



# 05

## Cross-regional war: World War Two – Causes I: The failure of collective security

### Key concepts: Consequence

A meeting of the League of Nations Council, Geneva, 1938.

As you read this chapter, consider the following essay questions:

- Examine the reasons why collective security failed to keep the peace in the first half of the 20th century.
- To what extent was the League of Nations 'doomed to fail'?
- Discuss how economic crisis led to international tension in the 20th century.

The causes of World War Two are complex, so we have divided the key themes into separate sections. You have already studied the results of World War One and these can be considered as a long-term factor in causing World War Two. In this chapter we will look at another long-term factor – the failure of collective security in preventing the outbreak of another war. We will also consider the impact of the global economic crisis of the 1930s: the Great Depression. In the next section we will look more specifically at Hitler's policies and the policy of appeasement as a cause of war in Europe. In the last section we will consider the actions of the Japanese government and the response of the international community, particularly the USA, which led to the outbreak of war in the Pacific.

#### Timeline of events 1919–1933

1919	Treaty of Versailles Treaty of St Germain
1920	Establishment of the League of Nations
1922	Treaty of Rapallo between Germany and the USSR
1923	French occupation of the Ruhr
1924	Introduction of the Dawes Plan
1925	Locarno Treaties
1926	Germany admitted to League of Nations
1928	Kellogg–Briand Pact signed
1929	Introduction of the Young Plan Wall Street Crash
1932	Lausanne Conference on reparation payments
1933	Hitler appointed Chancellor of Germany

#### Activity 1

ATL Thinking and self-management skills

Some historians suggest that the settlement at the end of World War One was problematic, and some go further and argue that its terms sowed the seeds for future conflict.

1. Review the criticisms of the Versailles settlement. Identify the states that were:
  - a) defeated and unhappy with the settlement
  - b) victors and unhappy with the settlement
2. Discuss in pairs the following issues with the settlement that might have challenged post-war stability:
  - a) economic issues
  - b) territorial issues
  - c) political issues
  - d) social issues

## The failure of 'collective security'

As we have seen, one of Wilson's Fourteen Points led to the creation of the League of Nations, an organization that sought to prevent another war breaking out between states. Akira Iriye writes:

*It [the League of Nations Covenant] proposed an alternative to the conventional international order, which, Wilson was convinced, had been sustained by force. This had created a dangerous arms race and imperialistic activities abroad. Now military power and expansionism were to be replaced by a rule of law in which 'world public opinion' rather than alliances and armaments would be the key to international order.*

Akira Iriye, *The Globalizing of America 1913–1945* (CUP, 1993), p.68.

In the 1920s and 1930s, the League faced many challenges. Although it was successful in some areas, the overall failure of European states to work collectively through the League in dealing with various international crises was a major cause of World War Two.

## Collective security and the League of Nations

The principle of **collective security** was the idea that peace could be preserved by countries acting together – collectively – to prevent one country attacking another. Collective security was to be made practically possible by the machinery of the League of Nations. When there was a dispute between countries they would refer the issue(s) to the League's Assembly. If that body could not find a resolution, the Council could then apply 'collective security'. This meant that it could first impose moral pressure and then, if this did not work, the Council could impose economic sanctions to force the country that was deemed to be in the wrong to comply with its decisions.

### Activity 2

ATL Communication skills

1. Visit pearsonhotlinks.com, enter the book title or ISBN, and click on weblink 5.1 to watch a video about the League of Nations. Discuss the ideas and motives of Woodrow Wilson in attempting to set up a League of Nations.

## The Covenant of the League of Nations

The League met for the first time in Geneva in December 1920. Its key objective was to keep the peace and avoid future conflict by advising on and settling international disputes. It also aimed to promote disarmament, supervise the mandated territories, and promote international goodwill and cooperation through its various organizations dedicated to social and economic development. The initial membership of the League was 32 Allied states and 12 neutral states; however, by 1926, all ex-enemy states had joined. The USSR was not admitted until 1934, and the USA never joined.

There were 26 articles in the League's Covenant (including amendments made in December 1924), which prescribed when and how the League was to operate.

- Articles 1–7 were concerned with the membership and organization of the League, its Assembly, Council, and Secretariat.
- Articles 8–17 were concerned with the prevention of war.
- Articles 18–21 concerned with treaty obligations and the League's expectations of its member states.
- Article 22 concerned the mandated territories.

- Article 23 concerned humanitarian issues such as labour conditions, health concerns, the trafficking of women, children, drugs, and arms.
- Article 24 concerned the commissions.
- Article 25 promoted the **Red Cross**.
- Article 26 set down how amendments to the Covenant were made.

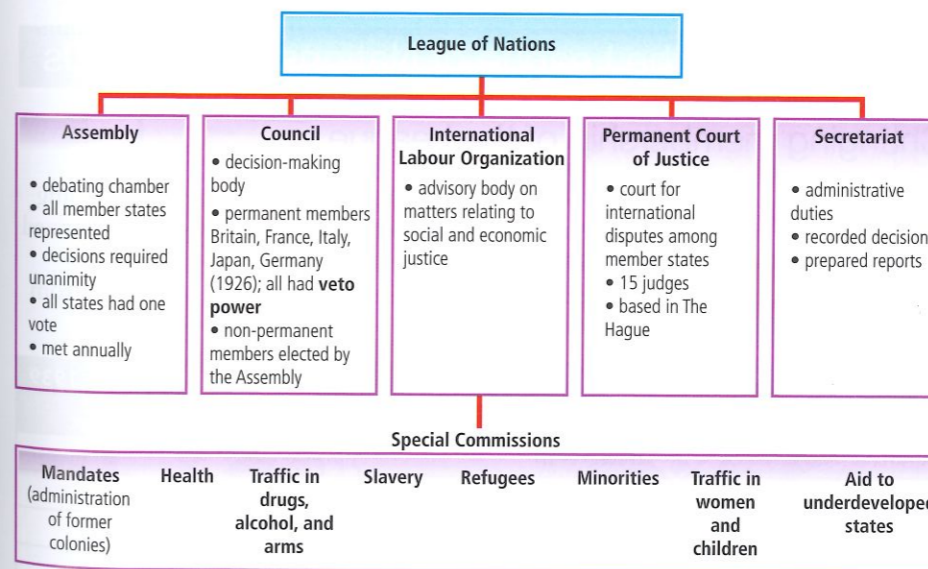
## Dealing with international disputes

It was set down in the Covenant that member states should refer disputes to one of the following:

- the Permanent Court of International Justice
- **arbitration** (having a neutral person or group of people listening to and judging a dispute)
- an investigation or inquiry by the Council.

If member states failed to refer their disputes to the League, or failed to follow its recommendations, the League could then impose economic sanctions, the main tool for the League against aggressors. In the aftermath of World War One, in which the economic blockade of Germany had been effective, this economic weapon appeared to have the potential to be effective in forcing compliance with the League's decisions.

In theory, the League could call for military action as a last resort against an aggressor. Yet the League did not have its own armed forces, and in reality member states did not want to put their sovereign forces under international control. In addition, the Covenant was rather ambiguous as to when and how such armed forces should be used. France had wanted an armed force, or League Army, but Britain had resisted this option. Thus the League lacked military teeth.



### Activity 3

ATL Thinking skills

Look up the League of Nations Covenant on the internet. As you read through the document, consider:

1. What aspects of the Covenant made the League of Nations an organization likely to fulfil its aims of collective security?
2. What aspects of the Covenant weakened the League's ability to deliver collective security?



The League of Nations in session, 1920.

The structure of the League of Nations.

## Activity 4

ATL Communication skills

## Source A

[the League] depended on the goodwill of the nations to work, though it was the absence of goodwill that made it necessary.

Hugh Brogan, *The Penguin History of the USA* (Penguin, 2001), p.480.

## Source B

... successive British governments took care to confine any specific political or military commitments they might make to western Europe, although under article 10 of the League Covenant they had undertaken to 'preserve ... against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all members of the League'.

Ruth Henig, *Versailles and After, 1919-1933* (Routledge, 1995), p.35.

## Source C

The allies had been so impressed by the effect of economic embargoes employed against Germany in the war that economic sanctions were chosen as the League's main weapon. The possibility of military sanctions was admitted, but their extent was left undefined, and they could only ever be applied if a member state agreed to put its own forces at the disposal of the League. In its 20 year life, the League never once sought to apply military sanctions.

T. Morris and D. Murphy, *Europe 1870-1991* (Collins, 2004), p.336.

## Source D

Rival states can be frightened into friendship only by the shadow of some greater danger.

Comment by the British historian A.J.P. Taylor.

1. What potential problems or weaknesses of the League are identified in sources A-D?

## Problems for the League of Nations in the 1920s

## Changing membership of the League

The changing membership of the League reflected the shifting priorities of its leading members, as the more liberal governments of the 1920s became increasingly polarized following the Wall Street Crash and the ensuing Great Depression. As right-wing governments within the League became more aggressive, so the perceived threat from the USSR shifted to the **Axis powers**.

## ACCESSIONS TO AND WITHDRAWALS FROM THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS, 1920-1939

Country	Date of entry	Date of departure
Austria	Dec 1920	Dec 1939*
Ethiopia	Sept 1923	
Ireland	Sept 1923	
Germany	Sept 1926	Oct 1933
Japan	Original member	March 1933
Italy	Original member	Dec 1937
Spain	Original member	May 1939
USSR	Sept 1934	Dec 1939*

\*The Council resolved on 14 December 1939 that Austria and the USSR were no longer members.

## Absence of major powers

The absence of major powers from the League of Nations had a decisive impact on its working and influence; indeed, this is possibly the key reason why the League ultimately failed to prevent another world war.

The most important absent major power was the USA. The League had been the idea of the Americans and had been championed by President Woodrow Wilson. The US Congress, however, was too concerned that membership would drag the Americans into more disputes and conflicts in Europe, hence the country withdrew into isolationism. The USA had played a pivotal role in bringing World War One to an end, but it did not want to play such a central role in the controversial Versailles settlement.

The absence of the USA seriously weakened the potential of the League to use 'collective security' against aggression, for several reasons. First, the world's most powerful economy would have given the League's economic sanctions real weight, but US absence undermined this one essential weapon. Second, without the USA, the make-up of the permanent members (except for Japan) was distinctly European and lacked the appearance of a genuinely 'worldwide' organization. Third, it highlighted that the new organization might be sidelined in favour of old-style agreements and treaties, as this was clearly how the USA was going to secure its future relationships. Finally, these factors meant that the League was primarily led by European powers that were arguably in decline.

## Activity 5

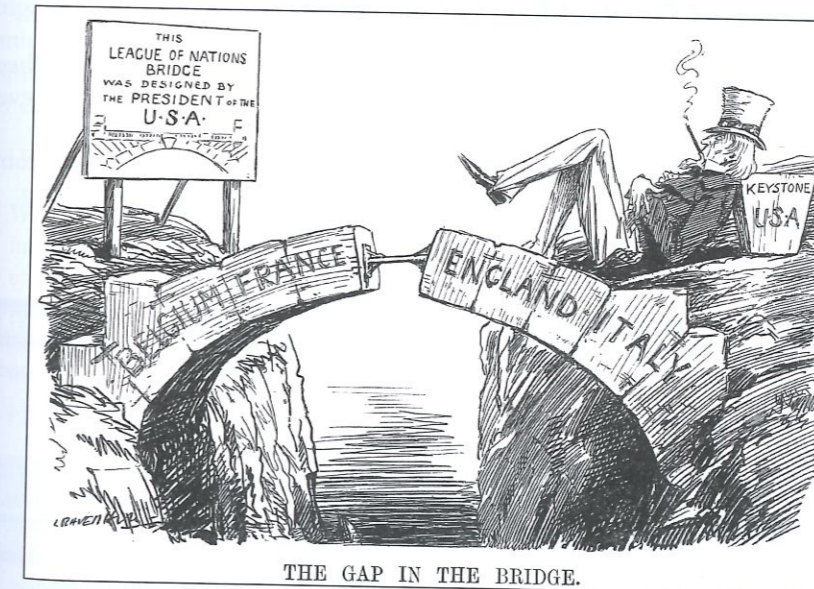
ATL Thinking skills

## Source A

The defeat suffered by Wilsonism in the United States strikes at the very existence of the League of Nations. America's place will remain empty at Geneva, and the two countries that dominate, France and Great Britain, are divided on almost every one of the topics to be discussed.

Marcel Cachin, a French politician, speaking in 1920 about the USA's decision not to join the League of Nations.

## Source B



1. According to Source A, what are the most significant problems for the League of Nations caused by the absence of the USA?
2. What are the views of the cartoonist in Source B concerning the USA's absence from the League of Nations?

British cartoon 'The Gap in the Bridge', first published in *Punch*, December 1919.

## Absence of the USSR

The USSR was excluded from the League of Nations. The newly established Bolshevik government was regarded as a 'pariah state'; indeed, Western powers had invaded Russia during the Russian Civil War (1918–1921), and had joined the 'White' counter-revolutionary forces. As the Bolsheviks consolidated their position in the Soviet Union after winning the civil war, the old powers of Europe looked on with great concern. Afraid that the 'revolution of the **proletariat**' would spread, they felt that it was expedient to isolate the Soviets rather than to embrace them in a new organization designed to prevent conflict.

Yet the exclusion of Russia further weakened the standing of the League, as it could be perceived by the USSR as a 'club for capitalists' – an organization to protect and promote their interests and empires at the expense of the exploited masses. Indeed, Lenin viewed the League as 'a robbers' den to safeguard the unjust spoils of Versailles'.

## Absence of Germany

Germany was initially excluded from the League. This exclusion again undermined the ideals of the League and, perhaps more importantly, suggested that the League was something of a 'victors' club' – the four permanent members of the Council were the victorious Allies. In addition, the exclusion tended to ignore the important fact that Germany remained a strong power at the conclusion of World War One. The assumptions that there had been a clear victory over Germany and that there was now scope for a reordering of European politics were flawed. Germany had been militarily defeated in the west, but not in the east. Its expansionist politics had not evaporated, nor had its economic power. It would therefore seem, particularly with hindsight, vital that Germany was included in the League so that it could work towards its aim of revising the Treaty of Versailles within the confines of the League's machinery. Indeed, following the wave of optimism and positive thinking that ensued after the Locarno treaty, Germany was admitted into the League in September 1926.

## Weakness of Central European states

The Austro-Hungarian Empire had collapsed following World War One and had been replaced by a number of smaller states based on the principle of nationality. However, as we saw in the previous chapter, many of these states struggled politically and economically to achieve stability. This meant that instead of another large European state there were now several much smaller states that would require more support from the League, particularly in terms of economic development and territorial security. These states could not offer the League much tangible support in return.

### Activity 6

#### ATL Thinking skills

1. To what extent was the League of Nations 'doomed to fail' due to the limitations of its Covenant and structure?
2. Examine why the failure of the USA to join the League may be viewed as critically important.
3. How might countries/regions around the world have perceived the role of the League of Nations differently?

### Activity 7

#### ATL Research skills

1. Research the work of the commissions shown in the diagram on page 101. How effective was the League of Nations in dealing with the humanitarian issues identified by the commissions?

## How successful was the League of Nations in the 1920s?

### Peacekeeping 1920–1925

Throughout the 1920s, the League dealt with various disputes arising mainly from the territorial changes of the Versailles settlement. The League had both successes and failures in its handling of these disputes.

**Aaland Islands, 1920:** These islands were populated mainly by Swedes, but, following the collapse of the Russian Empire, Finland had claimed sovereignty over them. The conflict was taken to the League and Sweden accepted the League's decision to give the islands to Finland.

**Vilna, 1920–1923:** Both Poland and Lithuania wanted control of the town of Vilna. It had once been the capital of Lithuania, but its people were Polish. The League was unable to prevent the Poles from seizing and retaining Vilna by force. Finally, the Conference of Ambassadors awarded Vilna to Poland.

**Upper Silesia, 1921:** Both Germany and newly formed Poland wanted control of the important industrial area of Upper Silesia. The League decided to split the area between the two.

**Corfu, 1923:** Three Italian army officers were shot while working on a boundary dispute between Greece and Albania. Mussolini blamed Greece and ordered compensation. When the Greeks did not pay, Italian soldiers occupied Corfu. Greece appealed to the League, but the Italian government ignored the Council's ruling and left only when compensation had been paid.

**Mosul, 1924:** The area of Mosul was claimed by both Turkey and Iraq. The League considered the problem and awarded the area to Iraq, a decision that was accepted.

**Bulgaria, 1925:** Following a Greek invasion of Bulgaria, the League ordered both armies to stop fighting. An investigation by the League blamed Greece for starting the dispute and ordered it to pay damages. Greece accepted the blame and was ordered to pay compensation.

P.M.H. Bell argues that even though the League did not solve all disputes successfully:

“What was important was that the League had settled down as a valuable forum for the conduct of international affairs. Germany was admitted in 1926, and at once became a permanent member of the Council; so the League was no longer a 'League of victors'. By 1928 every European state was a member (except the USSR). Nearly every foreign minister made a point of attending its sessions. The League was still young, but there seemed a good chance that Europe had found a workable successor to the pre-1914 states system.

P.M.H. Bell, *Twentieth-Century Europe* (Bloomsbury, 2006), p.97.

### Activity 8

#### ATL Thinking skills

1. Which of the disputes outlined above can be regarded as successes for the League and which disputes can be regarded as failures?
2. Are there any common factors that help to explain the successes and failures?
3. What lessons could be drawn for the 1930s from the challenges that had faced the League in the 1920s?



#### Conference of Ambassadors

The Conference of Ambassadors was set up in January 1920 in Paris to ensure that the peace treaties were implemented. It consisted of the British, Italian, and Japanese ambassadors.

## Attempts to strengthen the League

Two attempts were made, in 1923 and 1924, to strengthen the machinery of the League of Nations. These were both initiated by France. The first was the Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance, which would have required all members of the League to come to the assistance of a victim of aggression. Next, the Geneva Protocol of 1924 would have made arbitration compulsory in all disputes. Both initiatives were rejected by Britain, its dominions, and the Scandinavian powers, who believed that members would not be willing or able to carry out the huge commitment that would result from such a role.

The League thus remained divided between those states that wanted a strong League to enforce the existing territorial agreements and those that wanted to be more selective in dealing with aggression. This division also arose because of the difference in vulnerability of the various states. While France felt highly exposed, others were not so worried and were not prepared to take on what they saw as extra commitments. These differences were to be highlighted further by the Ruhr Crisis, which would deeply undermine the principle of collective security.

### Activity 9

#### ATL Thinking and social skills

1. Discuss in pairs the extent to which France was made vulnerable by the USA's failure to ratify Versailles and join the League of Nations.

## The Ruhr Crisis (1923)

For France, future security lay in upholding the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. However, France had begun to feel that this security was being undermined within a year of its signing. The USA did not ratify the treaty and signed a separate peace with Germany. In Germany, the political situation seemed unlikely to produce a government keen to comply with its terms. Indeed, reparation payments, crucial for rebuilding the French economy, quickly became a problem. The Germans protested that they could not afford the payments. In October 1921, the Wiesbaden Accords were drawn up, in which France agreed to assist Germany with their reparations by taking a proportion in raw materials and industrial produce rather than cash. The following year, however, even these payments had fallen into arrears.

The French inclination to use force rather than diplomacy to resolve the issue was enhanced by the appointment of the strongly nationalistic Raymond Poincaré as prime minister in January 1922. The issue was brought to a head and became a crisis when Germany asked for reparation payments to be suspended for four years. The French had had enough. They believed that this suspension could jeopardize the enforcement of the treaty as a whole. The French and the Belgians, with the support of Italy, moved troops into the Ruhr Valley in January 1923 to take in kind what they thought they were owed. The German government of Chancellor Wilhelm Cuno protested that this action went against the terms of the Versailles treaty, and in addition instructed German workers to strike. The German government continued to pay the now-striking workers, but found it had to print more paper money to cover the bill.



▲ A German cartoon from 1923. France is represented by the figure of the woman, and the German text says 'Hands off the Ruhr!'

The floundering German economy now collapsed, and as the government continued to print money, inflation turned into hyperinflation. The French retaliated to this 'passive resistance' by encouraging the unemployed in France and Belgium to work in the Ruhr industries. The descent into economic chaos, indicated by the statistics below, coupled with growing political separatist movements in Germany, led to the replacement of Cuno with Gustav Stresemann in August 1923.

### THE IMPACT OF THE RUHR CRISIS ON THE GERMAN ECONOMY

#### Value of £ sterling to German mark

Jan 1914	£1 = 20 marks
Jan 1922	£1 = 760 marks
Nov 1922	£1 = 50,000 marks
Nov 1923	£1 = 16,000,000,000 marks

#### Coal production in Ruhr

1922	90 million tonnes
Feb 1923	2.5 million tonnes

#### Operating iron-smelting furnaces

1922	70
March 1923	3

Stresemann called for an end to the 'passive resistance' in the Ruhr, and in 1924 the crisis was ended by the Dawes Plan. The plan was named after a commission chaired by US economist Charles Dawes. He produced a report on German reparations in April 1924, which decided the following:

- reparations were to be guaranteed by two mortgages, one on German railways and the second on German industries (supplemented by taxation on the German population)
- a US 'reparations agent' would reside in Germany to supervise repayments
- repayments were to be reduced.

Although reparations were to be reduced, France nevertheless accepted the plan because it brought the Americans back into the picture, involving them in the collection of reparations. In fact, this became known as 'the golden age of reparations' (until 1929), as the Allies received more than they had done before. The Germans were unhappy, however, as there was no fixed date for the completion of repayments. Britain and France were also concerned about the link between German payments and their own payments of war debts to the USA, which they had not wanted.

The Dawes Plan devised a new system of reparation payments. Stresemann promised to comply with this, and French troops were withdrawn from the Ruhr by August 1925. Yet the crisis had thrown up serious problems with the integrity of the League of Nations. Instead of going to the League, France had taken matters into its own hands and attempted to seize payments by force. Indeed, attempts by Britain and Sweden to take the crisis to the League were blocked by the French. This action by a permanent member undermined the League's credibility, as it appeared that the powers would take independent action when it suited them.

Although the hostility of Britain (and the USA) to the invasion of the Ruhr could be seen as a clear condemnation of unilateral action, the overall impact of the invasion was bad for both the League and for international relations. Despite France's economic gains (it had been guaranteed 21 per cent of the Ruhr's production until December 1923, and then this rose to 27 per cent), the results of its actions dramatically increased the tension between France and Germany, making future cooperation all the more

problematic. Politically, France had alarmed its former allies, and heightened the sense of patriotism within Germany. In France, Poincaré came under heavy criticism from both left- and right-wing groups. The left argued that this act of aggression had been committed only to benefit capitalist groups in France, and the right were frustrated by Poincaré's withdrawal from the Ruhr, seeing it as a missed opportunity to exert some real control over Germany's economy. There was even unofficial support from certain elements for the promotion of an independent Rhineland.

### The Rapallo Treaty

In April 1922, the Germans and Russians signed the Rapallo Treaty. Through this treaty, Germany and Russia entered into diplomatic relations and pledged their future cooperation. Germany fully recognized the Soviet government and both powers denounced reparations. In addition, the Rapallo Treaty provided for close economic cooperation. Arguably a more important consequence of this treaty was that military cooperation would now take place, allowing Germany to rearm and train secretly in Russia. Knowledge of the Rapallo Treaty also made Britain more determined to win over Germany rather than alienate the nation further, lest Germany became even friendlier with Russia.

#### Activity 10

ATL Thinking skills

1. What were the reasons for the French occupation of the Ruhr, and how were their aims realized by this occupation?
2. What were the perspectives of other countries in this crisis?
3. How did France's actions undermine the concept of collective security?

#### Activity 11

ATL Thinking skills

*“The invasion of the Ruhr in 1923 had the most serious consequences. Within Germany, it weakened the position of the middle classes in society and diminished their support for the Weimar government. Extremist parties on the right and the left were given a boost, because of the alarm at the prospect of complete economic collapse and social disorder. Many historians argue that the invasion of the Ruhr paved the way for Hitler's subsequent rise to power. Both the British government and the British public were alienated by French policies ... The French franc ... came under pressure and the French government learned ... direct action carried a high political cost ... It has been suggested that France's failure to take military action to stop Hitler's remilitarization of the Rhineland in 1936 stemmed largely from the unhappy experience in the Ruhr in 1923.*

Ruth Henig, *Origins of the First World War* (Routledge, 1993), p.38.

1. According to Ruth Henig, what was the impact of the Ruhr Invasion on a) Germany and b) France?

### The Locarno Era

Following the disastrous Ruhr adventure, the political situation in Europe was improved by the Dawes Plan and the Locarno Pact of 1925, the Kellogg–Briand Pact of August 1928, and the Young Plan of 1929. However, it should be noted that these agreements took place outside the League of Nations.

#### The Locarno Conference and the 'Locarno spirit' (1925)

Although French forces left the Ruhr, there were allied troops in other Rhineland cities, as dictated by the terms of Versailles. Stresemann wanted to rid Germany

of these 'occupying forces', and he was also keen to quell any movement in support of an independent Rhineland. At a conference in Locarno in Switzerland in February 1925, Stresemann proposed a voluntary guarantee from Germany of its western borders. Significantly for the French and Belgians, this meant that Germany was resolved to give up its claims over Alsace-Lorraine, Malmedy, and Eupen. In return, Germany had some reassurance that France would not invade again, and it removed any potential for an independent Rhineland. A series of treaties were signed. The major treaty guaranteed the boundaries between France, Belgium, and Germany. Also present at Locarno were representatives of Italy, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. Germany signed treaties with Poland and Czechoslovakia, agreeing to change the eastern borders with these countries by arbitration only. It was also agreed that Germany should be admitted into the League of Nations.



The Locarno Conference, 1925.

For many in post-war Europe, the Locarno agreement gave hope for future security. It suggested that former enemies could work together to resolve disputes, and to uphold the Versailles settlement. The new mood became known as the 'Locarno spirit'. When Locarno was followed up with a series of agreements involving the USA, this 'spirit' seemed to be embracing even isolationist nations.

The Locarno Pact seemed to bode well for the future of collective security. However, although this agreement appeared to herald a new era of cooperation between the Western European powers (Britain had been in favour of the agreement, as it expunged French excuses for occupation), what the agreement did not guarantee were Germany's eastern borders. Italy, present at Locarno, had not managed to get similar agreements from Germany on its southern border. The treaties France had with Poland and Czechoslovakia were little comfort to these respective countries, as it would be strategically difficult to offer tangible support following Locarno. In addition, France had not changed its view of Germany. Rather, it had just changed its strategy for containing Germany. Instead of confronting the Germans with force, France was now attempting to bring Germany into international agreements that involved the guarantees of other powers. In addition, Locarno had undermined both the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations. Security for France had been sought outside the League, and only a component of the Versailles treaty had been guaranteed.

#### The Young Plan (1929)

The Young Plan attempted to redress some of the problems that remained with the Dawes Plan. The plan:

- further reduced the total sum to be repaid by Germany
- set a date for completion of repayments – 1988
- continued US involvement in reparation payments.

As part of the deal, Britain and France agreed to end their occupation of the Rhineland five years ahead of schedule.

As Keynes had noted in 1926, the foundations for both the Dawes and then the Young Plan, and thus both German and European recovery, was foreign money. Two thirds of investment in Germany during the 1920s came from America. Keynes wrote in 1926 that the reparation arrangements were 'in the hands of the American capitalist'.

## Activity 12

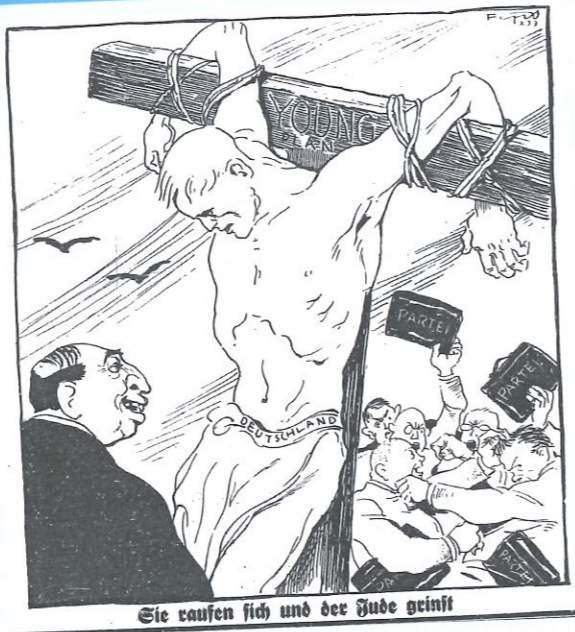
ATL Thinking skills

What potential problems with the Dawes and Young plans were highlighted by Keynes?

## Activity 13

ATL Thinking skills

German cartoon, c.1930, from *Der Stürmer*, a very **anti-Semitic** newspaper published by Julius Streicher as part of Nazi propaganda. The cross bears the words 'Young Plan', while German political parties can be seen fighting with each other in the background. The caption translates: 'They fight and the Jew grins.'



1. What message does this German cartoon give about the Young Plan?

## The Kellogg–Briand Pact (August 1928)

The Kellogg–Briand Pact was initiated by American Secretary of State William Kellogg and the French Foreign Minister Aristide Briand. The pact renounced 'war as an instrument of national policy' and 62 of 64 invited states signed the agreement (Brazil and Argentina declined).

“By declaring that Clausewitz's famous definition of war was illegal and guaranteeing that international disputes would be settled peacefully, this treaty ... seemed to provide the legal foundation for a new international order.

James Sheehan, *The Monopoly of Violence: Why Europeans Hate Going to War* (Faber & Faber, 2008), p.106.

Contemporary views of the pact were often positive; it was seen as an important declaration by governments that they would pursue their objectives through peaceful means. The pact has been viewed as the high point of 'Locarno spirit' era. Unfortunately, this perspective would prove to be naive, as the encouraging elements of Europe's recovery were very fragile.

It could be argued that there was no major conflict in the 1920s because the main revisionist power – Germany – was still recovering from World War One. In addition, the 1920s were in the main a period of relative economic boom and prosperity, which decreased international tensions and encouraged cooperation. As P.M.H. Bell writes, 'Europe had survived, but was still on the sick list.'

Enquire into which countries face debilitating debt repayments today. How are these countries and economies supported? Is 'developing world' debt a 'developing problem'?

## Activity 14

ATL Thinking and social skills

## Review questions

In small groups or pairs answer the following questions:

1. What had led to the mood of optimism in the 1920s?
2. Could the 'Locarno spirit' have survived? Why did it not last?
3. Why was there an improvement in relations between Britain, France, and Germany in 1924–1929? In what ways was the international situation more stable in 1929 than it had been in 1923?
4. What had the League of Nations achieved by 1929?

## Why did collective security fail in the 1930s?

Although the concept of collective security had some degree of success in the 1920s, the League's failure to resolve key international crises in the 1930s meant that it had completely collapsed by 1939.

## The Depression



▲ The unemployed line up at a soup kitchen in the USA.

The worldwide economic depression that followed the Wall Street Crash of October 1929 had far-reaching effects. The USA had become the globally dominant economic power, and this meant that the world's economy was ominously linked to its fortunes. The impact of the crisis on the economic, social, and, ultimately, political landscape of the world ushered in a return to a world dominated by national self-interest and the dominance of military forces. The USA's national income fell by almost 50 per cent between 1929 and 1932, and its government struggled to cope with unemployment and popular discontent.

Poverty and despair have often fostered the rise of extremist groups, and the fragile liberal governments of the 1920s found resurgent nationalist and aggressive political groups very difficult to restrict. The delicate European stability that had been nurtured by the resources of American Capitalism was particularly vulnerable to a major economic collapse in the USA. This was equally true of the recently democratic and liberal Japan.

Governments were blamed for the crisis. In France, a moderate government was replaced by a radical left-wing one in the May 1932 election. In Britain, iron and steel production fell by 50 per cent, and political support shifted to right-wing parties. The

### The Weimar government

The Weimar government had been established at the end of World War One with the defeat of the German Empire. It replaced the imperial government with a constitution that was seen as one of the most modern in Europe. Universal suffrage was introduced and a lower house of parliament was to be elected every 4 years by a voting system of proportional representation. The president was to be elected every 7 years and a guarantee of basic human rights was included in the constitution.



British Labour government broke up in the financial crisis of 1931 and was almost wiped out by the 1931 election, which led to the formation of a 'National Government' under the Conservatives.

Germany had borrowed £9,000 million between 1924 and 1929. When the money stopped, its economy collapsed; German unemployment stood at 1.4 million in 1928 and rose to over 6 million in 1932. The Weimar government and liberal democracy lost credibility and ended when Franz von Papen assumed the role of virtual dictator in May 1932.

In Japan, in 1931, 50 per cent of factories closed, and silk prices fell by two-thirds. There ensued a radical shift to the right, linked to military factions. By 1932, following a series of assassinations, the era of liberal politics in Japan was over.

In Belgium and Poland, the impact of the Depression led to new government initiatives that looked to improve the countries' defences against a potentially expansionist Germany.

The Depression heightened fears of the USSR's capacity for fostering the spread of Communist revolution into the impoverished working-class streets of European cities. Soviet propaganda claimed that the Depression demonstrated the inherent failings of Capitalism, and its inevitable replacement with the Communist system. Britain and France were also alarmed at the escalating nationalist and independence movements in their respective empires, and the corresponding costs of controlling these. With a pressurized domestic situation, it was particularly difficult to manage the growing forces of **expansionism** in both Europe and Asia. The democratic governments were thus increasingly forced to review their strategies for dealing with international tension. The League's key weapon of economic sanctions was now a weapon most countries would not want deployed as they attempted to protect their own trading interests. The USA pulled away further into isolationism. The British established **protectionism** for trade within their empire in the Ottawa Agreements (1932). Although France and Italy took longer to be affected, as they were not as heavily dependent on international trade, they too had a downturn in their economies.

The responses to the Depression by the democratic states seemed to lead back to an old-style diplomacy – alliances and agreements outside the League. The strategy of appeasing countries in response to aggression became more realistic. Economic sanctions were not palatable and to take on aggressors by force was not, at least in the early 1930s when the Depression was tightening its grip, a viable option.

### Activity 15

ATL Thinking and social skills

#### Source Analysis

*The depression that followed the Wall Street Crash was the worst in the history of the industrial world. It struck at a time when confidence in the long-term survival of the social order and world peace was already in the balance. Communism preached the imminent collapse of capitalism; 1929 heralded that collapse. As the crisis deepened governments struggled to protect the established order and prevent social revolution ... The international economic order broke down; 'beggar my neighbour' policies replaced co-operation. Britain and Germany came close to the point of national bankruptcy in 1931. American politicians thought their Republic was closer to revolution in 1932 than at any time in its history ... Economic nationalism became the order of the day; economic considerations openly trespassed into foreign policy, so that economic rivalry was expressed in terms of sharper political conflict. It was no mere chance that economic recovery at the end of the 1930s was fuelled by high levels of rearmament. The 'have-not' nations were determined to improve their economic share of the cake by force.*

Richard Overly, *The Road to War*, 2nd ed. (2009), pp.411–412.

1. In pairs, identify the international impact of the Great Depression as suggested by Richard Overly.

## The Manchurian dispute

Japan was the only independent Asian power with its own empire – an empire that had expanded in 1920 when Japan took over the Mariana and Caroline Islands as mandates.

Japan was also Asia's greatest industrial and trading power, and so was badly affected by world depression. Some sections of Japanese society believed that the key to Japan's future economic survival was to expand its empire. However, Asia was already dominated by the European colonial powers: Britain, France, and the Netherlands.

These countries would not tolerate any threat to their interests in the region. In addition, the USA was attempting to increase its influence in the Pacific, and would be concerned with any 'aggressive' expansionism there.

In September 1931, the Japanese army in Manchuria, the Kwantung Army (responsible for protecting Japanese interests in the area), claimed that a bomb explosion near the town of Mukden was evidence of growing disorder and used it as an excuse to conquer the province. In reality, the Kwantung Army had planted the bomb, evidence of its desire to expand its influence in the territory. In this incident, one key member of the League had attacked another member – China. China appealed to the League for assistance against an aggressor. Here was exactly the type of incident that 'collective security' was designed to contain. The League of Nations took the following actions:

- It condemned Japan's actions and ordered the withdrawal of Japanese troops. The Japanese government agreed, but their army refused. This outcome exposed the lack of control the Japanese civilian government had over its military.
- It appointed a commission under Lord Lytton to investigate the crisis. The commission took more than a year to report, by which time the invasion and the occupation were complete. The commission found Japan guilty of forcibly seizing part of China's territory.
- It accepted the Lytton Report and instructed all of its members not to recognize the new Japanese state called Manchukuo. It invited Japan to hand Manchuria back to China.

In response, the Japanese said that they were leaving the League. They claimed that the condemnation of their actions in China was hypocrisy by powers such as Britain, which had a long legacy of using force to achieve its objectives in China. They may have had a point, but the new ideas embodied by the League represented a shift in international tolerance of this kind of empire-building.



### Activity 16

ATL Thinking skills

#### Review questions

1. Explain Japan's motivation for attacking Manchuria.
2. What actions did the League of Nations take? What were the problems with these actions?

## CHALLENGE YOURSELF

Research skills ATL

Get into groups of four. Each student should research the impact of the Great Depression on **one** country in a specific region:

- the Americas
- Europe
- Africa and the Middle East
- Asia and Oceania.

Each student should select a different region to ensure the group can feed back on the impact of the economic crises on all four regions. Individuals should then feed back to the group; each group can then share its research with the class. Discuss as a class the extent to which the crises were 'global'. What factors made certain countries more vulnerable to the crash that began in the USA in October 1929?

Japanese-controlled Manchuria, 1932.



TOK

*In Manchuria today [there is] a collision between twentieth century international machinery and a nineteenth century point of view ... [I] hope that the League's commission will be satisfied with no superficial approach to existing difficulties.*

**From a speech by the Honourable Vincent Massey, 14 January 1931, to the Empire Club of Canada, published in *The Empire Club of Canada Speeches 1932*.**

- What does Vincent Massey mean by 'a nineteenth century point of view'? How was the 'twentieth century' view different? How far is our twenty-first-century view on empire-building different?

## Why did the League fail to resolve the Manchurian Crisis?

There are several factors that contributed to the League's failure to resolve the crisis:

- The impact of the Great Depression caused the member states to be too preoccupied with their own troubled domestic situations. It also made them unwilling to apply economic sanctions. In any case, Japan's main trading links were with the USA, which was not a member of the League.
- Imposing any kind of military solution was problematic, as Manchuria was geographically remote, and only Britain and the USA had the naval resources to confront Japan; again the USA was unwilling to do this. Britain was unwilling to act alone and also did not want to risk a naval conflict in the region – it might well have been outnumbered by the Japanese (following the Washington Conference – see pages 119 and 152) and risk threatening colonial interests.
- France and Italy were too occupied with events in Europe and were not prepared to agree to any kind of military or naval action against Japan. Again, as with Britain, France's colonial interests in the region made for a confused response. Japan was openly condemned, but privately the government sent a note suggesting that it was sympathetic to the 'difficulties' Japan was experiencing.

## What was the impact of the Manchurian Crisis on the League of Nations?

The outcome of the Manchurian Crisis was a dire failure for the League. China had appealed to the League for help in the face of an aggressor, but had received no practical support, neither militarily nor in terms of economic sanctions. The moral high ground offered by the Lytton Report's verdict was little comfort. The whole affair had suggested that the League lacked the will to follow through with its philosophy of 'collective security'. The aggressor had 'got away with it'. Richard Overy points out that by leaving the League of Nations, Japan had 'effectively removed the Far East from the system of collective security'. In Europe, meanwhile, Mussolini began planning his expansionist adventure into Abyssinia, encouraged by what had happened in Manchuria.

## What was the impact of the Manchurian Crisis on the growth of Japanese militarism?

Traditionally, historians have seen the events in Manchuria as the starting point for the dominance of militarism within the Japanese government, which led ultimately

to the Pacific War. Some historians, however, view the Manchurian Crisis as less significant to future events in Asia. In *The Manchurian Crisis and Japanese Society, 1931–33* (Routledge, 2002), Sandra Wilson argues that the crisis had a more limited impact on Japanese thinking than has been suggested. Wilson argues that most Japanese regarded the end of fighting in Manchuria in 1933 as a return to normality rather than the beginning of the militarization of Japanese society. Many people in Japanese society even believed that Japan would continue working cooperatively and diplomatically with Britain and the USA. She contends that the post-World War Two idea of a 15-year war beginning in the Pacific in 1931 has affected *our* perception of the Manchurian incident.

### Activity 17

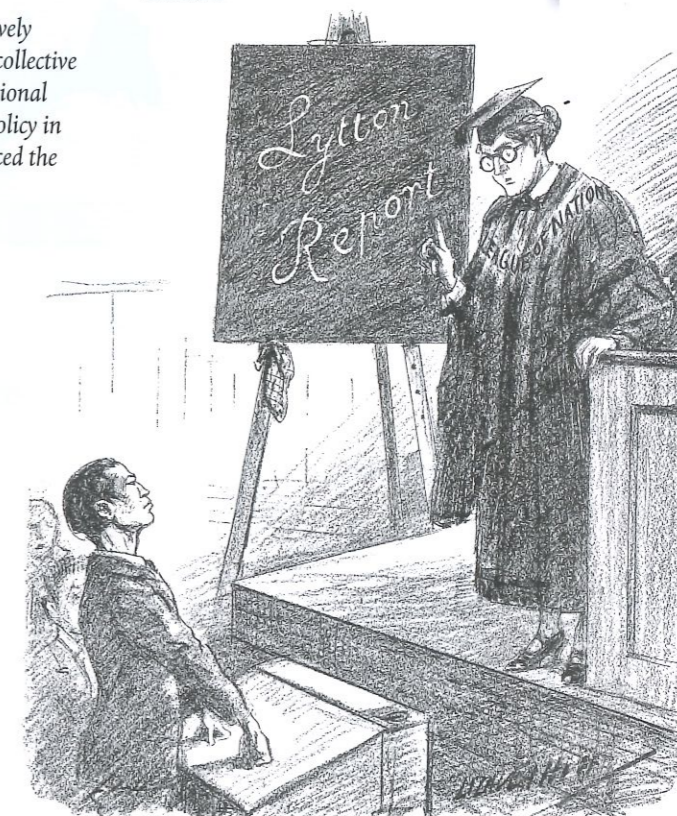
ATL Thinking skills

#### Source A

*In 1933 Japan left the League and effectively removed the Far East from the system of collective security. In 1934, in violation of international agreements to preserve an 'Open Door' policy in China, the Japanese government announced the Amai Doctrine, a warning to other powers to regard China as Japan's sphere of influence and to abandon trade with the Chinese and the provision of technical aid to them. There is no doubt that Japanese leaders, spurred on at home by the military, were encouraged to go further after 1932 than they might otherwise have done because of the weak response from the major powers.*

**R.J. Overy, *Origins of the Second World War*, 2nd ed. (Vintage, 2009), pp.12–14.**

#### Source B



**THE ULTIMATUM.**

JAPAN. "IF YOU GO ON SAYING I'M NAUGHTY, I SHALL LEAVE THE CLASS."

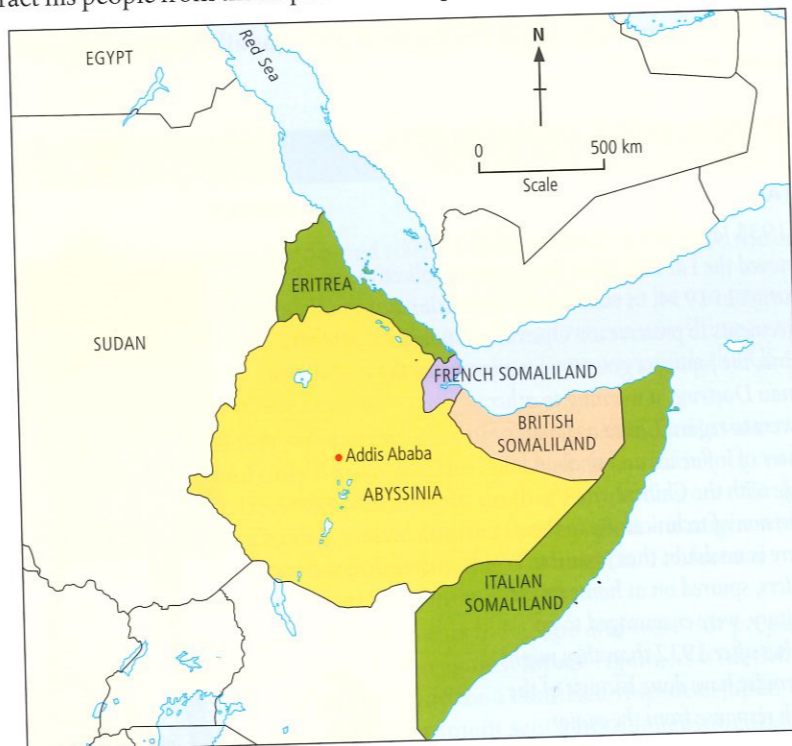
1. What are the key points made about the League's response in Source A?
2. What is the cartoonist's message in Source B?
3. In pairs, discuss how far political cartoons reflect the public opinion of the time. Can cartoons 'shape' public opinion?

▲ A cartoon titled 'The Ultimatum', published in the British magazine *Punch*. The caption reads: Japan. "If you go on saying I'm naughty, I shall leave the class."

## The Abyssinian Crisis (1935)

In 1932, the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini began detailed planning for the annexation of Abyssinia (present-day Ethiopia and Eritrea). At this point, Eritrea was already an Italian colony, and had been since the 1890s. This move was not only an element of his long-term ambition of securing a north African empire, but also a tactic to distract his people from the impact of the Depression.

Abyssinia, 1934.



The conquest of Abyssinia would link together two Italian African territories – Eritrea and Italian Somaliland – and provide land for Italians to settle. At the Wal-Wal oasis, 80 kilometres inside the Abyssinian border with Italian Somaliland, Italian and Abyssinian forces clashed in December 1934. A full-scale invasion, however, did not begin until the following October, when Mussolini's forces were ready. He believed that the League would not respond, as Britain and France would not strongly object – Mussolini had been made aware by the French Foreign Minister Pierre Laval that he would be given a free hand in Abyssinia, and the British had wanted to reach an agreement in which Mussolini would have control over the territory without formally annexing it. Neither the French nor the British wanted to lose Italy as an ally against Nazi Germany. The Italians had already prevented Hitler from attempting *Anschluss* in 1934.

It was the brutality and ferocity of the Italian assault on Abyssinia, which began on 3 October 1935, that compromised Britain and France. When the 100,000-strong Italian army invaded, the Abyssinian Emperor, Haile Selassie, appealed to the League.

The League's response came on 18 October. Italy's invasion was condemned and the League decided to employ an escalating programme of sanctions. Britain and France worked for a settlement outside the League in an attempt to avoid a breakdown in relations with Italy. France was hopeful of gaining Italian support for an anti-German alignment that might help to contain Nazi aggression. Britain was faced with possible Japanese aggression in the Far East and also had to consider the dangers of having Italy as an enemy, when Italy occupied an important strategic position in the Mediterranean Sea, a major sea route for Britain through to its imperial possessions.

In December, the British Foreign Minister Samuel Hoare and the French Foreign Minister Laval rekindled a plan that had already been considered by the League in September. The plan, called the Hoare–Laval Pact, was to allow Italian control of around two-thirds of Abyssinia. Mussolini could have accepted this idea, but it was never to be put on the table, as it was leaked to the French press. The pro-League British public was outraged and Hoare was forced to resign. The plan was shelved. Despite this strong public support, the League's sanctions were so diluted that they had little impact on the Italian war effort. No **embargo** was put on oil exports to Italy, and Britain refused to close the Suez Canal to Italian shipping. Mussolini was able to escalate his efforts until May 1936, when the Italians were in control of Abyssinia.

### Activity 18

ATL Research skills

1. Visit [pearsonhotlinks.com](http://pearsonhotlinks.com), enter the book title or ISBN, and click on weblink 5.2 to read Selassie's impassioned speech. Identify the key points he makes to the League on why member states must act to defend Abyssinia.

The British public (generally) supported action by the League, and public opinion was more important at this time, as a general election was pending in November. In France, the **left-wing** element also supported the League, whilst the **right-wing** was more sympathetic to Italy's cause.

### Activity 19

ATL Thinking and communication skills

1. What do you think were the different perspectives on the Abyssinian invasion? Consider the permanent members of the League, then consider the smaller nation members, and finally the views of non-members, such as the USA. You may want to work in groups, each group taking a different country. You could take it in turns to be 'hot seated' – where a student or teacher takes on the role of representing a country or person – to present to the rest of the class the perspective and recommendations of your country to the League.

### Activity 20

ATL Thinking skills



THE AWFUL WARNING.

FRANCE AND ENGLAND  
together? "WE DON'T WANT YOU TO FIGHT,  
BUT, BY JINGO, IF YOU DO,  
WE SHALL PROBABLY ISSUE A JOINT MEMORANDUM  
SUGGESTING A MILD DISAPPROVAL OF YOU."

1. What is the message of this cartoon?
2. What evidence can be used to support the cartoonist's viewpoint of the handling of the crisis?



Abyssinian Emperor Haile Selassie.

A cartoon from the British satirical magazine *Punch*, 1935.

## What were the effects of the Abyssinian Crisis on the League of Nations?

For the League, the Abyssinian Crisis was a disaster. A permanent member had again successfully ignored the League and had been victorious through violence and war. The League had proved itself ineffective in using 'collective security' to maintain peace. The crisis had revealed (as had already been seen in Manchuria) that the leading League powers were not prepared to stand up to other major members if their interests were not directly threatened. It was too dangerous to invoke a conflict with a power that – while upholding the idea of collective security – might adversely affect their own power and international position.

Italy, now isolated from its former allies, moved closer to Nazi Germany. The alliance between the British, French, and Italians had collapsed. The League's ultimate weakness was exposed for Hitler to exploit, which he readily did with the militarization of the Rhineland in March 1936.

Many historians have viewed the Abyssinian Crisis as the 'final nail in the coffin' for the League of Nations. Thereafter, the League was simply symbolic of an ideal that had arisen out of the tragedy of World War One – an anomaly amidst old-style militaristic alliances and modern expansionist ideologies. The League of Nations could no longer exert any authority. Collective security had failed.

“The immediate effects of victory were exhilarating. Mussolini had succeeded where the old Italy had failed. He had defeated not only the Abyssinians but the League of Nations. He abandoned his former cautious approach to foreign affairs and looked for new worlds to conquer.

P.M.H. Bell, *Origins of the Second World War* (Longman, 1986), pp.63–64.

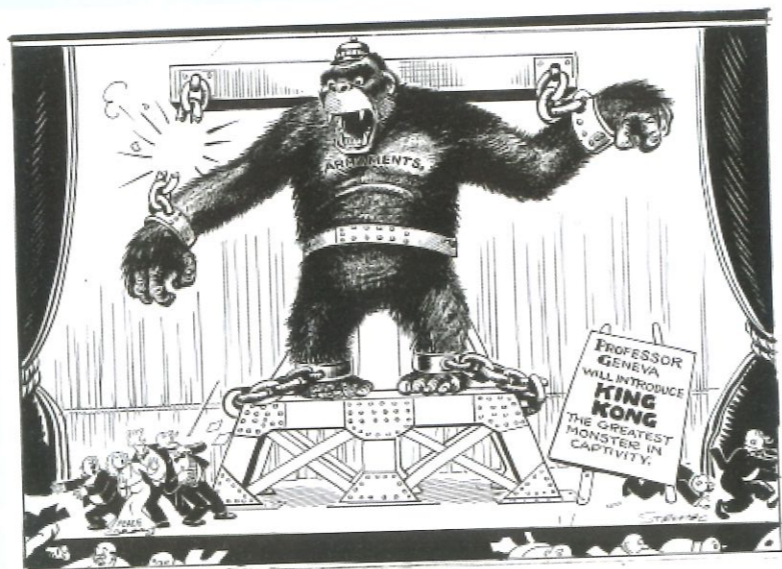
## The failure of disarmament

There were attempts to reduce weapons in the 1920s, though these were done outside the League of Nations rather than through it.

### Activity 21

ATL Thinking skills

#### Source A



This cartoon from 10 May 1933 references the 1933 film *King Kong*. The caption on the board reads: 'Professor Geneva will introduce King Kong, The greatest monster in captivity.' The word 'Armaments' is written across King Kong's chest, and 'Peace' on the lady's dress below.

#### Source B

##### Article 8.1.

The members of the League recognize that the maintenance of peace requires the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety and the enforcement by common action of international obligations ...

4. After these plans shall have been adopted by the several governments, the limits therein fixed shall not be exceeded without the concurrence of the several governments.

5. The members of the League agree that the manufacture by private enterprise of munitions and implements of war is open to grave objections. The Council shall advise how the evils attendant upon such manufacture can be prevented ...

6. The members of the League undertake to interchange full and frank information as to the scale of their armaments, their military, naval and air programmes and the conditions of such of their industries as are adaptable to warlike purposes.

1. In Source A, what point is the cartoonist making regarding the failure of disarmament?
2. Read Source B. What were the key aims of the League of Nations with regard to disarmament?

## The Washington Conference (1921–1922)

After World War One, Great Britain, the USA, and Japan in particular continued to build up their navies. The cost of this military growth and the concern that the USA had regarding Japan's growing strength led America to call for the first post-war disarmament conference, held in Washington DC in 1921–1922. The Five-Power Treaty that was a result of this conference set naval tonnage to 525,000 tons for Britain and America, 300,000 for Japan, and 175,000 for France and Italy (a ratio of 5:5:3 for America, Britain, and Japan). The agreement would involve nations destroying battleships until their quota was reached. In addition, no new battleships were to be built for 10 years.

The Washington Conference also addressed other issues in the Far East. America and Canada wished to see Britain distance itself from the 1902 Alliance with Japan, and this was replaced with a Four-Power Treaty involving the USA, Japan, Britain, and France. It guaranteed the rights of all signatories to their possessions in Asia, and they also agreed to come to each other's defence in the case of an attack. A Nine-Power Treaty affirmed the territorial integrity of China and endorsed the concept of an 'open door' through which all nations could trade with China on an equal basis.

The conference was successful in limiting naval armament and was seen as an example of how moves could be made towards disarmament in other areas as well. All countries gained something from the agreements. The fact that so few powers were involved helped make this disarmament conference a success. Nevertheless, the conference highlighted the growing isolation of France, which now had to accept the humiliating position of being on the same level as Italy. It also did not include Germany or Russia in the discussions and agreements.

## The London Naval Conference (1930)

The London Naval Conference revised the agreement made at Washington. With the Great Depression now taking hold in Europe, the major powers were still keen to limit their defence spending. The 5:5:3 ratio for the USA, the UK, and Japan was changed to 10:10:7. France and Italy refused to take part in this agreement, though they did agree to continue the ban on building capital ships for five years. Agreements were also reached on the size and numbers of cruisers, destroyers, and submarines, and rules were made to control submarine warfare.

### The London Naval Treaty (1936)

In 1935–1936, the major powers met to renegotiate the London treaty of 1930. Yet the international situation had now changed dramatically. Japan no longer wished to limit its naval tonnage and be inferior to the USA and Britain, and so walked out of the conference. The Italians also left. Although Britain, America, and France signed a treaty on cruiser tonnage, all disarmament agreements became meaningless given the rearmament programmes of Germany and Japan.

### The Geneva Disarmament Conference (1932–1934)

Between 1926 and 1932, preparations were made for a disarmament conference organized by the League of Nations. When the conference finally convened, 60 nations were represented, including the USA and the USSR. However, even at the preparatory stage, there were disagreements over what types of armament limitations should be discussed and how any resulting agreements should be enforced. By the time that the actual conference took place, in Geneva in 1932, delegates were faced not only with resolving these issues, but they were also faced with a German threat – if League members failed to bring about substantial disarmament, Germany would demand the right to rearm. By this time, Hitler's Nazi Party was the largest party in Germany. Hitler's demands were forceful and they made France even more determined to resist pressure for it to disarm. Germany demanded 'equality of status', but this aspiration clashed with French security. If Germany was equal, France would not be secure; if France was secure, Germany could not be equal.

In October 1933, Hitler (now Chancellor of Germany) dramatically led the German delegation out of the conference, which finally ended in 1934 having failed to secure any of its goals.

### Why did the League fail to achieve disarmament?

Supporters of the League of Nations were perhaps most disappointed with its failure to carry through its promises on disarmament. However, there were many factors that made its task in this area almost impossible.

- The economic instability of the 1930s, following the Great Depression, caused, as we have already seen, nations to concentrate on their own problems first rather than work for collective security. Competition for markets grew and with it the dangers of conflict over them. In this position, nations were unlikely to feel that they could reduce their armed forces; indeed, some countries used rearmament as a way of providing employment and thus helping their economies out of the Depression.
- The political instability of Europe, with the new Communist regime in Russia, the fragility of new states in Central Europe, and a discontented Germany, made many states reluctant to limit their arms. France in particular, neighbouring a potentially powerful Germany and lacking any real commitment of support from Great Britain and America, was unwilling to do anything that would increase its vulnerability. Similarly, Czechoslovakia and Poland were looking for increased security given their proximity to both Germany and Russia.
- Japan's invasion of Manchuria undermined the idea of collective security and meant that nations with interests in the Asia–Pacific region were unlikely to welcome disarmament suggestions.

### Activity 22

ATL Self-management skills

1. You have read about many conferences/agreements that took place in the post-World War One era. To help remember the key points, look back over the chapter and summarize these conferences and agreements in a grid such as the one below.

	Participants	Terms/agreements	Significance for international situation
Washington Conference 1921–1922			
Geneva Protocol 1921			
Rapallo Treaty 1923			
The Dawes Plan 1924			
The Locarno Conference 1925			
Kellogg–Briand Pact 1928			
The Young Plan 1929			

To access websites relevant to this chapter, go to [www.pearsonhotlinks.com](http://www.pearsonhotlinks.com), search for the book title or ISBN, and click on 'chapter 5'.



### Activity 23

ATL Communication skills

#### Essay planning

Consider the following essay question:

**Examine the reasons for the failure of collective security to keep the peace between 1920 and 1935.**

**Introduction:** You need to identify and explain key terms/concepts in the actual question. Here you need to explain the concept of 'collective security' and that the League of Nations had been established to facilitate this policy. You also need to show the examiner that you understand the relevance of the dates in the question. How did the situation regarding collective security change between these two dates? What is the relevance of 1935? Don't forget to set out your argument to show the direction that the essay will take.

**Section 1:** The main instrument for collective security was the League of Nations. In explaining why collective security failed, you need to outline the weaknesses of the League of Nations that were to undermine its ability to perform its task of keeping the peace.

**Section 2:** Collective security was undermined not just by the machinery of the League, but also by the continued willingness of countries to work outside the League to achieve peace: France in the Ruhr, the various agreements made in the 1920s, and so on.

**Section 3:** The impact of the Great Depression needs to be examined here, as this had a big effect on the desire/ability of nations to work collectively for peace.

**Section 4:** Here, analyse the specific events in the 1930s – such as Manchuria, Abyssinia, and disarmament conferences – that showed the inability of the nations in the League to work together.

#### Opening sentences

As indicated by the essay planning chart on page 42, the opening sentence of each paragraph in your essay is important for indicating the direction of your argument. Each 'topic sentence' should relate back to the question and set out the point that will be argued in that paragraph. A good topic sentence will also lead you into an analytical rather than a narrative approach.

Which of the following opening sentences to the essay above suggest an analytical approach linking to the question? Which suggest a more narrative approach or do not link to the question?

- There were several key events between 1920 and 1935 that created tension in Europe.
- The structure of the League meant that it would be difficult to follow through with the idea of collective security.
- The concept of collective security was damaged by France's unilateral actions in the Ruhr in 1923.
- The League of Nations was set up in 1919 with the aim of keeping peace.
- The Locarno conference took place in 1925.
- The Great Depression was triggered by the Wall Street Crash in America in 1929.
- The Manchurian Crisis undermined the credibility of the League and its will to follow through with its philosophy of collective security.
- In 1935, Mussolini invaded Abyssinia.
- The reaction of the League and of key powers such as Britain and France to the Abyssinian Crisis proved conclusively that collective security had failed.
- The League of Nations consisted of an Assembly, Council and Secretariat.
- Collective security was undermined by the impact of the Great Depression.

Now consider the following essay question:

**'The League of Nations was inherently weak and therefore could not maintain peace.' To what extent do you agree with this statement?**

**Introduction:** Begin by identifying the inherent problems with the League's structure, mandate, and membership that made it weak and likely to fail. As this is a 'to what extent' question, you will need to present a counter-argument. State this clearly in your introduction – for example, explain that the League was not inherently flawed, but failed due to the impact of the Great Depression and the self-interested actions of key member states and expansionist states.

**Section 1:** Always start with the argument presented in the question itself and give arguments to support this view, such as:

- weaknesses in structure, mandate, and membership
- failures to keep the peace in the 1920s.

**Section 2:** Now address an alternative view – that the League had the potential to succeed. Look at:

- strengths in structure, mandate and membership
- evidence of success in peacekeeping in the 1920s
- evidence of support for and strengthening of the League in the 1920s
- the international impact of the Great Depression
- the self-interested actions of key member states and the actions of expansionist states.

**Conclusion:** Based on the weight of evidence in the main body of the essay, refer back to the question directly.