



MACMUN
2019

LEAGUE OF NATIONS

BACKGROUND GUIDE



The following content was developed by members of the McMaster Model United Nations conference planning team for the sole purpose of framing delegate discussions and debate at the conference and does not represent any official position of the University or anyone engaged in preparing the materials. Delegates should use this information to guide their research and preparation for the conference but should not assume that it represents a complete analysis of the issues under discussion. The materials should not be reproduced, circulated or distributed for any purpose other than as may be required in order to prepare for the conference.

Greetings delegates!

We are the Chairs for the League of Nations simulation at this year's MACMUN, and we wanted to say hi and introduce ourselves! The short lifetime of the League of Nations was an incredibly formative section of history. It provides the unique opportunity to think about how decisions could have been executed differently - and whether that would've made a measurable difference. We've been working tirelessly to make sure that we picked an exciting topic for you to experience in committee!

A quick note about who we are:

Abhayraj Jain is a third year Mechatronics Engineering student. This is his second year chairing a committee at MACMUN, and he enjoys fast-paced committees where the consequences of every decision have a chance to bear fruition - or even come back to haunt the delegates. After all, a decision at the highest political level carries a lot of weight. This is his fifth year doing Model UN in committee, but he has helped organize conferences for a little longer than that. When not debating about critical world issues, he can be found with a screwdriver or keyboard working on a project or building something.

Fatima Al-Setri is a second year student in Philosophy and Economics, and is more than excited to be chairing at MACMUN this year! She has been an avid MUN-er for about five years, and truly believes in the ability of the conference to inspire personal growth, valuable insight into the realm of politics, and great skills development for those willing to leave their comfort zone and engage in the wonderfully animated discussions we hope to have. MUN is for you, delegate. It is a safe place for you to experiment with vocalizing ideas, learning methods of discourse and public speaking that can serve you in all areas of life and professionalism, and most importantly, to learn. Each of you will leave having learned something different, or having developed particular skills at varying degrees that are unique to your own individual experiences; and if you learn anything throughout the conference, we can consider it a success. Delve into the world of international relations that so many have alienated themselves from, and hopefully we can all participate in cultivating a generation of youth that are politically literate and able to take the world by storm, challenging stale agendas and improving our world one idea at a time. But first...Roll Call!

We hope you're as excited as we are about this year's conference! We aim to be as approachable as possible, so we're always open to chat about life, the weather, the topic, or committee in general! Debating in a rigid Model UN format can be intimidating, and we're here to make sure it's a great experience for newcomers.

Best,
Abhayraj and Fatima
leagueofnations@macmun.org

“*The High Contracting Parties,
In order to promote international co-operation and to achieve international
peace and security, by the acceptance of obligations not to resort to war, ...
Agree to this Covenant of the League of Nations.*”¹

¹“The Covenant of the League of Nations.” *The American Journal of International Law* 13, no. 3 (1919): 157. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2213121>.

Committee Overview

History of the Committee

The League of Nations, officially inaugurated on January 10, 1920 and headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, was an international diplomatic organization formed after World War I². Its aim was to prevent future wars by acting as a forum for settling international disputes. The concept of the League was first proposed by President Woodrow Wilson, who spoke before the U.S. Congress on January 8, 1918, advocating for the creation of a new organization dedicated to fostering international cooperation, strengthening international security, and keeping the peace at a global scale. Although Congressional opposition meant that the United States itself never joined the League, Wilson's ideas sparked international interest and became wildly popular amongst many diplomats.³

The League was officially established after the Paris Peace Conference, which was chaired by President Wilson in December of 1918. The objective of the Conference, beyond formally ending World War I, was to formulate a list of “rules and regulations” for an international organization built to preserve world peace.⁴ The resulting document was the draft of an agreement, or “Covenant,” between nations. Less than four months later, on April 29, 1919, the final version of the Covenant of the League of Nations was adopted, and it became Part I of the Treaty of Versailles.⁵

The Covenant outlined the League of Nations’ three primary objectives: to ensure collective security; to assure functional cooperation; and to execute the mandates of peace treaties.⁶ The 42 original members of the League of Nations were also Signatories of the Treaty of Versailles. In addition, 13 additional states were invited to assent to the Covenant. The League was essentially open to all other states, provided they obtain a two-thirds majority approval in the Assembly. The organizational work of the League began in the fall of 1919, and it spent its first ten months headquartered in

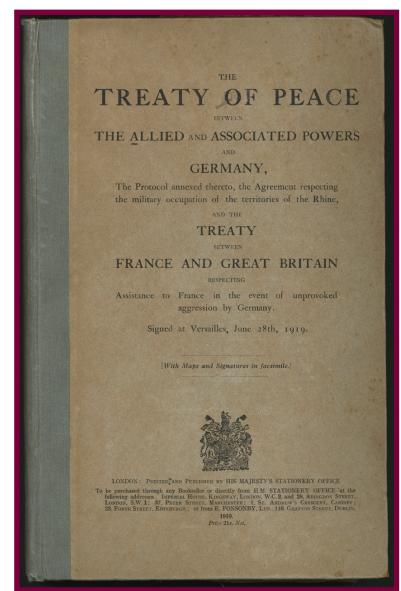


Figure 1: Treaty of Versailles, English version

² Walters, F. P. History of the League of Nations. Vol. 2, Oxford University Press, 1952.

³ Walters, F. P. History of the League of Nations. Vol. 2, Oxford University Press, 1952.

⁴ Walters, F. P. History of the League of Nations. Vol. 2, Oxford University Press, 1952.

⁵ Walters, F. P. History of the League of Nations. Vol. 2, Oxford University Press, 1952.

⁶ Walters, F. P. History of the League of Nations. Vol. 2, Oxford University Press, 1952.

London before moving to Geneva. By 1920, 48 countries had joined the League of Nations.⁷

Those absent during the Peace Conference included the Soviet Union—the Allied Powers refused to recognize the new Bolshevik Government and thus did not invite its representatives to the Conference—as well as the defeated Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey, and Bulgaria). China was present, but refused to sign the Treaty of Versailles in protest over the League awarding the German colony of Qingdao to Japan; China and the United States both signed separate treaties with Germany.⁸

Recent Activity (up to 1 April 1938)

Åland Islands

The Åland Islands dispute is an example of a territorial dispute that the League of Nations deftly managed, preventing potential war between Sweden and Finland. The Swedish-speaking Åland archipelago of 6,500 people is mid-way between the two countries. In the early 1900s, Finland had sovereignty over the Islands, but shortly after 1917 the residents of the Islands wished to secede to Sweden. This was one of the first issues entrusted to the League of Nations to solve, and at the end, the Islands were allowed autonomous governance while remaining part of Finland. It was not the secession that the residents wanted, but the ruling prevented military conflict and unwanted perceived assimilation into Finnish culture for the inhabitants.

Protocols for the Reconstruction of Austria and Hungary

Following the Great War, the Austrian and Hungarian economies were crippled by slow growth and war reparations. The League oversaw the signing of agreements between these two nations (Austria in 1922, Hungary in 1924) and the governments of the United Kingdom, France, Italy, and others. The latter nations agreed to loan Austria and Hungary money in order to begin a gradual reconstruction of the war-torn nations. The agreements also established committees to supervise the allocation of funds, and had clauses preventing the violation of Austrian and Hungarian territorial and economic independence.

The Mukden Incident

Also known as the Manchurian Incident, this was a major setback for the League, and resulted in Japan's withdrawal from the organization. There was a dispute over a section of the South Manchurian Railway, held by Japan in the Manchuria region of China. The Japanese claimed that the Chinese had sabotaged the railway, a major trade route between the two countries. In retaliation, the Japanese Army acted against its government's orders and occupied Manchuria. The League launched an investigation, but by the time the Lytton Commission arrived to conduct it, they faced conflicting reports—China asserted that the Japanese invasion was unlawful, whereas Japan claimed they were acting to keep the peace in the area. The Lytton Report

⁷ "The Covenant of the League of Nations." *The American Journal of International Law* 13, no. 3 (1919): 157. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2213121>.

⁸ Walters, F. P. *History of the League of Nations*. Vol. 2, Oxford University Press, 1952.

declared Japan to be in the wrong, and recommended that Manchuria be returned to China. However, Japan simply ignored the report and left the League.

Simulation Style/Composition of the Committee

Two designated Chairs will lead the League of Nations Committee. The session will be in the form of a Special Session of the Assembly. Since the topic is historical, the simulation will begin on April 1, 1938. The sessions will loosely resemble a crisis committee—the situation will constantly evolve, and delegates will be expected to take into account updates and developments. Every hour of the committee session will be approximately equivalent to 3 months of simulation. The Chair will keep the committee apprised of the simulation time's passing. This is to ensure that decisions made during session will affect the situation, and that fallout from those decisions is experienced further down the line.

Since only a single topic is to be discussed, discussion will take place in the form of a rolling moderated caucus. The duration of the caucus will be infinite, whereas the speaker time and topic will be modified by the Committee as discussion evolves. The caucus will be adjourned for unmoderated caucuses to discuss a draft resolution, move into voting procedure, and so on. The Chairs will open and close each meeting, recognize any points or motions on the floor, set the agenda, and facilitate the discussion. In addition, the Chairs are given the final rule on any disputed points, and will declare when motions are to be voted on by the body. It is also the decision of the Chairs to pass any draft resolution to be introduced for debate.

The Special Session of the Assembly will consist of 34 delegates representing 31 Member States and 3 Observer States. The Observer States are Italy, Japan, and the United States. They have been invited to the session due to their involvement in the issue to be discussed. Germany was invited, but has declined the invitation. The Member States are Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Colombia, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Iraq, Netherlands, Norway, Panama, Persia, Poland, Romania, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and Yugoslavia. Each Member State shall have one vote. For procedural matters, a simple majority is required to pass any motion, unless it is passed at the Chair's discretion. Substantive matters will require a simple majority vote as per the Covenant of the League of Nations.

A page will be present during the meeting to pass notes between delegates and to the Chairs, if necessary. Pages will be screening notes to ensure appropriate content, and the Chairs retain the right to read notes.

Forming Resolutions

Resolutions represent the consolidated opinions of the League of Nations' body, and act as proposed comprehensive solutions to the issues at hand. They are a final result of discussions and negotiations, and detail recommended courses of action. These papers are composed of preambulatory clauses (reasons for addressing this issue) and operative clauses (solutions to the issue). A resolution is first considered a draft resolution prior to being voted on by the committee. Resolutions will be similar in format to those used by the modern United Nations. Delegates may refer to the Resolution Adopted by the Assembly of the League of Nations at Its Meeting Held on Monday, September 22nd, 1924.

During the course of debate, delegates may work individually or collaborate with others to write a draft resolution. At the end of the debate, many draft resolutions can be submitted to the Chairs, and the Chairs will proceed to read all the draft resolutions until the delegates vote and pick the final resolution(s). The delegates writing the resolution are deemed the "sponsors" and states that support seeing the resolution presented are signed on as "signatories." Signatories are simply members who want to bring the resolution to debate; they do not have to necessarily support the resolution.



Figure 2: The Signing of Peace in the Hall of Mirrors, Versailles, 1919 (William Orpen)

For detailed instructions on how to write resolutions, including a list of preambulatory and operative phrases, and a sample resolution, please refer to our How to MUN guide on our website (macmun.org).

To better respond to time-sensitive situations, delegates may pass Directives and Communiques. Directives dictate actions to be taken, whereas Communiques pass on information or ask for information. Directives may be passed by the committee as a whole or by a group of nations working together. Directives become part of the public record and are revealed immediately after being brought to the attention of the Chair. Communiques are private communications sent from a delegate to their government. These are private unless revealed at the delegate's discretion.

Instructions for Writing Position Papers

The position paper is a detailed essay of your country's policies and position on the topic to be discussed in the committee. This will help you to organize your thoughts and successfully engage with the committee. You are required to submit a paper to be eligible for any conference award, and the writer of the best position paper in each committee will be given the Book Award.

Your position paper will tackle three main areas:

1. Discussing the topic in general
2. Giving background information on your country and their relation to this issue
3. Outlining why your country has taken certain stances historically, and what your solutions are to the current problems.

Include your name, assigned country, and committee. Please do not include illustrations, diagrams, decorations, national symbols, watermarks, or page borders.

Length: 1 page per topic.

Format: Times New Roman, size 12, single-spaced.

Citation style: Your choice (please include a reference page; not counted in page limit).

Due to: Sunday, February 3rd at 11:59pm to leagueofnations@macmun.org

For detailed instructions on how to write a position paper, including a template and sample paper, please refer to our How To MUN guide on our website (<https://www.macmun.org/>).

Where to Start Your Research

<https://search.un.org/> contains the official League of Nations archives (select LoN from the drop down menu of the search box.)

https://treaties.un.org/Pages/LONOnline.aspx?clang=_en contains a League of Nations Treaty Series, from the UN Treaty Collection.

<http://digital.library.northwestern.edu/league/background.html> League of Nations Statistical and Disarmament Documents (from Northwestern University.)

<http://treaties.fco.gov.uk/docs/pdf/1924/TS0037.pdf> the official League of Nations Covenant in pdf form.

Topic: Special Session of the Assembly Convened To Discuss the Anschluss

“War is progress, peace is stagnation”
— Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel

“Wars are poor chisels for carving
out peaceful tomorrows.”
— Martin Luther King, Jr.

The pages of history are written by the victors. Today, you have a chance to rewrite it. What will you choose?

Introduction

The key issue posing a threat to international stability today is the recent German-Austrian Anschluss. Anschluss refers to the German Annexation of Austria, which took place in March 1938. As a body of representatives concerned with maintaining global peace, the main concern here is that the union between the two European nations grants Germany's leading party, the National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nazi Party), a dangerously large sphere of influence and the ability to further extend its aggressive foreign policy into other parts of Europe and the world. The focus here is not to antagonize any one country, but to formulate a resolution that can effectively demobilize German troops and provide strong incentive for the Nazi Party to remain politically nonviolent. This act from Germany has blatantly undermined the Treaty of Versailles, as well as the authority of the League. It is imperative now that we preserve the League of Nation's legitimacy through taking decisive action to prevent other nations from violating peace agreements and militarizing, leading to further escalation and the threat of global warfare.

History and Background

The Great War is widely regarded as one of the largest wars in history, lasting four years (1914-1918) and claiming millions of lives. The League of Nations was formed as a direct result of this war, with the primary goal of avoiding conflicts going forward by providing an international forum to voice grievances.

The years before the Great War were filled with turmoil and an unstable political climate. The polarization of power in Europe was a major contributing factor. Alliances were formed due to mutual distrust of neighbouring countries or other strategic reasons. Territorial disputes, annexation of territories, and smaller wars occurred steadily in the years leading up to the Great War. The alliances culminated in the formation of two major sides—the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente. The keystone of the alliances was a promise of collective defense and retaliation

⁹ "Quotes on Human Rights." United Nations Population Fund. Accessed January 04, 2018. <http://www.unfpa.org/resources/quotes-human-rights>.

if any member were attacked—which meant that any small dispute could evolve into a multinational incident.¹⁰

The late 1800s played host to a global arms race, with every major power preparing for a massive war, despite not explicitly expecting one. The preparations resulted in millions of soldiers in standing armies across Europe. The First and Second Hague Conferences (1899 & 1907) discussed disarmament, but ultimately failed to solve the problem.¹¹

The tensions continued mounting until the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand began a chain of events leading in war. The Great War lasted longer than all expectations of such a conflict at the time—wars in the decades leading up to 1914 had lasted a few months. By the end of the War, the economies of many nations were in shambles, and the victors drafted treaties with clauses of reparation to recover from the massive costs of war.

The Treaty of Versailles (or Treaty of Peace between the Allied and Associated Powers and Germany) was the first of these.¹² The Treaty stripped Germany of part of its territory, greatly limited its military power, and demilitarized the Rhineland. To compensate for the destruction of France's coal mines, Germany would cede the output of the Saar coal mines to France for 15 years. The London Schedule of Payments established the “full liability of all the Central Powers combined, not just Germany alone,” at 132 billion gold marks (about \$658.4 billion Canadian dollars in 2018).¹³ The burden of 50 billion marks payment would fall upon Germany alone. This sum wreaked further havoc on the economies of the losing parties.

From the beginning of the reparation payments, the affected nations were often defaulting in one way or another. In Germany, initial coal deliveries were below the level agreed upon. This continued until January 1923, when the Reparation Commission voted to occupy the Ruhr in order to enforce Germany's commitments. Various measures were implemented over the following years, until the collapse of the largest bank in Austria (Creditanstalt) caused a banking crisis in Germany and Austria in 1931. A moratorium on reparation and war debts led to an end to Germany's reparation payments for good, in light of the Great Depression and other economic factors.¹⁴

¹⁰ Albertini, Luigi. *The Origins of the War of 1914*. Enigma Books, 2005.

¹¹ Hinsley, F. H. “Material Progress and World-Wide Problems.” *The New Cambridge Modern History*. Cambridge University Press (1898). Print.

¹² “Treaty of Versailles.” Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/law/help/us-treaties/bevans/m-ust000002-0043.pdf.

¹³ Marks, Sally. “The Myths of Reparations.” *Central European History*, vol. 11, no. 3, 1978, pp. 231–255. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/4545835.

¹⁴ Albrecht-Carrie, Rene. “Versailles Twenty Years After.” *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 55, no. 1, 1940, pp. 1-24, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/2143772.

Current Situation

The current situation, as of April 1, 1938, can be compared to the years before the Great War. Alliances like the Anti-Comintern Pact between Germany and Japan are similar to the alliances formed before the Great War, and are a symptom of mistrust between nations of the world. The principles of expansionism and militarism that led to the outbreak of war are resurgent. Germany's remilitarization of the Rhine in 1936 was in direct violation of the Treaty of Versailles—as is the German-Austrian Anschluss. The exception to this general environment of precarious mistrust is in Asia: Japan's invasion of China is already in full swing, with large swathes of China already under Japanese control and a Japanese naval blockade in place.¹⁵

Certain aspects of the treaties signed at the end of the Great War could be considered one-sided. However, the League of Nations is intended to be an open forum to discuss matters like this without bringing in military action. The current Special Session of the Assembly Convened to Discuss the Anschluss has been convened to discuss exactly this. If the treaties are no longer relevant to the modern political climate, they must be amended to prevent further escalation. If not amended, they must be enforced to keep the peace.

Bloc Analysis

The rise in tensions caused by the German Anschluss as well as other recent developments has led to a stark polarization between countries, many of whom have taken a decisive stance in their foreign policy and have begun to form strategic alliances. These alliances essentially formed on the basis of some powers being anti-war and others expansionist, while other nations chose to remain neutral, not standing alongside any particular side.

Anti-War Allies

The Allied powers have formed an alliance in response to the rising threat of war, with the intent to de-escalate events and prevent war from breaking out. The main ideological consensus between the participating powers is that the status quo must remain as it is, with each country wishing to preserve its sovereign borders without the threat of invasion from opposing sides. The main Allied powers are the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and China. Though bonded by their anti-war beliefs, each respective leader of the Allied nations has different long-term ideas should war actually break out. Britain, under the leadership of Churchill, has plans to prevent Germany from expanding its Nazi regime. The United States, under President Roosevelt, wishes to put an end to the fascist regimes of Japan, Italy and Germany, as well as to increase its influence over Europe. The main goal of the Soviet Union under Stalin is to preserve communism and, like the United States, oppose the fascist regimes of its opponents.

¹⁵ Harries, Meirion, and Susan Harries. *Soldiers of the Sun: the Rise and Fall of the Imperial Japanese Army*. Random House, 1992.

Expansionists

Expansionism is the military ideology that the participating nations use to expand their respective spheres of influence through territorial expansion, allowing them to spread their political and cultural influence. The main expansionist powers are: Germany, led by Adolf Hitler; Italy, led by Benito Mussolini; and Japan, led by Emperor Hirohito. This is a strategic alliance held together by the motivations of the three powers to expand their regimes by force, and spread their fascist ideologies to other parts of Europe and the world. Each power, through mutual support of the others' military agenda and ideological similarities, is able to more confidently expand knowing they have military support from one another. The three nations are also bonded by their wish to dismantle the Soviet Union's communist regime, and to respect each other's control over their respective geographic areas.

Neutral

The nations that decided to remain neutral, that is, not to explicitly side with any particular powers, include: Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Greece, the Netherlands, Norway, Persia, Poland, Yugoslavia, Austria, Egypt, Turkey, Colombia, Cuba, Switzerland, Finland, and Albania.

Asia

Although the League of Nations is convening to discuss the situation in Europe, war is already well underway in Asia; Japanese forces have already seized large parts of China and blockaded its coasts. Two key factors helping Japan are the fact that Chinese troops are split between two fronts (one against Japan, and one against the Chinese Communists), and that most of the League is distracted by the events in Europe. Japan has strategically avoided impacting European colonial interests in Asia, while China is in favour of more help from the international community. Other states (Siam, the Soviet Union, the United States, etc.) have other interests in Asia, and these interests will be impacted in different ways depending on the extent to which delegates focus on the events in Central Europe rather than East Asia.

Committee Mission

As of now, the main concern of the League of Nations is to move quickly and decisively to prevent tensions from escalating to war. The aim of the Session is to form a resolution that calls not only for demilitarization, but also for the fair treatment of countries involved with regards to the demanding terms of the *Treaty of Versailles*. The Committee must acknowledge that this is a time-sensitive crisis, yet one with the main goal of the Assembly being to achieve lasting and sustainable peace.

Focus Questions

1. Should the Treaty of Versailles be reworked to fit into the current political climate, or should it be enforced as it stands?
2. How can the League serve its purpose when key players are not members, and existing members keep leaving?
3. Should the League focus on defusing the crisis in Europe, or stopping the war in Asia?
4. To what extent has the Treaty of Versailles, the harsh terms imposed on Germany, and the resulting decades of economic hardship led to the current crisis?
5. How did the League successfully resolve the Åland Islands' crisis, and why did the League fail with the Sudetenland crisis, despite similar arguments made by Sweden and Germany, respectively?

WRITTEN BY:

Abhayraj Jain
Fatima Al-Setri

EDITED BY:

William Li

MANAGING EDITOR:

Takhliq Amir

FORMATTING:

Gursharan Sohi

COVER DESIGN:

Michelle Yao

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