

# Attempts to Make and Keep Peace - The Paris Peace Conference and The League of Nations

## World War 1

### Why did World War 1 Occur?

- Alliances
- Arms and naval race
- Clash over **Austro-Hungarian annexation of Bosnia in 1908**
- Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary

### Impacts of the War

Country	Impact of the Country	Mindset of People
Germany	The Kaiser's government lost control of the country. The Kaiser was overthrown in a revolution.	Did not believe their army lost the war

Country	Impact of the Country	Mindset of People
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Austria-Hungary	Austria-Hungary collapsed and broke up into many different countries.	People in their new countries developed a new sense of nationalism
Britain	WW1 had been costly in terms of lives and money	Wanted to focus on rebuilding its economy and strengthening its empire.
France	Most was affected by the war. Lost many lives. Large parts of its industrial regions were devastated.	Wanted revenge on Germany. Ensure Germany could not threaten France again.

Country	Impact of the Country	Mindset of People
Russia	Tsar was overthrown in March 1917 and replaced by a Provincial Government. In November 1917, Provincial Government was overthrown by the Communist, Bolshevik Party, as led by Vladimir Lenin. Civil war breaks out between the Bolsheviks and its opposition, collectively known as the Whites. In 1922, the USSR wins the Civil War.	Sought increased equality, hence the revolutions. Tired of war. Desire to spread communism.
United States of America	Became the world's greatest power due to the sale of weapons during the war. Lost many lives.	Did not believe the lost American lives were worth it. Developed isolationist mindset.

Country	Impact of the Country	Mindset of People
Japan	Did not take part in the major fighting. Did not suffer damage from the war and was able to focus on allowing it to increase its wealth and power	Increasing power made them feel that Japan was the equal of the European powers. Felt Japan deserved an empire just like the European powers.

# Paris Peace Conference

## Context for the Paris Peace Conference

- Public Sentiment of Allies in 1919
- The Treaty of **Brest-Litovsk**

## Aims of the Big Three

### Woodrow Wilson

- 14 Points

- Germany
- Self-Determination

## **Lloyd George**

- Protect Britain
- Rebuild the British economy
- Maintain the British Empire

## **Clemenceau**

- Ensure Germany could not wage war against France again
  - Wanted to break up Germany

## **Compromises**

- No German breakup, reparations instead
- Self-determination

## **Key Terms of the Treaty of Versailles**

- War Guilt Clause
- Reparations
- Territory Changes
- Limit on armed forces/Disarmament
- Formation of League of Nations

## **Germany's Reaction**

- Saw it as a diktat

- Sources of resentment
  - War Guilt Clause
  - Reparations
  - Territory Changes
  - Limit on armed forces/Disarmament
  - Formation of League of Nations

## Impact of the Treaty of Versailles

### Short Term

- Fostered the *Dolchstoss*/"stabbed in the back" theory
- Bitterness against the new democratic system

### Medium Term

- Political crisis
- Economic Crisis
  - Hyperinflation in the early 1920s

### Long Term

- Became a lingering source of resentment

## Impact of other treaties

- Four other treaties were signed at the Paris Peace Conference
  - The Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye reinforced the Treaty of Versailles prohibition on *Anschluss*

# Judgments on the Paris Peace Conference and the Treaty of Versailles

## Was the Treaty of Versailles Too Harsh on Germany?

### Yes

- Disarmament
  - Left it unable to protect itself
- Territorial
  - Brest-Litvosk was harsher to Russia than the TOV was on Germany → The Big 3 was kinder to Germany than it was to Russia
- War Guilt Clause
  - Unfair because Germany was only responding to Russian mobilisation when it did so at the start of WW1
- Reparations
  - Leads to hyperinflation in 1920s
  - Leads to greater suffering during the Great Depression
- Built resentment towards the Big 3
  - Rise of Hitler

### No

- Leadership
  - Leadership was not removed/executed/tried → Experience

(especially of military leaders) was retained

- Territorial
  - It is relatively characteristic of treaties of that time
    - But times had changed thanks to ideas like the 14 points and nationalism
      - Germans believed that it was too harsh
  - Germany was not split apart

# League of Nations

## Aims of the League

### Collective Security

- "An attack against one is an attack against all"
- To achieve world peace through **international cooperation**
- League members would bind themselves to the League's Covenant and would...
  - Disarm
  - Bring disputes to the League and accept its decisions
- If a member broke the Covenant
  - Economic sanctions
  - Military action

### Disarmament

- Aim: to **reduce the ability of countries to wage war**
- To be achieved through international agreements



- E.g. TOV required Germany and her allies to disarm; Allied Powers also required to disarm.

## **Other Aims**

- Promote open, fair and honourable relations between nations (prevent alliance systems / secret treaties)
- Lay out system of international law
- Maintain, modify treaties between nations

## **Structure of the League**

- General Assembly
  - Parliament
  - Met once annually
- The Council
  - 4 Permanent Members (Britain, France, Italy and Japan)
  - 4 (later 9) temporary members elected by GA
- Agencies and Commissions
  - Means through which the League tackled medical, economic and humanitarian issues.
- The Secretariat
  - Handled day-to-day operations
  - Prepared agendas and published meeting minutes
- Permanent Court of Justice
  - 15 Judges in the Hague, Netherlands
  - Settled international disputes

## **League of Nations tried to Influence:**

- Aid
  - Special commissions were set up to consider giving aid to developing nations.
- Health issues
  - Special commissions worked to fight disease worldwide. First big success was against leprosy. Commissions also worked against drug abuse.
- Minorities
  - Special commissions worked to ensure fairness for all minorities - racial, national and sexual.
- Human Rights
  - Special commissions worked to solve the problems faced by refugees and to abolish slavery.
- Collective Security
  - The General Assembly and the Court of Justice worked to solve disputes between nations, to avoid the threat of war. The League also tried to implement a programme of disarmament worldwide.
- The Mandates
  - Special commissions worked to make sure the mandates were properly run.
- Labour issues
  - The ILO advised on working conditions and wages

## Concerns about the League

- Concerns by Britain and France
  - Lloyd George

- Wanted a simpler organisation like the Conference of Ambassadors
  - Conference of Ambassadors
    - Non-League organisation
    - Informal meeting of the League's permanent members
  - Wanted to maintain Britain's ability to act independent of the League
- Clemenceau
  - Also wanted to maintain French independence to act
- Ability to achieve disarmament
  - The League expected members to disarm
  - However, this only worked if all members disarmed
  - If not, countries would be left themselves unable to protect their territories and interests
  - Members were thus resistant to disarm.
- Ability to stop aggressor countries
  - Peacekeeping Steps
    - A commission of enquiry determines if a nation was guilty of aggression
      - **Concern:** Takes time. Time that a country under attack might not have
    - Hold talks with the guilty party (Arbitration and use of moral persuasion)
      - **Concern:** Guilty party might not be open to persuasion and/or arbitration
    - League encourages members to impose economic sanctions collectively (thus cutting off trade and financial relations)
      - **Concern:** Members might be concerned of the

economic impact on their own countries

- Take military action to protect them
  - **Concern:** The League had no army of its own.

- Membership of the League

- Limited Membership
  - USA did not join because of its non-interventionist policy
    - The League lacked the USA's economic and military support to enforce its will → Aggressor countries could continue to trade with US and did not fear one of the strongest militaries in the world
  - Germany denied from joining until 1926
  - USSR denied from joining until 1934
- All these thus greatly weakened the League

## Successes and Failures of the League in the 1920s

Year	Incident	Resolution	Success/Failure
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Year	Incident	Resolution	Success/Failure
1925 - The Greek Bulgarian Border	Border dispute between Greece and Bulgaria. Greece then invaded Bulgaria.	The LON made Greece withdraw. Britain and France supported the League's decision.	Success
1920 - Vilna	Poland seized Vilna, the former capital of Lithuania.	The League could not make Poland withdraw. Britain and France were reluctant to act.	Failure
1923 - Corfu	Italy took over the Greek island of Corfu.	The LON could not make Italy withdraw until Greece gave in on the dispute. Britain wanted to act, but France was distracted with dealing with dispute with Germany in the Ruhr.	Failure

Year	Incident	Resolution	Success/Failure
1921 - Upper Silesia	Both Germany and Poland wanted Upper Silesia.	The LON let the people of Upper Silesia vote; a huge majority wanted to join Germany. The LON split it into 2 instead.	Ambiguous

## Vilna, 1920

In 1920, Poland took control of Vilna, the Lithuanian capital. Lithuania appealed the League. However, the League could not make Poland withdraw. Britain and France were reluctant to act because Poland was a potential ally against Germany.

## Attempts at Keeping Peace - League of Nations

### Upper Silesia, 1921

In 1921, a dispute broke out between Germany and Poland over Upper Silesia. To solve the problem, the League oversaw a peaceful vote and

divided the region between Germany and Poland.

## Attempts at Keeping Peace - League of Nations

### The Greek Bulgarian Border, 1925

In October 1925, some Greek soldiers were killed on Greece's border with Bulgaria. When Greek troops invaded, Bulgaria appealed to the League for help. The League demanded both sides to stand down and told Greece to withdraw. Britain and France supported the League's judgement. Greece obeyed, but pointed out that there seemed to be one rule for large states such as Italy and another for smaller ones such as itself. The outcome was seen as a major success for the League, and optimism about its effectiveness soared.

## Attempts at Keeping Peace - League of Nations

### Corfu, 1923

One of the borders that had to be decided after the war was between

Albania and Greece. The Conference of Ambassadors was given this task. Three Italian officials were killed while surveying the Greek side of the frontier area. Italian leader Benito Mussolini blamed the Greeks, demanded compensation, and attacked and occupied the Greek island of Corfu. Greece appealed to the League for help but Mussolini insisted that this dispute should be resolved by the Conference of Ambassadors, not the League. The British wanted to stand up to Mussolini. However, the French was involved in a dispute with Germany in the Ruhr region over reparations and did not want a dispute with Italy as well.

In the end, Mussolini got his way. The Conference of Ambassadors ruled that the Greeks must apologise and pay compensation directly to Italy. If Britain and France had stood together, Mussolini would probably not have gotten his way.

## Other attempts to keep the peace outside the League

### **1922: Rapallo Treaty**

- The USSR and Germany re-established diplomatic relations

### **1924: The Dawes Plan**

- Represented by USA, Britain, Italy and France
- helped Germany's economy
  - Restructured Germany reparations
  - USA offered Germany huge loans that helped support its economy and fight hyperinflation
- French and Italian troops withdrawn from Ruhr



## **1925: The Locarno Treaty**

- Sought to maintain peace between Germany, France, Britain, Italy and Belgium
- Germany accepted Western borders outlined in TOV
- Reassured France and facilitated Germany's entry into the LON

## **1928: The Kellogg-Briand Pact**

- Agreement between 65 nations to not use force to settle disputes

## **1929: The Young Plan**

- Plan by WW1 to support Germany's economy
  - Designed to ensure they could pay reparations
- Reduced reparations
- Extended reparation periods.

## **Successes**

**Significant progress was made after World War 1 in several areas:**

- The League helped millions of refugees to return home after the war.
- The Health Commission of the League helped to reduce the spread of contagious diseases through international vaccination programmes and helped to reduce fatalities from such diseases.
- The League also worked to reduce the smuggling of cheap labour, opium and dangerous chemicals across international borders.