

League of nations short summary essay sample

War



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League of Nations: The goal was to create an organisation that would prevent war and resolve conflict by discussing issues in a peaceful manner.

Wilson's idea. Based in Geneva because it was neutral. Aims

- * Discourage aggression from any nation
- * Encourage countries to cooperate, especially in business and trade
- * Encourage nations to disarm
- * Improve the living and working conditions of people in all parts of the world

Strengths

- * Main strength: it was set up by Treaty of Versailles, which every nation had signed and had 58 nations as members by 1930
- * Could offer arbitration

Weaknesses

- * Everyone nation hated treaty of Versailles
- * Aims were too ambitious
- * Germany and Russia were not members until Germany (1926), USSR (1934)
- * No army
- * Decisions had to be unanimous
- * USA refused to join, not good image

Problems of membership

- * Important members: USSR, Germany, Japan, Britain and France
- * Germany and Russia were not allowed to join the League at first, which made it look like " Club for winners" under hated Versailles Treaty. This undermined the League's credibility.
- * Most powerful members, Britain and France, both had suffered financially and militarily during the war - and neither was

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enthusiastic to get involved in disputes that did not affect Western Europe. * They felt America was the only one able to make it work * France's main concern was Germany because it worried that without army of its own the league was too weak to protect France from Germany. This made France prepared to bypass the League if necessary in order to be strong against Germany.

Successes

* Aaland Islands

* Sweden and Finland wanted control and threatening to fight for it. * The islands were between both countries.

* League said the islands should go to Finland, Sweden accepted and war avoided. * Upper Silesia

* Industrial region between Germany and Poland. Inhabited by German and Polish. * They both wanted control of it because of its rich iron and steel industry. * Plebiscite was organised for Silesians to vote on which country they wished to join. (1920) * French and British troops sent to keep order at polling booths * Industrial areas voted mainly for Germany

* Rural areas voted mainly for Poland

* League divided region along these lines

* Built in many safeguards to prevent future disputes

* Safeguarded rail links between both countries

* Made arrangements for water and power supplies from one side to the other

* Border between Greece and Albania had to be sorted by Conference of Ambassadors

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- * Tellini, Italian general supervised it
- * Tellini and his team were killed on 27th August surveying the Greek side of frontier
- * Mussolini was furious and blamed Greek government
- * He demanded that it pay compensation and execute members * Greeks had no idea who murderers were
- * Mussolini bombarded killing 15 people and occupied the Greek island of Corfu * Greece asked for help to League
- * The League condemned Mussolini's actions, Greece to pay compensation but that the money be held by League and paid to Italy when killer found
- * Bulgaria
- * Two years after Corfu, League was tested
- * Greek troops invaded Bulgaria after an accident were Greek soldiers were killed * Bulgaria appealed for help
- * League ordered Greece to pull out and pay compensation to Bulgaria * Received disapproval of major powers in the league
- * Greeks obeyed although they did complain that there seemed to be one rule for the large states and another for the small ones

- * Vilna
- * Made capital of Lithuania
- * Population largely Polish
- * 1920 private Polish army took control of it
- * Crucial first case for the League as Lithuania appealed for help
- * Both countries members of the League
- * League protested to Poland but did not withdraw

- * League was stuck
- * According to covenant it could have sent British and French troops but France was not prepared to upset Poland because they saw it as possible ally against Germany in the future * Britain not prepared to act alone
- * League did nothing. Poles kept Vilna

Structure

Secretariat

Sort of civil service. Kept records of meetings and prepared reports for different agencies. Had specialist sections of covering areas: * ILO (International Labour Organisation)

Brought together employers, governments, and workers' representatives once a year. Aims was to improve conditions of working people throughout world Collected statistics and info about working conditions and tried to persuade member countries to adopt suggestions * Permanent court of International Justice

Key part of the League's job of settling disputes between countries peacefully. Court based in Netherlands. Made up of judges from member countries. If asked they gave a decision on border dispute between two countries Also gave legal advice Had no way of making sure countries followed rulings. * Assembly

League's parliament. Every country in the League sent a representative. Met once a year. Unanimous. Could recommend action and could vote on: *

Admitting new members to the League

* Appointing temporary members of Council

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- * Budget of League

- * Other ideas

- * Council

Smaller group which met more often, about five times a year and in case of emergency. It included: * Permanent Members

Britain, France, Italy (1920)

- * Temporary Members

Elected by Assembly for three year period. Number of members between four and nine Each had a Veto. (Permission to stop Council acting even if all members agreed. Main idea was to sort out problems through discussion. If this didn't work: * Moral Condemnation

- * Economic and financial sanctions

- * Military force

Commissions

League attempted to tackle major problems through commissions or committees.

- * Mandates Commission

Made sure that Britain or France acted in the interests of the people on that territory and not in it's own * Refugees Committee

This helped to return refugees to their original homes after end of First World War one * Slavery Commission

Worked to abolish slavery around world

- * Health Committee

Attempted to deal with the problem of dangerous diseases and to educate people about health and sanitation

League worked for a better world

* Refugees

Tremendous work in getting refugees and former prisoners of war back to their households.

* Working conditions

* Health

* Transport

* Social problems