

LEAGUE OF NATION

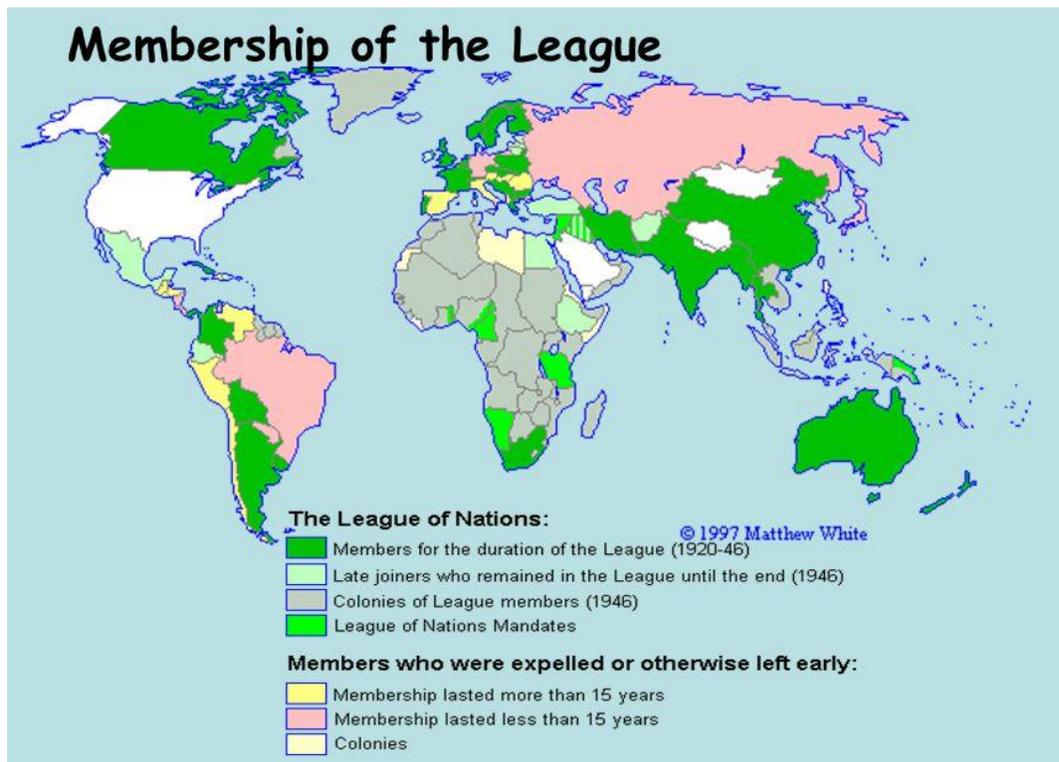
- Its headquarter were situated at Geneva, Switzerland. This choice was natural as Switzerland was a neutral country and had not fought in World War One. No one could dispute this choice especially as an international organisation such as the Red Cross was already based in Switzerland.

❖ Aims of the League - SIDE

1. Stop war
2. Improve people's lives and Jobs
3. Disarmament
4. Encourage nations to co-operate in business and trade.

❖ Members of the LON

- At the start of the LON there were 42 countries joined
- By 1930's this has risen to 60
- The USSR did not join the League. (in 1919 it set up the Comintern to cause revolution)
- Germany was not allowed to join the League as a punishment for causing WWI.
- The leading members were Britain and France, helped by Japan and Italy.
- America never joined the League. (When Wilson got back home to the United States, the American Senate refused to join the League. Americans did not want to get dragged into other countries' problems. This damaged the League a lot.



❖ **The League's Structure and Organisation.**

Like any large organisation (think about the structure of your school) the League had a number of parts to its body. Some of these parts were involved with decision making while other parts carried out the actual work.

1. **Secretariat**

- It connected all the parts of the League, keeping records and preparing reports for the different agencies of the League.

2. **Council**

- most powerful decision-making part of the League
- has 4 permanent members: *Britain, France, Japan, Italy*
- met 5 times a year and in case of emergency
- each of the permanent members held a powerful blocking vote called a **Veto**. This allowed them to stop any decision they did not agree with.

3. **Assembly**

- This was essentially the League's Parliament
- Met once a year
- It could decide which countries were allowed into the League and make recommendations that could then be put to the Council.
- Any decisions or recommendations made by the Assembly had to be done by a unanimous vote, meaning that every member had to agree for a decision to be made.

4. **The International Court of Justice**

- The forum where disputes (arguments) between countries could be heard.
- Based in the Hague, in the Netherlands.
- The Court also provided legal advice to the Council and Assembly. However, unlike normal courts it had no power to make sure its ruling were followed because the League did not have an army of its own.

5. **The Commissions were:**

*The League also contained four **committees** or **commissions**. They were largely responsible for carrying out the humanitarian work of the League thus helping achieve its aim of improving lives.*

❖ **The Refugee Committee**

- Designed to help with getting prisoners of war and others displaced in the First World War back to their homes.

❖ **The Slavery Commission**

- Was given the job of ending slavery that still existed in some parts of the world.

❖ **The Health Committee**

- Worked to prevent or reduce deadly diseases such as smallpox and also educate in areas such as sanitation and hygiene.

❖ **The Mandates Commission**

- Was created to ensure that the colonies under the League's control were run fairly and in the interests of the people who lived there.

6. **International Labour Organisation**

- A separate body that looked to 'improve workers' rights and make the workplace safer.
- It offered advice and encouraged employers to follow its strategies.

❖ **Powers of the League**

- The League had 4 powers it could use to make countries do as it wanted.

1. **Covenant**

The covenant was a short and concise document of 26 articles signed in June 1919, where primary goals of the League were stated. They included preventing wars through collective security and disarmament and settling international disputes through negotiation and arbitration.

2. **Sanction**

If a dispute did occur, the League, under its Covenant, could do three things - these were known as its **sanctions**: It could call on the states in dispute to sit down and discuss the problem in an orderly and peaceful manner. This would be done in the League's Assembly - which was essentially the League's parliament which would listen to disputes and come to a decision on how to proceed.

If one nation was seen to be the offender, the League could introduce **verbal sanctions** - warning an aggressor nation that she would need to leave another nation's territory or face the consequences.

If the states in dispute failed to listen to the Assembly's decision, the League could introduce **economic sanctions**. This would be arranged by the League's Council. The purpose of this sanction was to financially hit the aggressor nation so that she would have to do as the League required. The logic behind it was to push an aggressor nation towards bankruptcy, so that the people in that state would take out their anger on their government forcing them to accept the League's decision. The League could order League members not to do any trade with an aggressor nation in an effort to bring that aggressor nation to heel.

If this failed, the League could introduce **physical sanctions**. This meant that military force would be used to put into place the League's decision.

3. **Condemnation**

The League could offer to decide between two countries.

4. **Arbitration**

The League could tell a country it was doing wrong.

❖ **SUCCESSSES/ACHIEVEMNTS OF THE LEAGUE IN 1920s**

1. The Aaland Islands (1921)

These islands are near enough equal distant 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 League to adjudicate. The League's decision was that they should remain with Finland but that no weapons should ever be kept there. Both countries accepted the decision and it remains in force to this day.\

2. Upper Silesia (1921)

The Treaty of Versailles had given the people of Upper Silesia the right to have a referendum on whether they wanted to be part of Germany or part of Poland. In this referendum, 700,000 voted for Germany and 500,000 for Poland. This close result resulted in rioting between those who expected Silesia to be made part of Germany and those who wanted to be part of Poland. The League was asked to settle this dispute. After a six-week inquiry, the League decided to split Upper Silesia between Germany and Poland. The League's decision was accepted by both countries and by the people in Upper Silesia.

3. Greece and Bulgaria (1925)

Both these nations have a common border. In 1925, sentries patrolling this border fired on one another and a Greek soldier was killed. The Greek army invaded Bulgaria as a result. The Bulgarians asked the League for help and the League ordered both armies to stop fighting and that the Greeks should pull out of Bulgaria. The League then sent experts to the area and decided that Greece was to blame and fined her £45,000. Both nations accepted the decision.

4. Memel (1923)

Memel was/is a port in Lithuania. Most people who lived in Memel were Lithuanians and, therefore, the government of Lithuania believed that the port should be governed by it. However, the Treaty of Versailles had put Memel and the land surrounding the port under the control of the League. For three years, a French general acted as a governor of the port but in 1923 the Lithuanians invaded the port. The League intervened and gave the area surrounding Memel to Lithuania but they made the port an "international zone". Lithuania agreed to this decision. Though this can be seen as a League success – as the issue was settled – a counter argument is that what happened was the result of the use of force and that the League responded in a positive manner to those (the Lithuanians) who had used force.

5. Turkey (1923)

The League failed to stop a bloody war in Turkey (see League failures) but it did respond to the humanitarian crisis caused by this war.

1,400,000 refugees had been created by this war with 80% of them being women and children. Typhoid and cholera were rampant. The League sent doctors from the Health Organisation to check the spread of disease and it spent £10 million on building farms, homes etc for the refugees. Money was also invested in seeds, wells and digging tools and by 1926, work was found for 600,000 people.

A member of the League called this work "the greatest work of mercy which mankind has undertaken."

❖ **OTHER SUCCESS OF THE LEAGUE**

The League was the first international organisation to suggest that the world community should take collective action to tackle problems such as starvation, disease and child slave labour.

Health Committee	International Labour Organisation	Slavery Commission	Commission for Refugees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Channelled resources into ending leprosy, malaria and yellow fever. ➤ International campaign to exterminate mosquitoes. ➤ Prevented typhus epidemics in the Soviet Union (Russia). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Closed down 4 Swiss companies selling illegal drugs ➤ Restricted addition of lead to paint ➤ Convinced countries to adopt an 8hour work day and 48hr working week, worked to end child labour, increased women's rights in the workplace. Survived and became part of the United Nations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ending slavery in Abyssinia enabling it to join in 1926, ➤ worked with Liberia to abolish forced labour, ➤ Kept records to control slavery prostitution and human trafficking. ➤ Set free 200,000 slaves in Sierra Leone and Burma. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Oversaw the return of prisoners of war to their homes. ➤ Returned prisoners of war to their homes (400,000 of them). ➤ Helped refugees in Turkish camps by sending doctors to stop the spread of typhoid and cholera ➤ Spent £10 million on building homes for refugees and supplying them with farming tools and equipment.
<p>But:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ They were never going to solve the problem of disease. ➤ It was difficult to ensure that all countries and companies complied with new rules and regulations. This also led to conflict across big business and the USA wasn't in it and was one of the largest economies. ➤ Slavery went underground and became more difficult to solve. ➤ Racism was a huge problem for the Commission for refugees. 			

❖ FAILURE OF THE LEAGUE IN 1920s

1. Italy (1919)

In 1919, Italian nationalists, angered that the "Big Three" had, in their opinion, broken promises to Italy at the Treaty of Versailles, captured the small port of Fiume. This port had been given to Yugoslavia by the Treaty of Versailles. For 15 months, Fiume was governed by an Italian nationalist called d'Annunzio. The newly created League did nothing. The situation was solved by the Italian government who could not accept that d'Annunzio was seemingly more popular than they were – so they bombarded the port of Fiume and enforced a surrender. In all this the League played no part despite the fact that it had just been set up with the specific task of maintaining peace.

2. Teschen (1919)

Teschen was a small town between Poland and Czechoslovakia. Its main importance was that it had valuable coal mines there which both the Poles and the Czechs wanted. As both were newly created nations, both wanted to make their respective economies as strong as possible and the acquisition of rich coal mines would certainly help in this respect.

In January 1919, Polish and Czech troops fought in the streets of Teschen. Many died. The League was called on to help and decided that the bulk of the town should go to Poland while Czechoslovakia should have one of Teschen's suburbs. This suburb contained the most valuable coal mines and the Poles refused to accept this decision. Though no more wholesale violence took place, the two countries continued to argue over the issue for the next twenty years.

3. Vilna (1920)

Both Poland and Lithuania claimed it. In 1920, the Polish occupied it and refused to League. The League required an army to take action but didn't have one and Britain and France did not want to supply one (as Poland was a barrier against Germany and Communist Russia). So the Polish kept it and unrest continued.

4. War between Russia and Poland (1920 to 1921)

In 1920, Poland invaded land held by the Russians. The Poles quickly overwhelmed the Russian army and made a swift advance into Russia. By 1921, the Russians had no choice but to sign the Treaty of Riga which handed over to Poland nearly 80,000 square kilometres of Russian land. This one treaty all but doubled the size of Poland.

What did the League do about this violation of another country by Poland?

The answer is simple – nothing. Russia by 1919 was communist and this "plague from the East" was greatly feared by the West. In fact, Britain, France and America sent troops to attack Russia after the League had been set up. Winston Churchill, the British War Minister, stated openly that the plan was to strangle Communist Russia at birth. Once again, to outsiders, it seemed as if League members were selecting which countries were acceptable and ones which were not. The Allied invasion of Russia was a failure and it only served to make Communist Russia even more antagonistic to the West.

5. The invasion of the Ruhr (1923)

The Treaty of Versailles had ordered Weimar Germany to pay reparations for war damages. These could either be paid in money or in kind (goods to the value of a set amount) in 1922, the Germans failed to pay an installment. They claimed that they simply could not rather than did not want to. The Allies refused to accept this and the anti-German feeling at this time was still strong. Both the French and the Belgium's believed that some form of strong action was needed to 'teach Germany a lesson'.

In 1923, contrary to League rules, the French and the Belgium's invaded the Ruhr – Germany's most important industrial zone. Within Europe, France was seen as a senior League member – like Britain – and the anti-German feeling that was felt throughout Europe allowed both France and Belgium to break their own

rules as were introduced by the League. Here were two League members clearly breaking League rules and nothing was done about it.

For the League to enforce its will, it needed the support of its major backers in Europe, Britain and France. Yet France was one of the invaders and Britain was a major supporter of her. To other nations, it seemed that if you wanted to break League rules, you could. Few countries criticised what France and Belgium did. But the example they set for others in future years was obvious. The League clearly failed on this occasion, primarily because it was seen to be involved in breaking its own rules.

6. Italy and Albania/ Corfu (1923)

Italy demanded a huge compensation from the Greek Government for the death of 5 Italian surveyors who were mapping the border. The Greek did not offer any. Mussolini was very mad and bombarded and occupied Corfu a Greek island. Greece appealed to the League for help but Italy was one of them and so they weren't in agreement. They put pressure on the Greeks to accept Mussolini's demands instead. It was only resolved when the Greeks apologised and paid the compensation demanded that Mussolini withdrew his forces.

To follow up this success, Mussolini invited the Yugoslavian government to discuss ownership of Fiume. The Treaty of Versailles had given Fiume to Yugoslavia but with the evidence of a bombarded Corfu, the Yugoslavs handed over the port to Italy with little argument

❖ FAILURE OF THE LEAGUE IN 1930s

In the 1920s, the League of Nations had been quite successful. In the 1930s, it failed terribly. This spread looks at the League's two main failures in the 1930s – in Manchuria and Abyssinia. By 1935, most countries did not think that the League could keep the peace. When Hitler began to break the Treaty of Versailles in the 1930s, the League was powerless to stop him (this is the next topic you will study). The league failed, and the only way to stop Hitler was a Second World War.

1. Manchuria (1931)



The Dispute:

In the 1930s there was a world-wide economic depression. Japan tried to overcome the depression by building up an empire. In 1932, the Japanese army invaded Manchuria, threw out the Chinese, and set up their own government there. China asked the League to help.

What the League did:

The League sent officials to study the problem (this took a year). In February 1933 it ordered Japan to leave Manchuria.

What happened?

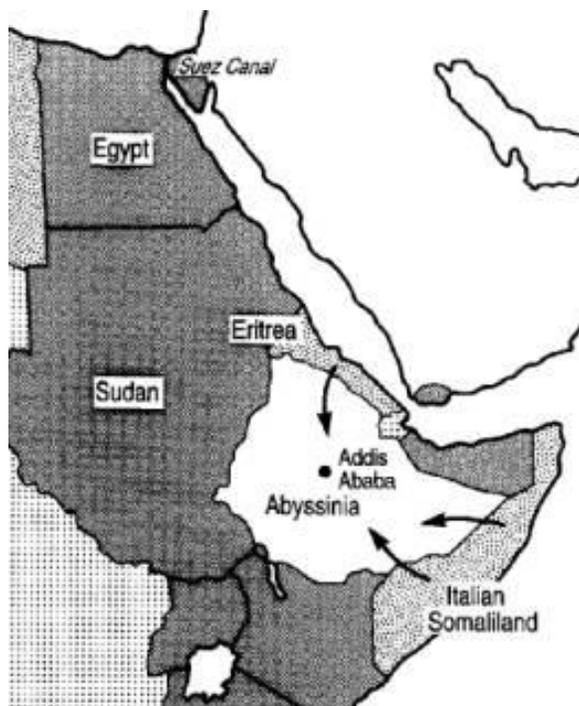
Japan refused to leave Manchuria. Instead, Japan left the League.

Many countries had important trading links with Japan. The League could not agree on sanctions or even a ban on weapons sales. Britain and France did not want a war, so nothing was done.

The Japanese stayed in Manchuria.

The League had failed.

2. Abyssinia



The Dispute:

Mussolini got ready to invade Abyssinia (Ethiopia). He wanted war and glory.

Abyssinia asked the League to help.

What the League did:

The League talked to Mussolini – but he used the time to send an army to Africa.

The League suggested a plan to give part of Abyssinia to Italy.

What happened?

Mussolini ignored the League, and invaded Abyssinia. The League banned weapons sales, and put sanctions on rubber and metal. It did nothing else – in fact Britain and France secretly agreed to give Abyssinia to Italy.

Italy conquered Abyssinia. The League had failed.

❖ **STRENGTH OF THE LEAGUE**

1. Set up by the Treaty of Versailles
2. Universal membership, all of which had signed the Covenant promising to support the League.
3. Means of Influence – Covenant (26 promises which every member agreed to follow) Moral condemnation (public opinion)/ Arbitration (act as a referee)/ Sanctions (refuse to trade)/ Military Force (send an army)/ 'Community of Power' (acting together)

❖ **REASONS WHY THE LEAGUE FAILED – (WAS DUMB)**

Weak – the League's 'powers' were little more than going 'tut-tut'. Sanctions did not work. It had no army no army of its own. The only two countries in the League that could have provided any military might were Britain and France and both had been severely depleted strength-wise in World War One and could not provide the League with the backing it needed. Also both Britain and France were not in a position to use their finances to pay for an expanded army as both were financially hit very hard by World War One.

America – the strongest nation in the world never joined.

Structure – the League was muddled, so it took ages to do anything. Members couldn't agree – but decisions had to be unanimous. This paralysed the League.

Depression – the world-wide Depression made countries try to get more land and power. They were worried about themselves, not about world peace.

Unsuccessful – the more the League failed, the less people trusted it. In the end, everybody just ignored it.

Members – the League's main members let it down. Italy and Japan betrayed the League. France and Britain did nothing to help it.

Big bullies – in the 1920s, the League had dealt with weak countries. In the 1930s, powerful countries like Germany, Italy and Japan attacked weaker countries. They were too strong for the League to stop them.