

Background information

The Rhineland is a region between the German-French border that is well known for its industry and raw materials like Coal, which is essential for a military power. At the end of World War One the Germans were forced to demilitarize the Rhineland and the German Army was not allowed to be within 50 km of this region. In addition to this French, Belgian, British, and USA troops were allowed to occupy the Rhineland, which stirred up feelings of resentment amongst Germans.

In 1925, the European nations signed the Locarno Treaty which was a peaceful attempt to solidify the new borders of Germany and ensure peace through Europe. Interestingly this treaty caused the Allied troops to finally evacuate the Rhineland by 1930. But soon in 1933, the Nazi party was elected to power with Adolf Hitler as their leader. Hitler was an outspoken critic of the Treaty of Versailles, and during his reign he actively violated the terms of the treaty. It is important to note that it was clear to the Germans that any violation of the terms will be met with intervention from the League of the League of Nations (includes France and Britain). Hitler knew that the Allies were too weak to fight back so he took multiple gambles, the first being the remilitarization of the German War Machine, and the reoccupation of the Rhineland.

In 1936, the Nazis sent approximately 32,000 soldiers to the Rhineland in open opposition to the Treaty but instead of arming them with guns and tanks, Hitler sent them with drums and bicycles. The soldiers were forbidden to fire any shots and were instructed to retreat if met with armed resistance. After this bloodless occupation occurred, a referendum was held with the results of 98.8 % of the inhabitants approving of the Nazi presence. Diplomatically, this was Hitler's message to the world that he is not afraid to break the treaty.

PRAMUN XII: Historical Committee
Topic 1 — **Rheinland Remilitarization**

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Note: the Rhineland was a strategic position as it was on the French border and provided good natural barriers because of the hills.



Positions

Delegates please make sure that you understand the policies of your nations. In order for us to have the full experience of this unique committee delegates must represent the policies of your nation. Note that this is one of the issues which lead up to the break out of World War Two. Because no one opposed Hitler's move on the Rhineland, it reinforced Hitler's ambition to grow German influence: annexing Austria and the Sudetenland. Interestingly, if Hitler never had the Rhineland he could of have been easier to defeat him in the War.

1. **The Rhinelanders**

2. **Czechoslovakia**

3. **Great Britain**

4. **Germany**

5. **France**

6. **Italy**

7. **USSR**

8. **Yugoslavia**

9. **Romania**

10. **Finland**

11. **Poland**

12. **Hungary**

13. **Austria (to be annexed)**

14. **Greece**

15. **Belgium**

16. **Portugal**

17. **USA**

Germany and its Allies (the Axis)

Nazi Germany was still developing and was not strong enough to go to war and did not want to aggravate the Allies, which is why Hitler chose a more 'peaceful' approach. Hitler viewed the reoccupation of the Rhineland as an opportunity to redeem Germany from the humiliations in WW1. In addition, this was an opportunity to secure industrial centres that would help Germany rebuild its military. Note that Germany saw this land as their right, so the Germans were in support with Hitler's policies.

Despite signing the treaty of Locarno Italy, and Germany, had no intention of upholding the promise as Mussolini proceeded to go to war with Abyssinia (Ethiopia).

Austria will soon be annexed by the Germans, so the Nazi party had a presence in Austria.

The Locarno Treaty

This Treaty was signed between the nations that bordered Germany to ensure that no wars would break out, and all the signatories were forbidden from going to war.

For the smaller nations this was a significant treaty because it secured their safety. Countries like Poland and Czechoslovakia were able to guarantee a way to protect their newly acquired lands, but eventually this treaty will prove to be useless.

Neutral/Pacifist

Most of Europe was tired of fighting and were unwilling to get dragged into another war. Most of the countries on this list were neutral. Meaning that as a delegate of this country are willing to do anything to avoid war, hence the policy of German Appeasement.

Britain did not care too much about the remilitarization of the Rhineland because they wanted to see a stronger German Army that could balance out the French and the

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Soviets. In addition, the population was generally sympathetic to the Germans and viewed the Rhineland remilitarization as their right. In addition, Britain wanted to distance themselves from the issues of mainland Europe.

Nations Against German Remilitarization

France and Belgium were at the centre of World War One, resulting in a lot of destruction and feeling of resentment towards the Germans. Despite the Treaty of Versailles outlining that Germany had to pay reparations to the Allies some felt that it was not enough.

Belgium was destroyed during WW1 as Germany violated its neutrality, which is why Belgium was so keen on making sure Germany does not regain power.

France wanted the Rhineland for themselves and were determined to make sure that Germany paid for all the havoc it caused. But the delegate must remember that France did not want to go to war without Britain, and were going through tough elections during this time. This resulted in France's inability to respond to the remilitarization

French-Soviet Treaty of Mutual Assistance

Both France and the USSR viewed Germany as a potential threat and wanted to ensure that it could never rise to power again.

As outlined before, France was keen on making sure that Germany, its rival, could never threaten it again.

The USSR was still recovering from a Civil War and were ensuring their safety from the Germans. The Soviet Union will eventually sign a Treaty of Mutual Assistance with the Nazis, which will be later violated by Hitler.