at this time was still strong. Both the French and the Belgium's believed that some form of strong action was needed to 'teach Germany a lesson'.

In 1923, contrary to League rules, the French and the Belgium's invaded the Ruhr – Germany's most important industrial zone. Within Europe, France was seen as a senior League member – like Britain – and the anti-German feeling that was felt throughout Europe allowed both France and Belgium to break their own rules as were introduced by the League. Here were two League members clearly breaking League rules and nothing was done about it.

For the League to enforce its will, it needed the support of its major backers in Europe, Britain and France. Yet France was one of the invaders and Britain was a major supporter of her. To other nations, it seemed that if you wanted to break League rules, you could. Few countries criticised what France and Belgium did. But the example they set for others in future years was obvious. The League clearly failed on this occasion, primarily because it was seen to be involved in breaking its own rules.

- **MEMEL 1923**

Memel was/is a port in Lithuania. Most people who lived in Memel were Lithuanians and, therefore, the government of Lithuania believed that the port should be governed by it. However, the Treaty of Versailles had put Memel and the land surrounding the port under the control of the League. For three years, a French general acted as a governor of the port but in 1923 the Lithuanians invaded the port. The League intervened and gave the area surrounding Memel to Lithuania but they made the port an "international zone". Although Lithuania agreed to this decision, here the League was responding in a positive way to Lithuanians who had used force.

- **Corfu, 1923**

The Dispute:

An Italian general was killed while he was doing some work for the League in Greece. The Italian leader Mussolini was angry with the Greeks. He invaded the Greek island of Corfu. The Greeks asked the League to help.

What the League did:

The Council of the League met. It condemned Mussolini, and told him to leave Corfu. It told the Greeks to give some money to the League.

What happened?

Mussolini refused to accept its decision. He refused to leave Corfu.

The League changed its decision. It told Greece to apologise to Mussolini, and to pay the money to Italy.

The Greeks did as the League said. Then Mussolini gave Corfu back to Greece.

- **Other treaties (Geneva Protocol – 1924)**

Britain and France drew up the Geneva Protocol in 1924, which said that if two members were in dispute they would have to ask the League to sort out the disagreement and they would have to accept the Council's decision. They hoped this would strengthen the League. But before the plan could be put into effect there was a general election in Britain. The new Conservative government refused to sign the Protocol, worried that Britain would be forced to agree to something that was not in its own interests. So the Protocol, which had meant to strengthen the League, in fact weakened it.

- **Disarmament in the 1920s**

In the 1920s, the League largely failed in bringing about disarmament. At the Washington Conference in 1921 the USA, Japan, Britain and France agreed to limit the size of their navies, but that was as far as disarmament ever got. In 1923, the League's first attempt at a disarmament treaty was

accepted by France and other nations, but was rejected by Britain because it would tie it to defending other countries. In 1926, plans were finally made for a disarmament conference, but took five years even to agree a 'draft convention' to focus on.

SUMMARY

SIX FAILURES OF THE LEAGUE IN THE 1920s **[memory word: VIMCOD]**

1. **V**ilna, 1920 – Poland refused the League orders to withdraw from Vilna.
2. **I**nvasion of the Ruhr, 1923 – by France; the League was not even consulted, and Britain disagreed.
3. **M**emel, 1923 – The League tried unsuccessfully to make the Lithuanians leave.
4. **C**orfu, 1923 – General Tellini murdered, so Italy occupied Corfu. The Conference of Ambassadors overruled the League's order to Mussolini to leave – forced Greece to pay compensation to Italy.
5. **O**ther Treaties: Washington, 1921/ Dawes Plan, 1924/ Locarno Pact, 1925/ The Geneva Protocol, 1924 (to support the League of Nations) failed because Britain refused to sign it.
6. **D**isarmament – Britain objected to the 1923 conference/ 1932-1934 conference was wrecked when Hitler demanded parity with France.

How did the League of Nations work for a better world?

The League of Nations had set itself a wider task than simply waiting for disputes and hoping to solve them. Through its agencies, the League aimed to fight poverty, disease and injustice all over the world.

Refugees

The League did tremendous work in getting refugees and former prisoners of war back to their homelands. It is estimated that in the first few years after the war about 400,000 prisoners were returned to their homes by the League's agencies.

When a refugee crisis hit Turkey in 1922, hundreds of thousands of people had to be housed in refugee camps. The League acted quickly to stamp out cholera, smallpox and dysentery in the camps.

Working conditions

The International Labour Organisation was successful in banning poisonous white lead from paint and in limiting the hours that small children were allowed to work. It also campaigned strongly for employers to improve working conditions generally. It introduced a resolution for a maximum 48-hour week and 8 hour day, but only a minority of members adopted it because they thought it would raise costs in their own home industries.

Health

The Health Committee, which later became the World Health Organisation, worked hard to defeat the dreadful disease leprosy. It started the global campaign to exterminate mosquitoes, which greatly reduced cases of malaria and yellow fever in later decades. Even Russia, which was otherwise opposed to the League, used the Health Committee to advise it on preventing plague in Siberia.

Transport

The League made recommendations on marking shipping lanes and produced an international highway code for road users.

Social problems

The League blacklisted four large German, Dutch, French and Swiss companies, which were involved in the illegal drug trade. It brought about the freeing of slaves in British-owned Sierra Leone. It organised raids against slave owners and traders in Burma. It challenged the use of forced labour to build the Tanganyika railway in Africa, where the death rate among African workers was a staggering 50%. League pressure brought this down to 4% which they said was 'a much more acceptable figure.'

Even in areas where it could not remove social injustice the League kept careful records of what was going on and provided information on problems such as drug trafficking, prostitution and slavery.

Limitations

Although the League had considerable humanitarian successes, its promises to improve conditions for workers, to stop drug trafficking, help trade and disease could be regarded as over ambitious! While the special commissions were very effective in some areas and had many positive results, they did have some limitations outlined below:

- **Health Committee** – disease would always be a problem. Each area and each community presented its own problems which only time and a great deal of money could solve.
- **International Labour Organisation** – it was difficult to ensure all countries and companies complied with the new rules and regulations. Big business was not always pleased with government interference, and the economic instability in Europe and isolation of the USA meant that far reaching changes were restricted.
- **Slavery Commission** – approaching slavery as an open issue forced it 'underground' as people increasingly began to be traded on the black market.
- **Commission for Refugees** – racism and animosity remained a problem in many countries, and success in this area was dependent on success in all other areas of the League; this made lasting progress difficult.

TWO FAILURES OF THE LEAGUE IN THE 1930s

The Manchurian Crisis 1931



Since 1900 Japan's economy and population had been growing rapidly. By the 1920s Japan was a major power.

- It had a very powerful army and navy.
- It had a strong industry, exporting goods to the USA and China in particular.
- It had a growing empire which included the Korean peninsula.

The Depression hit Japan badly. China and USA put up tariffs (trade barriers) against Japanese goods. The collapse of the American market put the Japanese market in crisis. Without this trade Japan could not feed its people. Army leaders wanted to solve this problem by building up a Japanese empire by force.

An opportunity to expand came in 1931. The Japanese army controlled the South Manchurian Railway. This railway was built by the Japanese – it carried Japanese goods into Manchuria and China and brought food and raw materials such as iron, coal and timber back to Japan. In September 1931 they claimed that Chinese soldiers had sabotaged the railway. In retaliation, they overran Manchuria and threw out all Chinese forces. In February they set up a puppet government in Manchuria or Manchukuo as they called it – which did exactly what the Japanese army told it to do. Later in 1932 Japanese aeroplanes bombed Shanghai. China appealed to the League of Nations. Japan claimed it was not invading as an aggressor, but simply settling a local difficulty. Japan was a leading member of the League – it needed careful handling.

There was now a long delay. The League's officials sailed round the world to assess the situation in Manchuria for themselves. It was now September 1932 – a full year after the invasion – before they presented their report which stated that Japan had acted unlawfully and Manchuria should be returned to the Chinese.

However, in February 1933, instead of withdrawing from Manchuria the Japanese announced that they intended to invade more of China which they claimed was necessary in self defence. On 24th February the report was approved by 42 votes to 1 in the Assembly. Only Japan voted against. Japan resigned from the League on 27th March 1933 and invaded Jehol one week later.

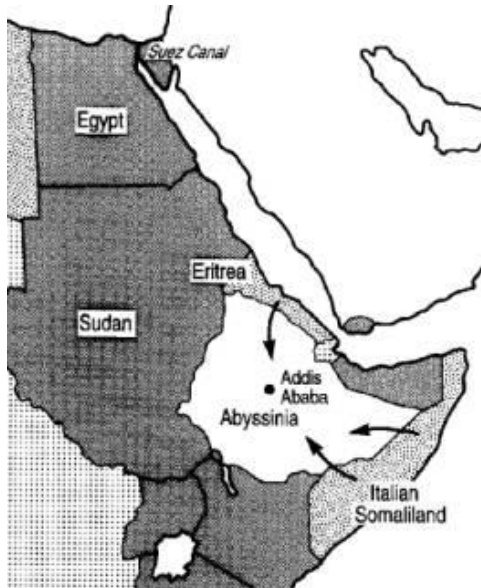
The League was powerless. It discussed economic sanctions, but without the USA, Japan's main trading partner, they would be meaningless. Britain seemed more interested in keeping up good relations with Japan than in agreeing to sanctions. The league discussed banning arms sales to Japan, but member countries could not agree. They were worried that Japan would retaliate and the war would escalate. Britain or France would not risk their navies or armies in a war with Japan. Only USA and USSR would have had the resources to remove the Japanese from Manchuria and they were not members of the League. This incident showed the League was powerless if a strong nation decided to pursue an aggressive policy and invade its neighbours. Japan had got away with blatant aggression. Hitler and Mussolini looked on with interest. They would both follow Japan's example.



▪ **Source A**

A British cartoon of 1933 shows Japan trampling all over the League, whilst Britain powders her nose. Other cartoons made the same point.

Italian invasion of Abyssinia - 1935



Like other nations, Italy was hit badly by the Great Depression. When unemployment rose, Mussolini turned to foreign adventures to distract the Italian people from the troubles at home. Abyssinia was almost the only part of Africa not under European control and was located next to the Italian colonies of Eritrea and Somaliland.

Italy had attempted to conquer Abyssinia before and one of Mussolini's aims was to avenge the humiliation suffered by the Italians at the Battle of Adowa (1896). In December 1934 a clash between Italian and Abyssinian troops at the oasis of Wal Wal gave Mussolini the excuse he needed. The League intervened but tension increased.

Everything depended on the attitude of Britain and France. If they were determined enough, Mussolini might be forced to back down. However, they needed Mussolini's friendship because they saw him as a potential ally against Germany.

In January 1935, the French foreign minister met Mussolini in Rome. A number of secret agreements were made, some of which concerned Abyssinia. Mussolini interpreted France's approach as an indication that he could do as he liked in Abyssinia. He assumed that Britain and France both major colonial powers themselves would not object to Italy acquiring another African colony. There was surprise when Britain tried to warn Mussolini off from invading Abyssinia. In September 1935, Sir Samuel Hoare made a vigorous speech to the Assembly of the League calling for collective resistance to any Italian aggression.

Despite warnings, Mussolini commenced invasion on 3rd October 1935. The Abyssinian forces stood little chance against the modern Italian army. At first, it seemed the League would take strong action that Hoare demanded. The

League condemned Italy as an aggressor and imposed sanctions, by which members were forbidden to trade with Italy. Crucially, the sanctions were not extended to basic war materials such as coal, iron and oil. Even Mussolini later admitted that this would have stopped the invasion within a week. But Britain and France were unwilling to risk provoking Mussolini more than was necessary. As a result, they kept the Suez Canal open to the Italians allowing Mussolini to supply his armies in Abyssinia.

The Hoare-Laval plan

Behind the scenes, Britain and France undermined the apparently tough actions of the League. Desperate for a settlement with Italy, Hoare and Laval met in December and agreed a plan that was designed to bring the invasion to an end. Abyssinia would be split up, with Italy gaining much of the fertile lands in the north and south of the country. Another huge area in the south would be reserved for Italian expansion and settlement. Abyssinia would be reduced to half its original size, and limited to the barren mountainous region. The only compensation for Abyssinia would be a narrow strip of land providing access to the Red Sea – the so called 'corridor for camels'.

This plan was never put to Italy. Details were leaked to the press, causing a public outcry. Hoare and Laval were forced to resign. Everyone now knew that Britain and France had been talking tough, but were not prepared to back up their threats with action. Just the opposite – they seemed willing to reward Mussolini for his aggression.

The end of the League of Nations

The League was completely powerless when its most important members would not take effective action. Abyssinia was left helpless against the Italians who were using modern weapons such as bombers, tanks and poison gas against Abyssinian troops often armed only with spears. On 5th May 1936 Italian troops entered the Abyssinian capital Addis Adaba in triumph.

The Abyssinian emperor Haile Selassie fled the country. He travelled to Geneva, where on 30th June he addressed the Assembly protesting against the failure of the League to deal with the invasion. His speech marked the end of the League's existence as an important international organisation. Nobody took it seriously in future and it played no significant part in the events which from 1936 rushed its members to another war.

If the British and French had hoped that their handling of the Abyssinian crisis would help strengthen their position against Hitler they were soon proved very wrong. In November 1936 Mussolini and Hitler signed an agreement of their own called the Rome – Berlin axis.

SUMMARY

Why the League Failed?

The League failed in Manchuria and Abyssinia because it **WAS DUMB!**

Weak – the League's 'powers' were little more than going 'tut-tut'. Sanctions did not work. It had no army.

America – the strongest nation in the world never joined.

Structure – the League was muddled, so it took ages to do anything. Members couldn't agree – but decisions had to be unanimous. This paralysed the League.

Depression – the world-wide Depression made countries try to get more land and power. They were worried about themselves, not about world peace.

Unsuccessful – the more the League failed, the less people trusted it. In the end, everybody just ignored it.

Members – the League's main members let it down. Italy and Japan betrayed the League. France and Britain did nothing to help it.

Big bullies – in the 1920s, the League had dealt with weak countries. In the 1930s, powerful countries like Germany, Italy and Japan attacked weaker countries. They were too strong for the League to stop them.

How far did the Depression make the work of the League more difficult?

- **Global economic crisis**

The Great Depression was sparked off by the Wall Street Crash – the collapse of the US stock market – in October 1929. The slump in American share prices was a disaster not just for America, but for the world economy. The wave of bankruptcies that followed the crash sent the US economy into a downward spiral that had a deep impact on world trade. Hardly a country in the world remained unaffected. The only exception was the Soviet Union, whose economy was not dependent on trade with other nations. The slump in world trade made all other nations poorer, and unemployment soared as industries ground to a halt.

Although this was an economic crisis, it soon had harmful political effects, which impacted on the work of the League of Nations. The Great Depression did much to destroy the goodwill on which the League had depended in the 1920s. The 1930s brought increasing tension and conflict, as nations struggled to cope with the effects of the crash. Their failure to find peaceful ways of doing this culminated in the Second World War.

- **Unemployment**

Millions of workers lost their jobs because of the crash. The unemployed demanded action from the politicians who had little idea how to handle the situation. Their first reaction was to assume that the slump was temporary and would soon correct itself. Everywhere governments became uncertain, unstable and preoccupied with solving their own problems than solving international difficulties.

- **Extremism**

In some countries, notably Germany, the Depression helped extremist political parties come to power. Voters were tempted to follow any politician who offered a solution to unemployment. They felt that democracy had failed them. These extreme parties were often nationalist – they had a hatred of other nations and were concerned with their own national interests. Where such parties came to power, they often showed an unwillingness to accept international agreements and a willingness to use force to achieve their aims. The League of Nations found it almost impossible to deal with the more violent international climate of the 1930s, as nations simply ignored its authority.

- **Militarism**

Extremist leaders looked to foreign policy success to distract the attention of their people from troubles at home. Dictators re-armed their countries and prepared their populations for war. Political parties like the Fascists in Italy and the Nazis in Germany had their own armies – they even had their own uniforms. In these countries ordinary life was militarised. People who did not accept party discipline were punished. Workers lost their rights. Opposition was not tolerated. Women and children as well as men were expected to join party organisations. Militarism in a powerful country posed a threat to other countries. Sooner or later the dictator would use their power. Japan and Italy's militarism did much to destroy international peace in 1930s.

How the Depression affected the League of Nations

- **Britain and France** no longer wished to sort out international disputes that would cost them money and could further damage their trade.
- Desperate people suffering terrible economic hardship increasingly turned to leaders offering radical solution. This led to the rise of **militaristic fascist governments**.
- There was **less international co-operation**. The USA and other nations looked to take care of themselves instead of worrying about world peace and humanitarian issues.

The Failure of the League of Nations

The League of Nations had failed to prevent war or solve international disputes – it's important to see why the idea didn't work.

The League didn't achieve its original aims

- 1) To prevent aggression
- 2) To encourage co-operation
- 3) To work towards disarmament
- 4) To prevent a major war breaking out again.

The League did have some success in improving the lives of ordinary people around the world – combating slavery and working conditions – but this wasn't its main purpose.

Opinions in DEFENCE of the League of Nations

- 1) Once the USA pulled out, Britain and France had a very difficult task – when they weren't that strong themselves. You cannot enforce sanctions if no one else wants to do it.
- 2) The Depression made the political situation tougher worldwide - it was nobody's fault.
- 3) No organisation could have stopped leaders like Mussolini or Hitler peacefully. Italy and Germany were members themselves, and could have worked harder for the League instead of against it. The same was true of Japan.
- 4) The League of Nations had to defend a settlement made after World War One which many of them thought was unfair.

Opinions AGAINST the League of Nations

- 1) The Manchurian crisis was the turning point - The League should have resisted Japan.
- 2) Too many members didn't keep to the rules. When they were attacked for it, they simply left the League, e.g. Germany and Japan 1933, Italy 1937.
- 3) Britain and France didn't lead strongly, and were often slow to do things.
- 4) Members of the League who could have opposed aggression didn't want to risk a war.

- 5) Ambitious members like Hitler and Mussolini weren't dealt with strongly enough.
- 6) A US President had invented the idea but the USA didn't even join.
- 7) Instead of co-operation, the League allowed the old system of Alliances to creep back – all the main members were guilty of making secret alliances.

PROS	CONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early minor successes in preserving peace between minor powers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rise of dictators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Europe re-building and aiding refugees of the war 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manchurian crisis 1931
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving health and labour conditions around the world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure of disarmament conference 1932
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USA support with loans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Germany & Japan leave 1933
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kellogg-Briand Pact 1928 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abyssinia crisis 1935
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided the groundwork for the United Nations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rome – Berlin Axis 1936
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • German aggression
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Italy leaves 1937
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USSR leaves 1939
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spanish Civil War 1936-9
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Powerless to prevent World War II

For and against – now you be the judge...

You need to know the evidence for both sides. Make sure you know the League's original aims and can give your own verdict on whether the League can be blamed for its problems, or whether they were unavoidable.....

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Road to WW2

Hitler's aims and actions

In January 1933, Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany and immediately began to challenge the Treaty of Versailles and adapt an aggressive foreign policy, which led to war. Some historians argue that Britain and France were to blame for the Second World War because they did not stand up to Hitler.

Hitler had three aims: DOG

1. To defeat Communism

The Nazis were Fascists: the exact opposite of the Communists who ruled Russia. Hitler was determined to destroy Communism, and this meant a war with Russia

2. To overturn the Treaty of Versailles

The Germans hated it, especially:

- Tiny armed forces,
- Rhineland demilitarised,
- *Anschluss* with Austria forbidden,
- Germans forced to live in Czechoslovakia (the Sudetenland) and Poland (including Danzig).

The Treaty was a constant reminder to the Germans of their humiliation in World War I. Hitler did not believe that the German army had lost the war, and he was determined to make Germany great again.

3. To gain more territory

The German population was growing. Hitler said that the German nation needed more *Lebensraum* ('living space'). He was determined to get *Lebensraum* by conquering land in Eastern Europe.

4. To defeat Communism

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Six Steps to War

1 CONSCRIPTION & RE-ARMAMENT

Hitler began to build up his armed forces. In 1935 he introduced conscription (calling up men to the army). This broke the Treaty of Versailles, but Britain and France let him get away with it.

2 RHINELAND

Hitler invaded the Rhineland on 7 March 1936. This broke the Treaty of Versailles. It was a bluff – the German army had only 22,000 soldiers and had orders to retreat if they met any resistance. But once again, Britain and France did nothing.

3 AUSTRIA

In 1938, Hitler took over Austria. First, Hitler encouraged the Austrian Nazis to demand union with Germany. Then Hitler invaded Austria. This broke the Treaty of Versailles, but Britain and France did nothing.

4 MUNICH

In 1938, Hitler tried to take over the Sudetenland. First, Hitler encouraged the Sudeten Nazis to demand union with Germany. Then, Hitler made plans to invade Czechoslovakia.

Neville Chamberlain appeased Hitler. At Munich, on 29 September 1938, Britain and France gave Hitler the Sudetenland.

5 CZECHOSLOVAKIA

In March 1939, Hitler's troops marched into the rest of Czechoslovakia. This, for most British people, was the time when they realised that the only thing that would stop Hitler was a war.

6 USSR/NAZI PACT & POLAND

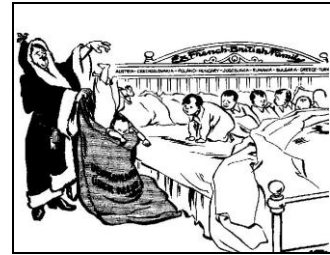
In 1939, Hitler tried to take over Poland. First, the Germans in Danzig demanded union with Germany. Then, Hitler threatened war.

Chamberlain promised the Poles that Britain would support them if Germany attacked Poland.

In August 1939, Hitler made a secret treaty with Russia. He thought this would stop Britain & France helping Poland.

On 1 September 1939, Hitler invaded Poland.

On 3 September 1939, Chamberlain declared war on Germany.



↑ Source D

This cartoon from 1938 shows Hitler as Santa, popping into his sack, one-by-one, little countries – who had got into bed with the 'French-British family'. His sack says: *Deutschland Uber Alles* ('Germany over all').



↑ Source E

This cartoon from 1938 shows Hitler as a poacher, stealing Austria. Mussolini is shown as a game-keeper. 'I never heard a shot, Adolf', he is saying.

Chamberlain and appeasement

During the 1930s, Britain and France followed a policy of **appeasement** [Appeasement: *The policy of pacifying an aggressor through giving in to their demands, thus maintaining peace.*] - They gave Hitler what he wanted in order to keep the peace. So why did Britain and France keep on giving in to Hitler's demands?

Why appeasement?



Chamberlain believed the Munich Agreement would appease Hitler

As the League of Nations crumbled, politicians turned to a new way to keep the peace - appeasement. This was the policy of giving Hitler what he wanted to stop him from going to war. It was based on the idea that **what Hitler wanted was reasonable** and, when his reasonable demands had been satisfied, he would stop.

Although historians recognise appeasement in the actions of Britain and France before 1938, the Sudeten Crisis of 1938 is the key example of appeasement in action. Neville Chamberlain was the British prime minister who believed in appeasement.

In 1938, Germans living in the border areas of Czechoslovakia (the Sudetenland) started to demand a union with Hitler's Germany. The Czechs refused. Hitler threatened war. On 30 September, in the Munich Agreement - without asking Czechoslovakia - Britain and France **gave** the Sudetenland to Germany.

The story of the Sudetenland



12-13 September 1938:

- Hitler encourages Konrad Henlein, leader of the Sudeten Nazis, to rebel, and demands a union with Germany.
- When the Czech government declares martial law, Hitler threatens war.



15 September 1938:

- Chamberlain goes to see Hitler at Berchtesgaden.
- Without consulting Czechoslovakia, he promises to give Hitler all the areas where more than 50 per cent of the population is German. Then he persuades France to agree.



22-23 September 1938:

- Chamberlain goes to Bad Godesberg to tell Hitler about the decision, but Hitler now demands ALL the Sudetenland. Chamberlain refuses; it looks like war.

- Chamberlain calls the crisis 'a quarrel in a faraway country, between people of whom we know nothing'.



30 September 1938:

- At Munich, France and Britain agree to give Hitler the Sudetenland.
- Chamberlain waves 'a piece of paper' with Hitler's statement that he does not want to go to war. German troops march into the Sudetenland, and are welcomed as heroes.

Reasons for appeasement

There were many reasons why Chamberlain appeased Hitler, but here are the main ones:

1. The **British people wanted peace** - they would not have supported a war in 1938.
2. Many of **Hitler's complaints appeared reasonable** at the time - especially about the Treaty of Versailles.
3. **Chamberlain wanted a strong Germany** to serve as a barrier against expansion by communist Russia.
4. **Britain's armed forces were not ready for a war** and they could not have helped Czechoslovakia anyway.
5. **Many people admired Hitler**. In 1938, the American magazine 'Time' declared him 'Man of the Year'.
6. Chamberlain remembered the **slaughter of the First World War**; he thought another war would destroy civilisation.

Appeasement

Why did Britain and France follow a policy of Appeasement?

- At least Hitler is standing up to Communism

Hitler was not the only concern of Britain and its allies. He was not even their main worry. They were concerned about the spread of Communism and particularly about the dangers to world peace posed by Stalin, the new leader in the USSR. Many saw Hitler as a buffer to the threat of spreading Communism.

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- We must not repeat the horrors of the Great War

Both British and French leaders vividly remembered the horrific experiences of the First World War. They wished to avoid another war at almost any cost.

- Hitler is right the treaty of Versailles is unfair

Many felt that the Treaty of Versailles was unfair to Germany. They were convinced that once these wrongs were put right then Germany would become a peaceful nation again.

- Our own economic problems are a higher priority

Britain and France were still suffering from the effects of the Depression. They had large debts and huge unemployment.

- **Britain is not ready for war**

The British government believed that the armed forces were not ready for a war against Hitler.

What was wrong with Appeasement?

- It encouraged Hitler to be aggressive

With hindsight, you can see that each gamble he got away with encouraged him to take a bigger risk.

- **It put too much trust in Hitler's promises**

With hindsight, you can see that Hitler often went back on his promises. Appeasement was based on the mistaken idea that Hitler was trustworthy.

- It allowed Hitler to grow too strong

With hindsight, you can see that Germany was not only recovering lost ground: it was becoming much more powerful than Britain or France.

- It scared the USSR

With hindsight, you can see how the policy alarmed the USSR. Hitler made no secret of his plans to expand eastwards. Appeasement sent the message to the Soviet Union that Britain and France would not stand in Hitler's way.

Verdicts on Appeasement

Nowadays, many people criticise Chamberlain for appeasing Hitler.

In the 1930s, there were some people – most notably Winston Churchill – who opposed his policy.

But at the time, most people thoroughly agreed with Chamberlain, and praised him.



↑ Source C

A British cartoon of 1936. Hitler goose-steps across the 'spineless leaders of democracy'. The first three steps are labelled 'Rearmament', 'Rhineland' and 'Danzig'.



↑ Source D

A British cartoon of 1938 shows Germany crushing Austria. Next in line is Czechoslovakia. At the back, Britain says to France: 'Why should we take a stand about someone pushing someone else when it's all so far away'.

Results of appeasement

Here are the main ones:

- **Czechoslovakia was weakened.** Poland and Hungary took other land.
- **Britain gained a year to build up its armed forces,** but so did Hitler.
- **Hitler decided that Britain and France were afraid of him** and that they would not stop him whatever he did. It encouraged Hitler to be aggressive and put too much trust in Hitler's promises.

- It allowed **Germany** to grow too **strong**. Germany was not only recovering lost ground; it was also becoming much more powerful than Britain or France.
- **It scared Russia** as Hitler made no secret of his plans to expand eastwards. Russia decided that Britain and France would never stand up to Hitler, and that war with Germany was inevitable.
- The people of Britain realised that they had been **duped**, and decided that war was inevitable.
- It improved the **war morale** of the British people, who knew they had done everything possible to avoid war.

End of appeasement

When Hitler marched his troops into Czechoslovakia in March 1939, it became clear that **appeasement** [**Appeasement:** *The policy of pacifying an aggressor through giving in to their demands, thus maintaining peace.*] had failed. Was this the only reason why Chamberlain abandoned appeasement, or were there other factors involved?

Invasion of Czechoslovakia



German troops marched into Czechoslovakia on 15th March 1939

On 15 March 1939, German troops marched into Czechoslovakia. They took over Bohemia, and established a **protectorate** [**Protectorate:** *Any state or territory protected and partially controlled by a stronger one.*] over Slovakia.

Hitler's invasion of Czechoslovakia was the end of appeasement:

- It proved that Hitler had been lying at Munich.
- It showed that Hitler was not just interested in a 'Greater Germany' (the Czechs were not Germans).
- On 17th March, Chamberlain gave a speech saying that he could not trust Hitler not to invade other countries.
- On 31st March, Chamberlain guaranteed to defend Poland if Germany invaded.

Why Chamberlain abandoned appeasement

Chamberlain made the Munich Agreement with Hitler to prevent war, but, in the year after September 1938, there were **six factors** pressurising him to abandon his policy of appeasement.

Two categories of factors

Things happening in Europe	Things happening in Britain
November 1938: Kristallnacht - attacks on the Jews in Germany.	Churchill's speeches: attacked appeasement as "a defeat without a war".
March 1939: Czechoslovakia - Hitler invaded the rest of Czechoslovakia.	October 1938: Oxford by-election - Chamberlain's Conservatives won, but the anti-appeasement candidate got lots of votes.
May 1939: Pact of Steel: an alliance was formed between Germany and Italy to help each other in times of war.	Lack of trust: Britain was building up its armed forces throughout 1938 and 1939.

Revision tip

Familiarise yourself with what lead to Chamberlain abandoning appeasement by thinking **how** each of the **six factors** below influenced him to change his policy. Some suggested:

- **Kristallnacht** proved that the Nazi regime was evil and ought to be resisted.
- The **invasion of Czechoslovakia** proved that Hitler was a liar, and that he did not just want land where Germans lived. It proved that being reasonable did not work, and that Hitler would only be stopped by war.
- The **Pact of Steel** showed that Hitler was planning for war.

- Britain building up its **armed forces** showed that, although Chamberlain had signed the Munich Agreement, he never trusted Hitler.
- The **Oxford by-election** showed that there were many British people who did not agree with appeasing Hitler any more.
- More people agreed with **Churchill's speeches** and appeasement was losing the support of the British people.

The Nazi-Soviet Pact

Britain and Russia

Stalin knew that Hitler's ultimate aim was to attack Russia. In 1939, he invited Lord Halifax, the British Foreign Secretary to go to Russia to discuss an alliance against Germany. Britain refused. The British feared Russian Communism and they believed that the Russian army was too weak to be of any use against Hitler.

In August 1939, with war in Poland looming, the British eventually sent a minor official called Reginald Ranfurly Plunkett-Erle-Drax. He travelled by slow boat, not by plane. He did not have authority to make any decisions, and had to refer every question back to London. The talks dragged on.

The Russians asked if they could send troops into Poland if Hitler invaded. The British refused. The talks broke down.

SUMMARY

AUG 1939: ANGLO-SOVIET TALKS FAIL [memory word: SCAB]

Suspicion – Chamberlain didn't trust Stalin – Communist & dictator. Stalin didn't trust the British [thought they wanted to trick him into war with Germany]. Poland didn't trust USSR.

Choice – If Stalin allied with Britain, he would end up fighting in Poland on Britain's behalf

Hitler was promising half of Poland for doing nothing.

Appeasement – Stalin didn't think Britain would honour its promise to Poland. He thought he would be left fighting Hitler alone.

Britain delayed, Aug 1939 – Britain sent an official (Plunkett-Erle-Drax) to USSR by boat - too slow. An admiral, he was not important enough to make decisions.

Germany and Russia

In August 1939, Hitler sent Ribbentrop, a senior Nazi, to Russia. He offered a Nazi-Soviet alliance – Russia and Germany would not go to war, but would divide Poland between them.

Stalin knew Hitler was lying, but he did not trust the British either – the Munich Agreement had convinced him that Britain and France would never dare to go to war with Hitler.

Stalin had two choices:

- If he made an alliance with Britain, he would end up fighting a war with Hitler over Poland.
- If he made an alliance with Germany, he would get half of Poland, and time to prepare for the coming war with Germany.

He chose the latter. On 23 August 1939, he signed the Pact with Hitler.

SUMMARY

WHY A NAZI-SOVIET PACT [memory word: THUG]

In August 1939 the USSR signed an agreement with Germany.

Time to prepare for war – It gave Russia 18 months to make military preparations.

Hope to gain – Stalin hoped Germany, Britain and France would wear themselves out in a long war.

Unhappy with Britain – Stalin turned to Germany when Britain was too slow.

Germany's Motives – Hitler thought it would make Britain back down over Poland.

What did the West think of the Nazi-Soviet Pact?

Source A:

Below is a David Low cartoon from September 1939 satirising the Nazi-Soviet Pact.



Rendezvous by David Low

Question:

What are the key features of the cartoon and what do they mean?

Answer: The cartoon shows:

1. Hitler and Stalin pretending to like each other.
2. Really they hate each other.

3. A figure (representing Poland) lying dead on the floor between Stalin and Hitler.
4. Both wear guns and military uniforms, and Germany's weapons (on the left) are in the background.
5. Dark clouds all around.

The world was amazed by this alliance of opposites, but, at the time:

- Stalin needed time to re-arm for when Hitler did invade Russia.
- Stalin would have to go to war if he allied with Britain and France, but could have half of Poland without a war if he allied with Hitler - it was an easy choice to make.

It was a marriage of convenience, until Hitler broke his promise and invaded Russia in 1940.

The pact brought war nearer because:

1. It left Britain and France to fight Germany alone, and Hitler did not really believe they would go to war over Poland.
2. It led Britain to sign an alliance with Poland on 25 August 1939, so they could not back down.
3. It encouraged Hitler to recover his nerve.

Who was to blame for causing WW2?

Was Hitler entirely to blame for causing the Second World War? Consider the following four factors that can be attributed to the cause of the war.

- **The Treaty of Versailles** was unfair and made Germany determined to destroy it.
- **The League of Nations** was too weak to keep the peace.
- **Hitler's policies** were aggressive. Hitler went on until there was a war to stop him.
- **The Nazi-Soviet Pact** released Hitler to go to war in 1939.

Four factors in detail

The Treaty of Versailles

Created anger in Germany that made many Germans support Hitler when he promised to destroy the Treaty. Also, it was so unfair that it undermined the confidence of western politicians to resist Hitler's demands, which many of them agreed with.

League of Nations

It was supposed to keep the peace, but it failed. It was too ambitious and badly organised. The group was betrayed by America, Britain and France and it was destroyed by Japan and Italy.

Hitler's policies

It is easy to argue that Hitler's actions pushed a Europe, which was desperate to be reasonable, into war. His invasions of Czechoslovakia and Poland went beyond correcting the mistakes of Versailles.

Nazi-Soviet Pact

Some historians argue that Hitler would not have gone to war in 1939 if he had been faced with fighting Britain and France in the west and Russia and Poland in the east. Stalin gave Hitler the green light for war.

