**OIB Exemplar Scripts 2021**

**History Script J**

**Explain how the policy of appeasement affected international relations in the 1930s**

The policy of appeasement’s goal was to satisfy the Nazi regime with conceded land in order to avoid another war. Indeed, countries such as France and Britain were still in shock after the violence of the First World War and tried their best not to repeat history. Although, Germany did not adopt the same theory, and international relations were very tense. Benito Mussolini said that “We (Italy) must try to build ourselves up so that we can look Germany in the eye, if and whenever that need arises.” This shows that even between future allies, relations were tense.

The League of Nations attempted to stop Germany from provoking another war but Germany simply left the union and the weak sanctions could not be applied. This bold act proved to the world that the League of Nations was powerless and nothing could be done to stop Hitler in his ideology. Even though Germany left the L.o.N., France and Britain decided to concede part of Czechoslovakia, which outraged the population and showed how weak Britain and France were. This added to the already tense situation in Europe as Britain and France were ready to concede land they did not possess, to avoid war.

Finally, the inaction of France and Britain as Germany re-militarised the Rhineland, although it was banned by the Treaty of Versailles, was the most significant factor as it proved to Hitler that he could do what he deemed and nothing could stop him. This, although illegal but bold move, is the major turning point towards war as France began constructing the Maginot Line, fundamentally proving that the policy of appeasement did not work, but only increased tensions between countries and showed Germany that they could do as they pleased, as France and Britain would not step in. This policy also created a sense of distrust between countries, specifically Britain and France, although they were close allies.

**How far do you agree that the economic factors were the most important underlying cause of the slide towards WW2?**

“Hitler’s fundamental intention to dominate the world in order to establish his caste system, could not be achieved without war.” – Elizabeth Wiskemann, a famous historian. Indeed, Hitler’s goals were to dominate the world and introduce a caste system which would allow him to have absolute control over all aspects of an individual’s life. The 1929 Wall Street Crash was the cause of an enormous economic depression worldwide, which allowed him to take power in 1933. Although economic factors were important in the slide towards war, political and social unrest were also driving underlying factors leading to war in 1939.

The Wall Street Crash was undeniably the most violent economic depression in the 20th Century, resulting in unemployment and poverty all over the world, including the USA and Germany. Rising unemployment and poverty were devastating for the population of Germany as food was hard to come by, which led to social unrest, and eventually the rise of nationalism. In order to protect their economies and industries, many countries began nationalising private sectors, such as Japan and the banking sector, which only slowed the ‘Crise de Showa’ in 1937, which was the late arrival of the Wall Street Crash in Japan’s economy. The USA adopted an isolationist economic scheme, which aimed to protect domestic industries from international imports. The closing off of economies did not have a positive impact on the world, and especially Germany, whose right-wing policies began obtaining more votes, finally leading to Hitler’s election.

The Wall Street Crash also had a dramatic effect on monetary values worldwide, which added to the already critical situation. Indeed, Germany suffered from hyper-inflation, worsening the already difficult economic situation. This implied that workers and middle classes could no longer buy essential products, leading to a famine. Most importantly, the huge crippling debt that had been imposed on Germany by the Treaty of Versailles was not lifted in order to help with the crisis, which led the German economy to collapse and growing unemployment. On the contrary, Japan experienced a severe deflation which, added to the banks’ collapse, was catastrophic. A famine was provoked, even though the rice productions were at a peak. These violent economic breakdowns allowed right-wing parties to gain attention in Germany, and a more violent imperial regime in Japan in the 1930s, imposing anti-communist laws, which created a sense of insecurity in the country.

In order to repair their economies, Japan and Germany required more space and workers. To achieve this, both countries began their expansionist ideologies, Japan invading Manchuria after a staged terrorist attack from the Chinese, to benefit from more space to develop their economy, while exploiting local raw materials on an international level. This also allowed Japan to have a continental foothold and a first line of defence. Most importantly, this allowed Japan to assert its dominance on a global scale and proving it was powerful, even during an economic crisis. Germany re-militarised the Rhineland in 1936, an area rich in coal and steel that Germany required to build up its army, which fuelled this expansion. These expansionist manoeuvres were driving factors for the slide towards war in 1939 as they were both done in the aim of economic stability for reconstruction. These also proved to the Japanese and German populations that they were a powerful country, bringing them pride and furthermore supporting their leaders who searched for solutions to feed their people and gain international recognition.

Although economic factors were important in the sliding towards war in 1939, social unrest was also a driving factor. After suffering a humiliation in 1918, with the defeat of the war, and in 1919 with the unfairness of the Treaty of Versailles. Indeed, Germany was imposed a huge debt, a reduction of its army to 10,000 men, and a ban on militarising the Rhineland. This was seen as an unfair treatment by the British population, which explains why the British did not step in as Germany remilitarised the Rhineland in 1936. This social unrest fuelled tensions and hate towards surrounding countries, which propaganda furthermore emphasised throughout the 1930s and even later, during the war. Similarly, the Japanese population had a difficult relationship with China, since the Sino-Japanese conflicts of the 19th and early 20th Century. This complex relationship, once again fuelled by propaganda, allowed the imperial government to gain general support for the Manchurian expansion.

All in all, although economic factors were important in the slide towards war in 1939, through unemployment, right-wing growth and financial difficulties worldwide, social unrest was very important. Without it, it is possible that the Nazi Party would not have gained as much attention, even during a financial crisis, but the past humiliations allowed for general support of the hateful ideologies. Therefore, the economic factors, although severely fuelling the slide towards war in 1939, were not fully the most important but still played a major role in the events.