



ARCMUN

Aristotelio College Model United Nations

HISTORICAL COMMITTEE (LEAGUE OF NATIONS)

**The Peace Treaty of Versailles: Addressing the
foundation of the League of Nations.**

Study Guide

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1. Historical Committee and Crisis

So, what is a Historical Committee?

A Historical Committee, is a committee whose works are focused on a specific historical period and start from a specific chronological point. This means that when the committee work and sessions start, all the events that count, are the historical events which have already took place before the historical checkpoint / start that we will commence, which **in our case for the League of Nations, is the year 1930**. All the other facts and events that occurred after the year 1930, are part of this period's crisis which of course challenges the delegates of our committee. The Historical Committee, with its own events, works and **crises** will rewrite the pages of the history books. But wait ...

What is a Crisis?

During the sessions of committees such the Security Council, NATO, and more specifically in our case, the Historical Committee, unexpected things and events can happen at any moment, no matter the general topic of our committee. Those events, to which our committee focuses throughout its committee-work, should find short solutions, in the form of Directives, which are a smaller and more informal version of a resolution. Except the crises, all the other rules and procedures, are the same with any other committee, however the Board acquires the mandate to simplify them at any case to avoid time constraints.

2. Introduction to the Committee

The League of Nations was created on the 10th of January 1920, as a result of the Paris Peace Conference, which ended the Great War or the more popular definition the First World War. It was the first, fully-fledged international organization, the predecessor of the United Nations, and its primary mission was to maintain world peace, prevent a second world war and maintain the tendency of certain countries for world domination. Its first goals and its mandate, as noted in its official Covenant, include the prevention of wars through collective security and disarmament, and the settlement and cease of international disputes through negotiation and arbitration. Its headquarters were in Geneva, Switzerland, and the organization consisted of 58 Member States.

In this year's edition of ARCMUN, the committee will host 15 of them, and those are: Belgium, United Kingdom, Cuba, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Switzerland, Republic of China.

3. General information on the Historical Aspects

During the 1920's, the decade right before the historical start of our committee, a lot of significant things happened worldwide, while all the globe was transitioning from

big tragic events that occurred during the last decade, and that was predominantly, the First World War. Some of the most significant events that happened during this decade, are gathered and presented in the following brief list which sets out our historical background. More specifically:

- **1920:** The First council meeting of the League of Nations took place in Paris, on 16 January, and, six days later, the Versailles Treaty was signed. Its Headquarters relocated from London to Geneva, Switzerland, 10 months later, where the first General Assembly was held on November the 15th.
- **1921:** The Communist Party of China is created, with the founding National Congress taking place on July 23-31. While it was originally planned to be held in the Shanghai French Concession, police officers interrupted the meeting on 30 July, and the congress was moved to a tourist boat on South Lake in Jiaxing, Zhejiang province. Only 12 delegates attended the congress. The resolutions of the congress called for the establishment of a Communist party (as a branch of the Communist International) and elected Chen Duxiu as its leader.
- **1922:** Mussolini marches on Rome, dissolves the parliament and forms a Fascist government. The *March on Rome* was an organized mass demonstration in October 1922 which resulted in Benito Mussolini's National Fascist Party acceding to power in the Kingdom of Italy. In late October 1922, the Fascist Party leaders planned an insurrection, to take place on 28 October. When fascist troops entered Rome, Prime Minister Luigi Facta wished to declare a state of emergency, but this was overruled by the king. On the following day, 29 October 1922, the King appointed Mussolini as Prime Minister, thereby transferring political power to the fascists without armed conflict.
- **1922:** Mahatma Gandhi preached for mass civil disobedience, non-violence and peaceful resistance against British Rule in India and British Authorities sentenced him to six years' imprisonment.
- **1923:** Adolf Hitler leads the Nazi Party in failed coup attempt (starting from the Beer Hall Putsch) in Germany, thus taking the name *Munich Punch*. About two thousand Nazis marched to the center of Munich, where they confronted the police, which resulted in the death of 16 Nazis and four police officers. Hitler himself was not wounded during the clash, he escaped immediate arrest and was spirited off to safety in the countryside. After two days, Hitler was arrested and charged with treason.
- **1924:** Lenin dies. Stalin wins a power struggle and rules afterwards as a Soviet dictator. Upon Lenin's death, Stalin was officially hailed as his successor secretly as the leader of the ruling Communist Party and of the Soviet Union itself.
- **1926:** British warships battle for control in China off of the Yangtze River, known also as the Wanhsien Incident. In May, Chinese Marshal Wu Peifu, appointed

General Yang Sen as the governor of Sichuan. The latter had used British commercial shipping to transport troops along stretches of the river Yangtze. On August 27, he attempted to board large numbers of his soldiers onto the China Navigation Company steamer Wanhsien, which was anchored at the city of that name. The captain of nearby gunboat HMS Cockchafer went aboard and persuaded the Chinese officers involved to disembark with their troops.

- **1927:** German economy collapses. Germany was economically devastated after its draining defeat in World War I. Due to the Versailles treaty, Germany was forced to pay incredibly sizeable reparations to France and Great Britain. In addition, the Versailles treaty, which many agreed was far too harsh, forced Germany to give up thirteen percent of its land.
- **1927:** The Chinese Civil War begins between the Kuomintang (KMT)-led government of the Republic of China and the Communist Party of China (CPC). The war started in August 1927, with the White Terror at the end of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's Northern Expedition, and essentially ended when major hostilities between the two sides ceased in 1950.
- **1929:** In the United States, stock market prices collapse, with U.S. securities losing \$26 billion, known then as the first phase of the Depression and world economic crisis. Then, the American stock market collapses, signaling the onset of the Great Depression. The Dow Jones Industrial Average peaks in September 1929 at 381.17—a level that it won't reach again until 1954. The Dow will bottom out at a Depression-era low of just 41.22 in 1932, and few foresee, that this incident may alter balances, over the remaining part of the world

4. States' Policy during the time of the League of Nations

Belgium

During WW1, Belgium was occupied by Germany, King Albert I went to the Paris Peace Conference in April 1919, where he met with the Big Four and the other leaders of France, Italy, Britain and the United States. He had four strategic goals: to restore and expand the Belgian economy, using cash reparations from Germany, to assure Belgium's security by the creation of a new buffer state on the left bank of the Rhine, to revise the obsolete for the state, Treaty of Separation in 1839 and to promote a 'rapprochement' between Belgium and the Grand duchy of Luxembourg.

United Kingdom

With the Allies during WW1 and member of the block *Entente Cordiale*, Stanley Baldwin, as leader of the Conservative Party and Prime Minister prevailed. The Dominions of United Kingdom, like Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand achieved virtual independence. Britain and France led the policy of non-interference in the Spanish Civil War. The basis of the British policy was to appease dictatorships under the scope of their inability to survive in the dorm of society. By 1930 British leaders and intellectuals largely agreed that all major powers shared the

blame for war in 1914. Therefore, they believed the punitive harshness of the Treaty of Versailles was unwarranted, and this view, adopted by politicians and the public, was largely responsible for supporting appeasement policies down to 1938.

Cuba

In April 1917, Cuba declared war to Germany. Gerardo Machado y Morales was the President and General of the Army. He started modernizing the country, while having a dictator's status. At the same time, Cuba possessed all the characteristics of an oligarchic state and the Cuban Communist party, started to form its opposition towards the Morales regime.

Canada

The British declaration of war automatically brought Canada into the war. R. B. Bennett as Canada's Conservative Prime Minister. Canada was hit hard by the Great Depression. The League's membership brought Canada, its first official contact with foreign governments, and helped establish its position as a sovereign state. League membership also presented Canada with the opportunities and the dilemmas associated with international co-operation and peace-making.

Czechoslovakia

Supporters of the Entente Cordiale during WW1 with Tomáš Masaryk as its President. Due to Hitler's advancement to power, Masaryk and his minister of foreign affairs signed a treaty which provided Czechoslovakia the Soviet Union's aid, but only in case that the Czechoslovakians won't be provided with assistance firstly from the former Alliance states, such as France.

Bulgaria

During WW1, The Kingdom of Bulgaria participated in World War I on the side of the Central Powers. Andrey Tasev Lyapchev was the Prime Minister of Bulgaria. Allies of Italy and Germany during 1930.

Switzerland

Switzerland maintained a state of armed neutrality during the First World War. – Neutrality and a safe haven for bank accounts. Jean-Marie Musy was at the time its President, coming from the Catholic-Conservative Party.

Republic of China

War against Germany during WW1 and against imperialism in its total, while the most enflaming issue for the country is the rising tensions with the Empire of Japan. In 1930, the Nationalists, having taken over power militarily and reunified China, started the second phase, promulgating a provisional constitution and beginning the period of so-called tutelage. The Kuomintang (KMT), a major political party, was criticized as instituting totalitarianism, but claimed it was attempting to establish a modern democratic society. Moreover, the Central Plains War of 1930 was a civil war between the Nationalist Kuomintang government in Nanjing led by Chiang Kai-shek and several regional military commanders that were former allies of Chiang during

the Northern Expedition, that goes from May to November 4 of 1930. Chiang Kai-shek became China's President with the Kuomintang during the period of 1930.

France

One of the main components of the Entente Cordiale, during WW1, the President of the state was Gaston Doumergue from the Radical-Socialist party, also he was the first Protestant President, he took a firm political stance against Germany and its resurgent nationalism. His seven-year term was marked by ministerial discontinuity. The Great Depression affected France in 1931. France led the major nations to call an arms blockade designed to prevent arms shipments, fearing of a civil war, to either side during the Spanish Civil War. This effort nonetheless failed to stop arms shipments from Germany, Italy and the Soviet Union.

Greece

Against Central Powers during WW1 and in favor of the Entente Cordiale, after a catastrophic civil war for the state. Its Prime Minister was the emblematic figure of Eleftherios Venizelos. During his presidency, Greece gained new territories, but lost also certain parts, due to its vigorous resistance to Turkey. Onward to this point, the Greek-Turkish relationships had a huge breakthrough, because of the political and shuttle maneuvers of the its Prime Minister before the commence of the 1930 period. However, is the country safe or could it be again a target of neighboring states?

Kingdom of Italy

Italy was a member of the Triple Alliance with Germany and Austria and Hungary. Benito Mussolini was the central political figure, which consolidated fascism for many years in Italy. Italy urges for new conquest against its previous-claimed Eastern African colonies, wanting to expand its influence on new waters.

Empire of Japan

Japan participated in World War I from 1914 to 1918 in an alliance with Entente Powers. Japanese military leaders believed that taking control of areas like Korea was an assurance of Japan's security in the East Asia region. In 1930 the Japanese army moved into Manchuria Northeast of China. Japanese leaders took the opportunity to set up what they called the autonomous state of Manchukuo, although in reality it was a military state controlled by the army. The Japanese Prime Minister was Osachi Hamaguchi at the time. The upcoming moves of the country cannot be predicted in period of our topic.

Persia

Persia was formally neutral in World War I. In reality, Persian forces were affected by the rivalry between the Allied Powers and the Central Powers and took sides based on the conditions. By the early 1930s, Reza Shah Pahlavi had close ties with Nazi Germany. The Shah worked to induce British influence with other foreign states and generally to diminish foreign influence in Iran.

Kingdom of Spain

Spain remained neutral throughout World War I. Miguel Primo de Rivera, 2nd Marquess of Estella was the Prime minister of Spain at the beginning of 1930. The Great Depression of the 1930's hit Spain hard and unemployment rose, while the Rivera did not have the ability to sort out Spain's financial mess. The army withdrew its support and Rivera had to resign. This crisis has the potent prerequisites to distort into a wider crisis covering the whole country. The outcome of this crisis, is still unknown by the 1930.

Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Yugoslavia)

In the late 1930s, internal tensions continued to increase with Serbs and Croats seeking to establish ethnic federal subdivisions. Alexander I was the king of Yugoslavia. The Kingdom nourished a close relationship with the Entente Cordiale, from World War I. This was especially the case between 1920 and 1934 with Yugoslavia's traditional supporters being, mainly Britain and France.

5. Questions to be addressed

In the following lines, you will find some issues that are of immense importance as regards our topic and should, in all cases, be debated upon during the days of the conference:

- The fear of up growth of Nazism in Germany and authoritarian regimes in Europe;
- The situation in the Soviet Russia during the interwar period;
- The unavoidable tense between the Empire of Japan and the Republic of China;
- The *Great Depression* and the economy repercussions of the League;
- The situation in the Middle East combined with the issue of disarmament;
- The empowering of peace-keeping through communication and diplomacy.

6. Conclusion

A perplex and complicated historical situation is active, in the most controversial historical crossroad of the human modern history. But, that is why the League of Nations was founded. To act as the catalyst of the whole situation, and via its influential, productive and ahead of its time work, as the very first fully-fledged international organization, to find viable solutions to any setbacks and problems that the First World War created.

To conclude, as Woodrow Wilson, former president of the USA and the man who inspired the creation of the League of Nations said:

“You are not merely to make a living. You are here in order to enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, with finer spirit of hope and achievement. You are here to enrich the world, and you impoverish yourself if you forget the errand.”

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