

U N REPORT

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS - PART II
DECLINE AND FALL

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PEACE PALACE

NARR: The United Nations has its European headquarters in Geneva, in that very palace built in the 1920's and '30's as a home for the League of Nations.

GENEVA

For ten years after the First World War, Geneva had been beacon and a sign for the peacemakers; in 1930, the flame was seen to be flickering but it was still fueled by the hopes of millions.

TITLES OVER FILM

UNITED NATIONS TELEVISION PRESENTS:

THE LEAGUE:
DECLINE AND FALL

GENEVA
LAKE, HOTELS
FLAGS

Geneva's lake seemed no less cheerful to the delegates of 1930, nor were the breezes less bracing. But Wall Street had crashed, world trade was down. Men were jobless and hungry in the midst of plenty.

PALAIS
CONSTRUCTION

It was against this dark sky that the walls of the Peace Palace rose. In every capital, the mood was one of suspicion and distrust: new forms of political extremism were loose and at work.

DELEGATES ARRIVING
ASSEMBLY INTERIOR

The new hall was not yet ready so the delegates met downtown. Fifty nations joining together to keep the peace and advance the good. Yet the clouds of war were plain to farseeing men and among these a passionate defender of peace was Aristide

Briand of France.

BRIAND SPEAKS

BRIAND (SYNC): Il leur suffira de dire - plus de guerre nous n'acceptons pas que dans aucun cas, pour aucune cause, dans aucune circonstance, la guerre que nous avons clouee au pilori comme un crime puisse se reveiller contre les peuples.

BRIAND RETURNS
TO SEAT

Briand knew that peace rested on agreement between France and Germany and he campaigned vigorously for this cause. Among those who cheered him that day were two men from Britain, Lord Robert Cecil and Phillip Noel-Baker.

ESTABLISHING SHOT
PHILIP NOEL-BAKER

Forty years later, at home in London, those memories were still vivid to Philip Noel-Baker.

PHILIP NOEL-
BAKER

NOEL-BAKER (SYNC): The Assembly had become an instrument of tremendous power by 1930-31 because most prime ministers...well, not most...but a large number of prime ministers and a great number of foreign ministers always came to the Assembly. And the foreign ministers stayed from the first day to the last. It was a body of very high authority indeed.

When I look at the Security Council now, when I think back from that to the days when Arthur Henderson and Stressman and Briand and Austen Chamberlain and Lord Balfour and other people of that calibre went to sit in the Council of the League, gave it a world prestige which made it impossible for governments to reject its findings. I'm afraid I think we've gone downhill in that regard a very great deal.

VARIOUS SHOTS
OF COUNCIL

EDEN, ..
AVENOL
LITVINOV AT
COUNCIL TABLE

In the first decade of its existence the Council of the League had acquired a bedrock authority: its decisions might sometimes be criticized or condemned, but nobody ignored or flaunted the Council itself. It was the peace-keeping body of the League, that part of the machine which acted quickly when there was danger in the Baltic, or the Mediterranean or the Yellow Sea.

In 1925, it brought a full stop to what had appeared to be inevitable war between Greece and Bulgaria.

PEOPLE DESCENDING
STAIRS
EXTERIOR SHOTS
OF DELEGATES

LEAVING
MEETINGS
DELEGATES
CONVERSING

At such times Geneva was the hub of the world, its stars a Who's Who of the diplomacy of the age.

Benes came for Czechoslovakia, and Briand appeared with Julius Curtius, the German Foreign Minister.

CROWDS LINING
UP WATCHING
DELEGATES

The world of diplomacy, formerly closed and obscure, had opened up at last -- even to the newsreel cameras.

NEWSREEL CLIPS
OLD TITLES SEQUENCE
GENEVE WITH MUSIC
PRESS ROOM JOURNALISTS
WITH OLD NARRATION

"Journalists talking with M. Laval, the French Prime Minister. The informal manner in which the press obtains its information in Geneva marks a new departure in international practice.

PRESS ROOM

Here is the press room where sometimes as many as 400 journalists compose their messages which are then despatched by a

special telegraph and telephone office all over the world. From this room it is possible to speak with countries as far away as America, India and China.

PICTURE JOURNALISTS
AT BAR

The bar where journalists refresh themselves in the intervals of obtaining copy. It is naturally here that most of the comments are made."

FILING ROOM

The staff of the League, now 600 strong, kept things running and collected the facts and figures for all.

RONEO MACHINISTS

SECRETARIAT MEMBER ON
TELEPHONE

BROADCASTING
STATION

The League was on the air with shortwave transmitters to carry its programs to far continents.

PUBLICATIONS

It printed pamphlets on child welfare, the opium trade, the armament statistics of the world.

While over all this activity there presided the genial figure of Sir Eric Drummond, the League's first Secretary-General.

INTERNATIONAL LABOR
ORGANIZATION

Alongside the League, but independent of it, was the International Labor Organization. A forum

VARIOUS SHOTS OF
BUILDING

for workers, employers and governments, all pledged to improve conditions of labor.

INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR

INTERNATIONAL
COURT

In The Hague, the newly established World Court was in session. Also independent of the League but with judges elected by the League, the Court gave judgement on legal disputes among the nations.

PHILIP NOEL-BAKER

NOEL-BAKER (SYNC): And by the time the League began to break up, the Court had dealt with 30 or 40 cases, some of them advisory opinions but almost equally as binding as the verdicts. The Council of the League had dealt with scores of disputes, some of them very important between great powers. They had not only settled the disputes and secured a peaceful agreement in every case. They had stopped four wars within a week. And attempt after attempt had been made to prepare the disarmament which would get rid of the militarist forces that make for war and which would leave the League free to operate in a world of law and on the basis of the law. And then there came the Disarmament Conference.

VOICE OVER
PREPARATORY COMMISSION
DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE

DELEGATES ARRIVE
FOR
PEACE CONFERENCE

In high optimism, the spokesmen of the military powers assembled in Geneva in February of 1932. Some were non-members of the League like the United States, one of whose delegates was Mary Woolley.

MARY WOOLLEY

MARY WOOLLEY (SYNC): May this conference mean a long step forward towards friendliness and goodwill among the nations and races of the world.

ARTHUR HENDERSON

Britain's Arthur Henderson, President of the Disarmament Conference, warned what might happen if it failed.

ARTHUR HENDERSON
VOICE OVER SHOTS
OF THE ASSEMBLY

HENDERSON (SYNC): The world will again be in danger of rapidly expanding armaments. Are we ready to face our task?

JAPANESE DELEGATE

DELEGATE (SYNC): I may venture to make concrete suggestion. The Japanese delegation are in favor of reduction in the size of battleships and in the calibre of their guns.

SIGNIOR GRANDI

GRANDI (SYNC): Dans les domaines navales, un: abolition simultanee des batiments de lignes et des sousmarins. Deux: abolition des navires porte-avions.

PHILIP NOEL BAKER

NOEL BAKER (SYNC): Mussolini's foreign minister Grandi had taken a very strong line in favor of proposals for drastic all round disarmament which were put forward by President Hoover on behalf of the United States.

Those proposals were accepted unexpectedly by Russia as being an adequate first step. They were accepted unexpectedly by Germany as being an adequate first step. Japan was against, but only mildly in the sense that the Japanese militarist opposition could have been overcome. Britain and France hesitated. They hesitated too long. After Hitler had come into power, Eden put up a draft treaty.....rather Ramsey MacDonald put it up but Eden and Alec Cadogan and General Temperly had prepared it on our behalf. They put up a draft disarmament treaty which could quite easily have succeeded if it had been put forward six months sooner.

EDEN

EDEN (SYNC): Well, I think you could say that in theory it was as near as that. I mean we did come quite close and I think that the convention that Ramsey MacDonald presented at the end with all the figures in it could conceivably, on paper at least, have achieved what it sought. But of course behind it all was the arrival of Hitler and I don't think that once that had happened and all the things that Hitler stood for, and that he was determined to do, I doubt whether anything we could have reached agreement upon, if we could have, would have stood for very long, because he would have found some pretext to see that it didn't.

HITLER SURROUNDED BY
ADMIRING CROWDS
MARCHING WITH BANNERS
MARCHING WITH SWASTIKAS
MARCHING WITH RAISED RIGHT ARMS
HITLER AT WINDOW

The Disarmament Conference failed - synchronously with Hitler's rise to power. He denounced the Versailles Treaty, quit the League and started massive rearmament. Yet the first direct threat came not from Germany, but Japan.

JAPANESE SHINTO
CEREMONY
BLESSING THE
TROOPS

The priests bless an army leaving to conquer Manchuria, China's northernmost province.

DOCK SHOT
CROWDS CHEER
DEPARTING TROOPS

Japan's forces had seized this territory in 1931, creating there the so-called state of Manchukuo.

AEROPLANES BOMBING
WOUNDED ON GROUND
REFUGEES

The road to World War II was open, and the first refugees in a column that was to be forty years long trundled past the cameras.

ASSEMBLY SHOT

Faced with this first act of open defiance, the League met quickly to consider the seizure of Manchuria. But no government was anxious to be the first to confront the aggressor. The Assembly sent out an investigating commission to see and to report under the chairmanship of a British diplomat, Lord Lytton.

LYTTON AND
INVESTIGATING
COMMISSION
TOUR RUINS

By the time Lytton came back to Geneva with his report, thirteen months had passed since the Japanese invasion.

LYTTON

LYTTON (SYNC): We found that the Japanese occupation of this large part of China was not justified on the grounds of self defence. And that the new state which has been set up was a Japanese protectorate rather than a genuine case of Manchurian self-determination.

JAPANESE DELEGATE

DELEGATE (SYNC): Japan's policy is fundamentally inspired by a genuine desire to guarantee peace

in the Far East, and to contribute to the maintenance of peace throughout the world. Japan however finds it impossible to accept the report adopted by the Assembly.

JAPANESE DELEGATION
WALKING OUT

Japan's delegates knew well that there was no real power behind the League's condemnation. They packed their briefcases, smiled and walked out of the League. But by now, the USSR was alarmed at developments in Asia and Europe and asked to join the League. The Soviet delegate was Maxim Litvinov.

CLOSEUP MAXIM
LITVINOV

LITVINOV (SYNC): Toutefois je suis convaincu que si on a la volonte ferme, et si tous les membres sont desires de collaborer etroitement empecher beaucoup de choses pour reduire au minimum les dangers de guerre.

COUNCIL SCENES

With the Soviet Union as a new member, the Council took up the destiny of a pocket of land between France and Germany where an international military force was despatched to ensure order in a plebiscite. The Saarlanders were, overwhelmingly German-speaking; and they voted to join Germany rather than France. Yet the plebiscite was run fairly and the anti-Nazis were able to leave safely.

SHOTS OF PEACEKEEPING
TROOPS IN SAAR

SHOTS OF VOTING

CLOSEUP MUSSOLINI
SHOTS OF MUSSOLINI
ADDRESSING CROWDS IN
ROME

But now a graver threat was looming from the south In Africa, Mussolini's armor was poised on the frontiers of Ethiopia, his soldiers sworn to wipe out the humiliation of Adowa -- where Ethiopian tribesmen had defeated Italy in 1896. Haile

ITALIAN ARMORED CARS

ETHIOPIAN TROOPS

Selassie mobilized his troops, armed mostly with ancient rifles.

EXTERIOR SHOT OF
LEAGUE
COUNCIL SCENES

At Geneva the gathering Ethiopian crisis dominated these weeks. The Council met repeatedly, and among its members was a young British minister who had been sent to Rome to try to ward off the Italian invasion: Anthony Eden, later Lord Avon.

CU ANTHONY EDEN
(in 1935)

LORD AVON

LORD AVON (SYNC): Mussolini, in my experience, was a perfectly reasonable person to talk with. The histrionics were all kept for when there were more than one or two gathered together. At least that was my experience. We had an extremely difficult meeting. I completely failed to make any impression. Looking back on it now I think he'd made up his mind long before ever I arrived in Rome. I remember one thing in particular which struck me one time and he said "Now Adowa, look at Adowa, we have to avenge Adowa" and it struck me as such an extraordinary point of view. I said 'what would happen to us, the British, if we had to do that. We've had so many defeats. I don't know where we'd begin. Would we have to avenge Bunker Hill and if so where would that lead us?' And for a moment he smiled but only for a moment. And there's no doubt it had eaten into him that Italy had got to win back this lost reputation, as he thought, it was over Adowa.

ITALIAN TROOPS
FIRING ARTILLERY

October 1935. Italy strikes at Ethiopia. The League brands Italy an aggressor but can do little to help the retreating Ethiopians. The Council calls for economic sanctions, tries to twist Mussolini's arm with a trade embargo. But the Italian army rolls on.

EXPLOSIONS AND DEAD
BODIES

ASSEMBLY
M. TECLE
HAWARIATE

SHAWARIATE (SYNC): The Ethiopian Government has the duty in all loyalty to proclaim that, having been made subject to an unjust war, and being determined to defend its independence and its integrity to death, however long that war may last. It will not yield to force.

BARON ALOISI
ITALY

BARON ALOISI (SYNC): Mr. President and gentlemen, war is not suppressed, it is replaced. And it is replaced because history does not stand still. If for its part the League of Nations stood still, history which cannot be forced by the application of sanctions would continue on its way for its way is the way of life.

EDEN

EDEN (SYNC): The League has two main tasks. First to avert war by the just and peaceful settlements of all disputes. Secondly, if we fail in our first objective, to stop war. And it is by the League's effectiveness in realising this aim that the League will be judged.

ITALIAN BOMBERS
BOMBS FALLING
HUTS ON FIRE

Sanctions did not keep the Italian bombers from taking off. Mussolini's son told reporters how agreeable it was to bomb the tribesmen. After seven months of fighting, the Italian Army marched into Addis Ababa and the Negus fled his country.

HAILE SELASSIE ARRIVES
GENEVA STATION

To Geneva on the 30th of June 1936 came the man without a country. The League's delegates had failed him, though they were still prepared to listen to his words. But high up in the press gallery a group of Italian propagandists had other plans.

SELASSIE MOUNTING
PODIUM
SHOTS OF RIOT
IN PRESS GALLERY

SELASSIE

SELASSIE (SYNC): Je prie l'Assemble de m'excuser si je ne m'exprime pas en francais....toutes mes pensees avec toute la force de mon esprit et de mon coeur en parlant en amharique.

SELASSIE LEAVES

APPLAUSE ..
DELEGATES

Within a month civil war flared up in Spain. Soon Hitler was to snuff out Austria and Czechoslovakia after that; but with the going of Selassie the League ended its life as a peacekeeping body. Collective security was dead. The teeth of aggression were bared and the sword was out of the scabbard.

AGGRESSION
SEQUENCEMARCHING JAPANESE
GERMANS, ITALIANS
LEAGUE EXTERIOR

Almost as though it were moved by a sense of guilt, the League turned its primal energies to the humanitarian field. Thwarted as a guardian of the peace, it nevertheless found other work to do: putting down the slave trade in Liberia; setting optimum housing standards for every region; tightening controls on narcotic drugs and persuading governments to exchange information on violators; laying the groundwork for a world bank; launching a campaign against malaria; 250 million cases a year. Collecting up the best brains to write a milestone report on the relationship between good food and good health.

LEAGUE INTERIORS

OPIUM TRADE

COMMITTEES

MALARIA

NUTRITION COMMITTEE

CLOSEUP AVENOL

The new Secretary-General -- Joseph Avenol of France -- pressed on with this work until the war put a Fascist ring around Switzerland and cut off

Geneva from the rest of the world.

AERIAL SHOT OF
PEACE PALACE

Those were five dark years when the light of Geneva faded to a memory. It was far away in San Francisco that the new torch was to be lighted.

In 1946, the last Assembly of the League of Nations convened in Geneva to hand over its assets and responsibilities to the newborn United Nations. Presiding then was Carl Hambro of Norway.

HAMBRO TAPS GAVEL
(SYNC SOUND)

HAMBRO (SYNC): I now declare the Twenty-first and last Assembly of the League of Nations closed.

EDVARD HAMBRO
TAPS GAVEL

HAMBRO (SYNC): The meeting is called to order. Ladies and gentlemen, as you know, this is an unique and historical occurrence which takes place today.

It is a generation later. In New York, the President of the General Assembly is now the son of Carl Hambro -- the man whose gavel brought the League to an end. Today, Edvard Hambro is in the chair at a meeting of Nobel Prize winners -- and one of them is a man whose eyes had seen it all -- the entire life cycle of the League and the first quarter century of the United Nations.....Philip Noel-Baker.

13.

PHILIP
NOEL-BAKER

VOICEOVER
SPANISH CIVIL WAR
MUNICH
WORLD WAR II

NOEL-BAKER (SYNC): Those who said more armaments would make their nations safe, only led their nations to disasters never dreamed of in human history before. Aggressive wars in Manchuria, in the Chacco, in Abyssinia, in Spain. The League's collapse, Munich, the Second war. With 17 million soldiers killed in battle, 6 million Jews gassed to death, 6 million Poles massacred by firing squads. More than 50 million human beings who lost their lives. In the burning of Hamburg, of Dresden, of Tokyo, scores of thousands of little children who ran around like human torches in those hellish conflagrations till they died. The oldest fallacy in any language 'if you want peace, prepare for war'.

How much more so, those who today put their faith in nuclear bombs. The truth is that the armaments themselves now create the danger against which they are supposed to guard.

WIDE SHOT
CONFERENCE

The search for a way to control those arms -- and those emotions -- still goes on. The Nations still send their delegates to New York and also to Geneva to work for peace.

SHOTS OF PEACE
PALACE

Some say there are better ways to tame the beast within us. Some have visions and dreams of a peaceful planet in a golden age. But those who must work for peace with their eyes open know that this is as close as we have come.

CLOSING TITLES
SUPERIMPOSED ON
PEACE PALACE.

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