

Disarmament in the inter-war period essay sample

[History](#)



TOPIC : Explain the attempts made to achieve disarmament in the inter-war period and analyze why results were limited. There is no doubt that World War I was a period in history that cannot be simply rubbed out. Numerous casualties, political as well as economical disturbances appeared to be only few out of the consequences of those 4 threatening years. Signing the truce in Compiegne (11. 11. 1918) made people feel more secure at least for some time. Yet it cannot be forgotten that damages and conflicts that came into existence between 1914 and 1918 were far more reaching and dangerous. That is why major politicians were setting up various conferences in order to achieve satisfactory disarmament. These were Washington Naval Agreement (1921-22), London Conference and Treaty for the Limitation and Reduction of Naval Armament (1930) and Geneva Disarmament Conference (1932-34). Each of them, as soon as they were ratified appeared to have more theoretical than practical usage.

Ineffectiveness of those agreements is visible as all hell broke loose once again in September 1939. First attempts for efficient disarmaments were taken during Washington Conference 1921-22. Three essential agreements have been signed in order to heal contemporary crises. For a start it was a Four Power Agreement that was enacted, on which basis USA, Great Britain and France guaranteed themselves rights and respect towards their territorial possessions in the Pacific. Moreover, signatories promised to defend one another in the countenance of any serious threat. Then, it was a Five Power Agreement that was implemented. This pact focused on limitation of the naval forces. Insiders (all of the above mentioned countries plus Japan) were obliged to adjust to the implemented ratio for the size of fleets. It was

definitely a step forward, for the first time disarmament policy was applied at an international level. In addition, each state could not have built battleships or cruisers for the subsequent 10 years so that ratio could be successfully reached.

Third settlement, The Nine Power Agreement, accounted for Open Door Policy in China, guaranteeing territorial integrity of China. Such conditions seemed to be very close to the ideal as nearly every country was satisfied with the terms. The only factor posing risk was France. Country that felt terribly humiliated as it had the same ratio of navy as Italy. Obviously French tried to get some special treatment but eventually it did not work out. To certain degree four and Five Power Agreements triumphed as it blocked use of poison gas in warfare and members agreed not to build any fortifications on Pacific. Unfortunately Washington Conference did not seem only in successes. Politicians did not manage to prevent depressions like the one of Manchuria in 1931. Furthermore historians have to remember that relative benefits came from narrow number of nations involved. In the case the question arises to what extent were the Washington agreements successful if at all. Second trial to achieve disarmament took place in London in 1930.

Conference held in the capital of Great Britain was to continue attempts for disarmaments. Simply this treaty was an improvement of the Washington Agreements. On its basis submarines and smaller warships were included. At that very time whole world was facing major crisis (caused by the Wall Street Crash 1929) Due to economic depression it was highly unpopular feeling to divert resources into a naval race. So those were only British, Americans and Japanese to modify its ratio. Aims of the London Naval Agreement occurred <https://assignbuster.com/disarmament-in-the-inter-war-period-essay-sample/>

to be somewhat fulfilled while Second London Naval Agreement (1936) was more a formality than real binding deal. Its contradictory and in reality vague foundations did not bring a lot in terms of disarmament. Last but not the least was Geneva Disarmament Conference (1932-1934). Spotlight of this meeting was put not only on the navy but to the army as a whole.

During that conference diplomats were dealing with several problems which finally accounted general failure. First and foremost no one really knew who was to pilot such operation. Secondly not a single member of the League of Nations Commission knew how to interpret the term 'disarmament'.

Additionally it was not explicitly stated how this disarmaments would be controlled. Point of sovereignty and independence was still present. Because of that problem of rights and limits was that significant. Number of arising doubts and questions made the situation uneasy to solve. Clash of interests as well as conflict of political views (so visible between Germany and France) precluded efficient disarmament. To cut a long story short, historical events and their consequences do not give one obvious answer. Each action causes reaction while results might be simultaneously positive and negative.

Very rarely historians are able to decide whether some incident was 100% failure or success. Undoubtedly inter-war agreements for disarmament were up to a point beneficial. Unfortunately those positive aspects were not strong enough to last. General tension among Great Powers and their vacillation took effect. World had to face alternate war. World War II is an incontrovertible proof for limitation of the inter-war disarmaments results.

Some say that years of 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 cannot be split and assessed separately, they are an inseparable period. Due to following

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presumes world had to cope with one war that was separated by 20 years of ceasefire. In overall judgment this statement synonymously shows that all of the trails were a fiasco.