



## Source 5

Sections of a speech by Mussolini to the Fascist Grand Council, 7 April 1932, on plans to change the peace terms agreed after World War 1  
(Catalogue ref: WO 204/948)



5a



5b

### Questions

1. Which countries does Mussolini see as Italy's rivals?
2. Why might Mussolini believe that there is no advantage for Italy to stick with the way peace was settled at Versailles after World War I?
3. What is Mussolini talking about when he refers to the "colonial clauses" of the peace treaty after World War I?
4. What is Mussolini's opinion of the League of Nations?
5. What is stopping Mussolini from leaving the League of Nations?



# HEROES & VILLAINS

Mussolini & Abyssinia > Why invade Abyssinia?

## Source 5a

It suits us, in one way, that GERMANY should re-arm quickly and efficiently in order to offset FRANCE; but on the other hand, so far as we are concerned, we must try to build up ourselves so that we can look GERMANY in the eyes if and whenever the need arises.

If the right of re-armament is withheld from the conquered peoples, then there is no reason why GERMANY and the other countries should stay in the League of Nations. And in that case the League of Nations will end with a bang. Which would not be altogether unforeseen by us, for the League of Nations has so far only been an Anglo-French condominium to maintain Anglo-French hegemony in the world.

Then there are the colonial clauses. Clearly those who have benefited by the peace, will not wish to entertain ideas of this kind. But there is no advantage for us in maintaining the peace as it was formulated at VERSAILLES. It is to our interest to set the Nations and history on the move.



# HEROES & VILLAINS

Mussolini & Abyssinia > Why invade Abyssinia?

## Source 5b

In any case we cannot overlook the League of Nations at present. But this is the right time for me to tell you that from now on there exists a possibility which we cannot rule out. If tomorrow our economic situation has changed for the better and particularly if it enables us to withstand Anglo-French economic reprisals, it is possible that Fascist ITALY will walk out of GENEVA.

Today we cannot yet make this gesture, simply because it would be inopportune; for we are not yet in a position to resist the reprisals of this plutocratic clique which controls the greater part of the world's economic situation. The day this danger no longer exists, the moment will have come for ITALY to make her Fascist gesture, to say to GENEVA, "We have had enough of your pacifist and masonic democracy, and above all of your imperialism masquerading behind your plans for peace!"

Perhaps the day is closer than we think!