

# The league of nations was a great source for peace in the 1920's assignment

[History](#)



The League Of Nations Was A Great Force For Peace In The 1920's In this essay, I am going to look at the successes and failures of the League of Nations (LofN) in its struggle for peace throughout the 1920's. The LofN was the 'brain child' of American president Woodrow Wilson. The four other main powers (Britain, France, Japan and Italy) joined along with approximately 60 other countries from around the world. The U. S. A then abandoned its 'child' as to social and economic unrest led to a more isolationist foreign policy.

Yet the other four main countries continued to support the LofN and formed the council, consisting to the 'most powerful countries'. The LofN was set up to enforce peace in Europe and the world. It created various mechanisms (tariffs and sanctions) to punish and to reward nations in the name of peace. They would have great success and great failure. The League was involved in many of boarder disputes, which could have led to war. The LofN was successful in the Aaland Islands incident in 1921.

These islands are nearly of equal distance between Finland and Sweden. They had traditionally belonged to Finland but most of the islanders wanted to be governed by Sweden. Neither Sweden nor Finland could come to a decision as to who owned the islands and in 1921 they asked the LofN to adjudicate. The League's decision was that they should remain Finish, but that no weapons should ever be kept there. Both countries accepted the LofN's decision. This sent out many positive signs at the time to the world. A failure of the 1920's was the Vilna incident of 1920.

Poland and Lithuania were two new states created by the Treaty of Versailles, made out of (mainly) Germany's previous land. Vilna was made the capital city of Lithuania, but its population was mainly Polish, and in 1920 the Polish Army took control of it. Lithuania appealed for help. This was the first crucial 'test case' for the LoF. Both countries were members of the League. Poland was clearly the aggressor, though some people sympathised with them. The league protested to Poland but they did not withdraw.

The league could have sent an army but France did not want to upset Poland as they saw them as a potential ally against Germany and Britain were not prepared to act alone in sending troops to the other side of Europe alone. Both countries' self-interests and selfishness led to a colossal embarrassment to the LoF, and shows how the LoF also failed in many aspects. There were many more international incidents that the LoF were involved in, in the 1920's. There was a mixture of mammoth failure and success. This sent out mixed messages around the globe.

The LoF was also involved in many of international treaties and agreements. A success story would be the Locarno treaties. Germany and her western borders had been arguing ever since the ToV about their borders. They decided to make Germany accept that the Rhineland would be demilitarised. Also, that France and Germany would have to come to the LoF to settle any further disputes. Both Germany and France accepted this, and again this showed that the LoF had worldwide influence. Germany respected their authority.

This led to Germany being accepted in Europe again, and was welcomed back into the LofN later. Now, the only major European power not in the LofN was the U. S. S. R. Another (short lived) success story was the Dawes plan. As Europe's (especially Germany's) economy was struggling, to help it back on its feet, the U. S. A lent money to the European powers. This ended up helping many more countries world wide due to the ripple affects. The money started up industrial trading (establishing trade links) which formed friendships, reduced unemployment and stimulated growth.

It also helped Germany pay their reparations. This, in the long term, would have prevented war. Yet as the American stock market crashed, it could no longer lend nearly as much, grounding the whole plan to a halt. This sent many other countries such as Japan into a deep depression. The League failed when attempting at worldwide disarmament. This barely even got started as the ' Big 4' only reduced their armed forces by a miniscule amount before worrying about self-defence. Britain's excuse was it had to ' protect' other weaker nations.

Only the Germans ended up disarming. This did not go down well, as these few selfish nations had put their own interests ahead of world peace, which was supposed to be their mission and purpose. The League lost respect for this, but this is their only large failure in the department of agreements and treaties. Finally, the League worked for a better world. The LofN had itself a wider task than simply waiting for disputes to arise and hoping to solve them. Through its commissions and committees, the LofN aimed to fight poverty, disease and injustice all over the globe.

The ILO (International Labour Organization) was successful in banning poisonous white lead from paint, which prevented many deaths, and also limited the hours that small children were allowed to work. They introduced a 48-hour week, and an 8-hour day. Yet only a few members used this as many thought this would event in soaring industrial costs. This small incident showed that the LofN was not all-powerful. Nations were undermining it. The LofN helped many refugees also. They worked to send many prisoners of war and refugees back home to safety.

In just the first few years, over 400, 000 prisoners were returned to their homelands due to the Leagues actions. The Health Committee worked extraordinarily hard to defeat the devastating, disheveling disease, leprosy. It campaigned to exterminate mosquitoes, which massively reduced cases of malaria and yellow fever in years to come. The League was very successful in this department of achieving peace, I believe. Overall, the LofN had been partially successful in sorting out global disputes, and successful in agreements and treaties and working to create a better world in the terms of social, health and working conditions.

Although there were some obvious cracks under the surface, due to selfishness and lack of will power, which showed later. Yet, they had prevented war/major political incidents in a very unstable continent. , and very unstable world. This was a good achievement, and I think all the evidence I have shown proves that the LofN was making positive steps towards worldwide peace, and was considered a great force of peace in the '20's due to the respect it had gained.