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Collective Security

by Alan Sharp

In 1918, President Wilson's support for a new international system offered the first practical opportunity to create a universal organisation of states pledged to non-violent diplomacy. This article explores some of the earlier theory and practice of collective security schemes designed to eliminate war, some of which contributed to the evolution of the League of Nations. It analyses the structure of the League before investigating the role of this potentially revolutionary development in the diplomacy of the inter-war period. The "Great Experiment" failed, overwhelmed by the aggression of the dictators, but it was replaced, in 1945, by the United Nations.

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Introduction

On 8 January 1918, the American President, Woodrow Wilson (1856–1924) (➔ Media Link #ab), set out his "programme of the world's peace" to remedy the problems that had plunged the world into its most destructive war to date. The final of his *Fourteen Points* demanded that:

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> A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small States alike.[1]

Although he did not speak of "collective security" because this term did not originate until the 1930s,[2] his vision matches the common definitions of the concept: A treaty-bound organisation encompassing the major states to discourage the use of force as a means of settling international disputes, to offer all members a guarantee of their independence and protection against aggression from each other.[3]

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> Two key commitments by members of a collective security system can be identified: They renounce the use of force in any disputes with each other; and they promise, ultimately, to use force against any member who breaks that promise. Collective security differs from collective defence in that the former only protects members against transgressions by other members, whereas the latter seeks to safeguard its members from attacks from states or organisations outside of the alliance.[4]

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Early Proposals and Developments

Wilson's plan was not a new idea:

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> Every scheme for the elimination of war that men have advocated since 1917 has been nothing but a copy or an elaboration of some 17th-century programme – as the seventeenth-century programmes were copies of still earlier schemes.[5]

The works of numerous writers and thinkers concerning the better ordering of international relations, from Dante Alighieri (ca. 1265–1321) (➜ Media Link #ac) onwards, have been claimed to be the progenitors of the 20th-century League of Nations and its successor, the United Nations.[6] Many of the early proposals were not, however, primarily motivated by a desire for peace.

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Among the most famous of these is the "Grand Design" of Maximilien de Béthune Sully (1559–1641) (➜ Media Link #af), who was an adviser to Henry IV of France (1553–1610) (➜ Media Link #ag). It was first published in 1638 but conceived in a number of late 16th and early 17th-century iterations. In fact, "the original draft of Sully's Memoirs, so far from containing any fanciful scheme for remaking the map of Europe and introducing an era of perpetual peace, simply reflects the dynastic ambitions of the Bourbons, as pursued by Henry IV and Richelieu."[7]

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After 1617, Sully did introduce important modifications, including a European confederation and free trade area to be controlled by a Senate of around 66 people, elected on a three-yearly basis with a certain number of delegates from each member state. Even so, his belief that its military forces might be used to expel the Turks (➜ Media Link #ai) from Europe or to counter a perceived growing threat from Russia both echoed medieval hopes of a new Crusade and maintained the concept of a hostile "other" which must be combatted.[8]

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Le Nouveau Cynée (➜ Media Link #aj) (1623) by Emeric Crucé (ca. 1590–1648) (➜ Media Link #ak) marked a significant change of emphasis, being, "in the records of modern history, the first proposal for an international organisation (➜ Media Link #al) that also was a proposal for maintaining peace." Crucé envisaged a universal association of all known states, including Persia, China, Ethiopia (Abyssinia), the East and West Indies, the European countries and the Ottoman Empire, with an assembly of ambassadors based in Venice, taking decisions by majority and with armed forces to deal with refractory members. Despite its total impracticality, Crucé's plan, with its emphasis on trade and prosperity as pacifying influences, presaged the ideas of later thinkers. Unlike earlier schemes which relied on the overarching power of a single ruler, it saw states as the key to future stability within this political entity. However, Crucé glossed over the potential for conflict between the developing sovereignty of states (➜ Media Link #am) and the rival competences of the international organisation which almost every other such scheme now assumed.[9]

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Three books around the turn of the 17th century suggested other possible complications. *Essay towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe* (1693) by William Penn (1644–1718) (➜ Media Link #an), *Some Reasons for an European State* (1710) by John Bellers (1654–1725) (➜ Media Link #ao), and *Projet pour Rendre la Paix perpetuelle en Europe* (➜ Media Link #ap) (1713) by Charles Irenée Castel de Saint-Pierre (1658–1743) (➜ Media Link #aq) all based their proposals for a European Union on an acceptance of the internal and external *status quo*.

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Each taking as a base-line one recent European settlement – in Saint-Pierre's case the Treaty of Utrecht (1713), which he had helped to negotiate –, they suggested that none of the major sovereigns should seek to increase their territories, nor should anyone of them rule more than one state. Every ruler should assist others in order to suppress internal rebellion, but existing democratic institutions, like the English Parliament, must retain their current powers, whilst religious difference would not be allowed to upset the prevailing order. Each state should adopt one of the three main religions and cooperate to suppress any new sect. Apart from the dangers inherent in this refusal to recognise the possibility, or indeed desirability, of change, the schemes assumed that the Union's military force would never be required. Moral pressure alone would ensure the implementation of the adjudications of its Senate in any disputes.

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In contrast to this, *Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht* (*Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim*, 1784) and *Zum ewigen Frieden* (*Thoughts on Perpetual Peace*, 1795) by Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) (➜ Media Link #at) accepted that independent states were a given, that they would seek to maximise their power, and that war was always a possibil-

ity. Kant proposed a federal structure creating an international society which would restrain external violence in the same way that civil society (➜ Media Link #aw) curbed criminality. Member states should be "republican" – by which he meant constitutional – because one of his key assumptions lay in the rationality of citizens, whose reluctance to settle disputes by violence would deter their governments from embarking on wars. But Kant was not over-optimistic, believing that rationality could only be achieved through long and bitter experience.[10]

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Despite their differences, all of these ideas had little practical influence in the real world – as Frederick II of Prussia (1712–1786) (➜ Media Link #ax) disparagingly remarked, Saint-Pierre's proposals required only "the agreement of Europe and a few other trifles"[11] to become effective. Yet, for pragmatic reasons of their own, Europe's rulers did develop concepts of a public law (➜ Media Link #ay) as the basis for the preservation of peace. From the alliances created to prevent any one of their number becoming overbearingly powerful – France was usually the chief suspect –, they developed mechanisms to safeguard the various settlements reached at the end of conflicts, although they were only sporadically utilised.[12]

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The Congress System and Nineteenth-Century Practice

The titanic struggle between Revolutionary and Napoleonic France (➜ Media Link #b0) and the rest of Europe encouraged the Vienna peacemakers in 1815 to consider innovations in managing international affairs, influenced by earlier theory and practice. The victorious powers of Austria, Britain, Prussia, and Russia committed themselves to a twenty-year guarantee of the settlement in order to ensure territorial stability. They also agreed to consult at regular intervals "upon their common interests … and for the maintenance of the peace of Europe". Their first Congress, at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1818, built upon a growing habit of international gatherings since the Congress of Westphalia (1643–1648), some of which, like this one, were held in time of peace to resolve potential problems in advance.[13] Nevertheless, Robert Stewart Castlereagh (1769–1822) (➜ Media Link #b1), the British Foreign Secretary, opposed the attempt made by Tsar Alexander I of Russia (1777–1825) (➜ Media Link #b2) to bind the four powers into a "Holy Alliance" which could maintain not merely the European territorial, but also the political *status quo*. Promising that Britain would act if actual danger threatened the peace of Europe, he stressed that the alliance "never was however intended as an Union for the Government of the World, or for the superintendence of the internal affairs of other States." Britain's attitude encouraged the original Congress system to become the looser "Concert of Europe" – essentially a great power club, now including France (➜ Media Link #b3), in which the members undertook to discuss any major alterations to the international landscape or threats to peace, albeit on a voluntary basis.[14]

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From 1815 to 1914, there was no general war which involved all the great powers simultaneously, and, apart from a flurry of conflicts in mid-century, 19th-century Europe was relatively peaceful. International agreements to facilitate trade signalled greater interdependence between the major states, and disputes were increasingly settled by law or arbitration. The first Hague Conference in 1899 established a Permanent Court of Arbitration (➜ Media Link #b4), and almost all the great powers had formal or informal agreements to resolve questions not involving their national honour or security by non-violent means. The widely read and translated book *The Great Illusion* (1910) by Norman Angell (1872–1967) (➜ Media Link #b5) suggested that war was irrational, immoral, uneconomic, and impractical, defeating its own ends.[15] The Concert also seemed to be working. As late as 1913, the London conference was perceived to have settled affairs after the recent spate of Balkan wars and was notable for its demonstration of Anglo-German cooperation. Sir Edward Grey (1862–1933) (➜ Media Link #b7), the British Foreign Secretary, always maintained that, had he been able to insist that the European powers attend a conference following the assassination of the heir to the Austro-Hungarian empire on June 28, 1914, the First World War could have been averted.

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The Evolution of the League of Nations

The failure of the existing structures and the devastating impact of the resulting industrial warfare prompted calls for a radical reconsideration of the international security architecture.[16] Grey was an early convert, but Wilson's endorsement on 27 May 1916, of an organisation that could demand consultation and delay before it would be legitimate to resort to war was crucial. Not only did the American President wield enormous moral influence, but, even more tangibly, by 1918 Britain, France, and Italy were completely dependent on the United States for food and finance, and the American military presence was growing in Europe. "Never", wrote John Maynard Keynes (1883–1946) (➜ Media Link #b8), the British economist, "had a philosopher held such weapons wherewith to bind the princes of the world."[17]

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Notwithstanding Keynes' subsequent bitter disappointment with Wilson's performance in Paris (➔ Media Link #b9), the President did insist that, first of all, a new international organisation be created when the peace conference opened in January 1919. In under a month, his Commission, working from a composite Anglo-American script and headed by himself and his British deputy, the leading Conservative Lord Robert Cecil of Chelwood (1864–1958) (➔ Media Link #ba), produced the draft Covenant of the League of Nations which Wilson presented to the Plenary Peace Conference on 14 February 1919. These negotiations reflected the ideas and encountered the problems implicit in earlier schemes.

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In May 1918, a British committee chaired by Lord Justice Walter Phillimore (1845–1929) (➔ Media Link #bb) had suggested an alliance of sovereign states to preserve peace which was essentially an improved Concert of Europe, but with a crucial difference. Any member that went to war before it had exhausted the League's procedures would "become *ipso facto* [automatically] at war with all the other Allied states".[18] Wilson's initial proposal maintained this automatic sanction, common to all the early drafts by the French jurist and politician Léon Victor Auguste Bourgeois (1851–1925) (➔ Media Link #bc), by Jan Christiaan Smuts (1870–1950) (➔ Media Link #bd), the South African Defence Minister and member of David Lloyd George's (1863–1945) (➔ Media Link #be) War Cabinet, and by Cecil. Wilson suggested that "[s]hould any Contracting Power break or disregard its covenant … it shall thereby *ipso facto* … become at war with all the other members of the League."[19]

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Herein lay the central tenet of his alternative international organisation – each member of a universal alliance absolutely guaranteed the political independence and territorial integrity of every other member threatened by unprovoked aggression. Herein equally lay its central problem – the clash between the necessity of an unconditional and automatic guarantee and each member's sovereign right to decide the fundamental issue of peace or war. As his Secretary of State, Robert Lansing (1864–1928) (➔ Media Link #bf), rapidly pointed out, only the United States Congress could determine any American declaration of war, not the rogue actions of another state. Wilson's redraft became Article 16 of the Covenant which stated:

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> Should any Contracting Power break or disregard its covenant … it shall thereby ipso facto be deemed to have committed an act of war against all the members of the League.[20]

Now each member could determine how it would respond. This inevitable outcome of any clash between national sovereignty and a possible League superstate negated any chance of the immediate action upon which collective security depended.[21]

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Moral or Armed Force?

When Wilson insisted that League members promise, in Article 10, "to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all members of the League", Cecil asked the pertinent question: "Yes, but do any of us mean it?" Article 16 did provide for automatic economic and cultural sanctions against an aggressor, but the League could only recommend, not require, member states to take military action. Bourgeois, one of the French delegates to the League Commission, believed that "[w]ithout military backing in some force, and always ready to act, our League and our Covenant will be filed away, not as a solemn treaty, but simply as a rather ornate piece of literature". Wilson and Cecil rejected this call for an armed League, sharing earlier writers' hopes that military action would be redundant.[22]

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Wilson declared:

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> My conception of the League of Nations is just this, that it shall operate as the organised moral force of men throughout the world and that whenever or wherever wrong and aggression are planned or contemplated, this searching light of conscience will be turned upon them and men everywhere will ask, "What are the purposes that you hold in your heart against the fortunes of the world?"[23]

Cecil added:

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> For the most part there is no attempt to rely on anything like a superstate ... What we rely upon is public opinion … and if we are wrong about that, then the whole thing is wrong.[24]

French premier Georges Clemenceau (1841–1929) (➜ Media Link #bg) was unimpressed: "vox populi, vox diaboli" ("the voice of the people is the voice of the devil") he growled, whilst paying Wilson the ambiguous compliment of referring to "la noble candeur de son esprit" ("his noble honesty / naivety of character"). The other French delegate, Ferdinand Larnaude (1853–1942) (➜ Media Link #bh), was heard to remark: "Am I at a Peace Conference or in a madhouse?" Clearly, neither shared Wilson's belief that people were fundamentally good or that public opinion would be both rational and benign.[25]

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Cecil feared that a system that made no provision for change could endanger, by its very rigidity, the peace it was meant to preserve, whilst Lloyd George and Wilson saw the League as necessary for correcting their inevitable mistakes. Article 19 permitted reconsideration of treaties or of "international conditions whose continuance might endanger the peace of the world".[26] Some of the many new frontiers of Europe might well qualify for adjustment, but what were then the implications for the promises of Article 10? Were some territorial integrities negotiable and others sacrosanct, and how were member states to know? Could states rely on the League for security when there was bound to be delay whilst individual governments pondered their response? Clearly France, which sought additional guarantees from Britain and America against a renewed German attack, did not believe so. If a great power did not trust the Covenant, why should smaller states? There was also concern about difficulties in identifying the aggressor in an international dispute – only in 1974 did the United Nations produce a tentative definition of "aggression" –, whilst "Who started this?" will be a fraught question familiar to any parent or teacher.

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Disappointed Expectations and Shortcomings

The League consisted of an Assembly (➜ Media Link #bi), a Council, and a permanent secretariat based in Geneva. The Assembly, to which all members could send representatives, would meet each autumn, but it was the Council, with the victorious great powers America, Britain, France, Italy, and Japan as permanent members together with four temporary members elected by the Assembly, upon which the main executive functions would rest. The League was a standing international conference ready to tackle disputes before they escalated into conflict and to delay precipitate resort to war. Unkind critics suggested that it had been created to stop the First World War, but, unfortunately, five years too late. The undermining of any credible security guarantee meant that it was more of an evolutionary than a revolutionary development in international politics. The French, who wanted a League which could enforce the Treaty of Versailles and ensure their security against Germany, were deeply disappointed. The British public, hoping for a guarantee against future war, did not necessarily perceive that they must reduce their expectations, and their political leaders did not hasten to disabuse them.

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In December 1918, encouraged by his reception across Europe, Wilson perceived that the Allies had "fought to do away with the old order and establish a new one, and that the key of the old order was that unstable thing which we used to call the balance of power", or, as he had declared it earlier, "the great game, now for ever discredited".[27] Yet, only a day later Clemenceau told the French Chamber of Deputies: "There is an old system of alliances called the Balance of Power – this system of alliances, which I do not renounce, will be my guiding thought at the Peace Conference."[28] Wilson was right to recognise the enormous public sympathy for any innovation which might prevent a repetition of the recent slaughter, but European political elites were more in tune with Clemenceau. In an increasingly democratic age, however, no government could afford to alienate its electorate by appearing anything but enthusiastic supporters of the League. There thus evolved a dangerous dichotomy between the public statements of ministers endorsing Wilson's new international order and their privately continued faith in the "old diplomacy" based on alliances and power blocs. The Abyssinian crisis of 1935 revealed this discrepancy in its starkest form (see below).

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The League never enjoyed universal membership or the simultaneous membership of all the great powers. Its 32 founder members in 1920 consisted of the victors of the First World War and some neutral countries, excluding the major ex-enemy states and Soviet Russia. Its maximum membership was 63 but, during its lifetime, 17 states withdrew, including Japan, Germany, and Italy, whilst the USSR was expelled. Wilson's insistence that the Covenant form an integral part of each of the treaties backfired when the American Senate refused (in November 1919 and, finally, in March 1920) to ratify the Treaty of Versailles. Thus, the United States never joined the League, leaving Britain and France as the reluctant and discordant guardians of Wilson's orphan, and dealing the League a crippling blow (➜ Media Link #bj). Lloyd George told the Imperial Conference in 1921: "You cannot have a League of Nations without America; it would not be of the least use." Not only had the League lost its major sponsor, but it also attached high hopes to the deterrent effect of an economic blockade on any potential aggressor, and it was likely that the Royal Navy would be its

principal enforcer. This created the potential for an Anglo-American conflict should the United States wish to continue trading with the blockaded power – the freedom of the seas was always a highly sensitive issue in Anglo-American relations. Without the cooperation of the United States, the League would struggle to deal with problems in South and Central America, as the war between Bolivia and Paraguay in the early 1930s demonstrated.[29]

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On four occasions, Canada, deeply concerned about a possible clash with its powerful neighbour, sought to delete or dilute Article 10.[30] It failed, as did attempts by the Scandinavian countries to amend Article 16.[31] Article 11 might assume that peace was indivisible, but its fragility was exposed by Senator Raoul Dandurand (1861–1942) (➔ Media Link #bk), who undiplomatically told the 1924 Assembly that Canada was "a fire-proof house far from inflammable material" and hence reluctant to get involved in others' quarrels. By 1926, the British Foreign Office had accepted that members' obligations under the Covenant would be limited by their "geographical situations and special conditions", and each state would decide that its contribution to any collective security operation and sanctions under Article 16 were not mandatory.[32]

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Gilbert Murray (1866–1957) (➔ Media Link #bl), the chairman of the British League of Nations Union, summarised the shortcomings of collective security under these circumstances:

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> The obligation in article 10 is at once too widespread for any prudent nation to accept, and too vague for any prudent nation to bank upon. As the Covenant now stands, no nation would be really safe in acting on the supposition that, if it were attacked, the rest of the League would send armies to defend it.

Cecil and others, notably the Czech statesman, Edvard Beneš (1884–1948) (➔ Media Link #bm), suggested strengthening the commitment to collective security, first in the 1923 Treaty of Mutual Assistance and then in the 1924 Geneva Protocol. However, this idea met widespread opposition, decisively from Britain, where the Service Departments were scathing in their rejection of potentially undefined and unlimited commitments.[33]

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The League in Action

With collective security reduced to an uncertain aspiration, the League still contributed to the diplomacy of the post-war world, producing a solution to the Åland Islands problem between Finland and Sweden in 1920[34] and helping to resolve the Graeco-Bulgarian dispute in 1925[35] as well as the 1923–1926 Anglo-Turkish clash[36] over Mosul. It provided financial advice and assistance, combatted disease, and inhibited the trade in drugs, international prostitution, and slavery.[37] The Norwegian explorer Fridtjof Nansen (1861–1930) (➔ Media Link #bo) won the 1922 Nobel Peace Prize for his work as a League High Commissioner for refugees. Geneva became well established as a diplomatic meeting place, and Smuts claimed in 1929 that "mankind has, as it were, at one bound and in the short space of ten years, jumped from the old order to the new".[38]

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Nevertheless, power politics remained strong. Britain, France, and Italy largely excluded the League from treaty enforcement questions – the Anglo-French resort to it to settle the impasse reached over the interpretation of the 1921 Upper Silesian plebiscite result (regarding the new border between Germany and Poland) was a rare exception. Nonetheless it did allow them to sidestep the potential clash between the principle of self-determination and the need to, for instance, provide France (➔ Media Link #bp) with coal from the Saar, or to give Poland the use of the port of Danzig, by transferring sovereignty to the League in both cases. They were also relieved to charge the League with minority protection for peoples in Eastern and Central Europe left on the wrong side of new frontiers. However, in issues such as the French occupation of five German towns in the aftermath of the 1920 Kapp *putsch*, the Franco-Belgian invasion of the Ruhr district in January 1923, or the future supervision of German disarmament, the Allies excluded the League. To safeguard Italy's face after its occupation of the Greek island of Corfu in 1923, Britain and France turned to the inter-Allied Conference of Ambassadors rather than the League.[39]

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The halcyon days of the League, as it met in an optimistic mood for its Tenth Assembly in September 1929, were soon shattered by the Great Crash, economic depression, and increasing militant nationalism. Whether the League had achieved more than might have been accomplished by traditional diplomacy is debatable, but its main purpose, the provision of security, was about to be tested. The results of the first major examination, the Japanese occupation of Manchuria following a minor explosion on 18

September 1931, which had been staged, it was later revealed, by the Japanese, proved inconclusive. It was difficult to blame Japan as the aggressor, given its legitimate interests in the area, the obscure status of Manchuria, and the general chaos in China at the time, whilst the exigencies of Anglo-French rivalry and uncertainties over Washington's position all contributed to delay and obfuscation. Only in February 1933 did a League Commission report, recommending that Article 16 did not apply because Japan had not declared war, and limiting sanctions to non-recognition of territorial gains made by force. In March, Japan announced its withdrawal from the League.[40]

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The League Collapses

Manchuria was not fatal to the League, but Abyssinia was. Following a border clash with Italian forces at Welwel in December 1934, Abyssinia appealed to the League, referring to Article 11 on 3 January 1935. On 3 September 1935, Fascist Italy, led by Benito Mussolini (1883–1945) (➔ Media Link #bq), invaded Abyssinia. The aggression was clear, placing at stake the League's credibility (➔ Media Link #br), but the considerations of the "old diplomacy" intervened because Italy was seen as a key component of any alliance to balance the growing threat from Nazi Germany. At Stresa, in April 1935, as Britain and France thought they had secured Italian support in Europe, Mussolini perceived he had their acquiescence for his Abyssinian adventure. An imminent general election in Britain further complicated matters since the government was aware, from a recent poll, of strong support for the League. If it wished to be re-elected, it had to back the League, call for sanctions – and alienate Italy.[41] It did so, but eschewed the potentially most effective measures – banning oil exports to Italy or denying it the use of the Suez Canal. The Conservative-dominated British Government was re-elected, but Abyssinia was conquered after all.

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Consequently, the League was perceived to be a failure, and Italy became the ally of Nazi Germany. Britain and France had neither enforced collective security nor ensured a balance of power. On 30 June 1936, the Abyssinian emperor, Haile Selassie (1892–1975) (➔ Media Link #bs), addressed the League Assembly:

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> I ask the Great powers, who have promised the guarantee of collective security to small states – those small states over whom hangs the threat that they may one day suffer the fate of Ethiopia: What measures do they intend to take? …What answer am I to take back to my people?[42]

For followers of *realpolitik,* the answer was obvious, as a leading British soldier declared:

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> So much for Collective Security and "moral forces" and all the rest of that stuff… It's no good thinking that Articles 10 and 16 of the Covenant can remain. People who rely on them for safety will be let down as Abyssinia was let down... [W]e now know where we stand, the Experiment has been made and failed. How lucky that it *has* been tried out in this minor test case, lucky for all except Abyssinia.[43]

The League had now been reduced to a shadowy presence in its new palace in Geneva. Technically, it survived until its dissolution on 18 April 1946, but after the case of Abyssinia, states looked for alternative sources of security, which could be armaments and alliances in some cases and hopeful neutrality in others. The outbreak of a second major conflict in 1939 confirmed that Cecil's "Great Experiment" had failed to achieve its primary objective.[44]

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The League is Dead, Long Live the United Nations?

Yet, planning for a successor organisation began during the Second World War, prompted by another American President, Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1883–1945) (➔ Media Link #bt), who overcame the doubts of his allies, British premier Winston Churchill (1874–1965) (➔ Media Link #bu) and the USSR's leader, Iosif V. Stalin (1878–1953) (➔ Media Link #bv). As a result, the Charter of the United Nations[45] was signed in San Francisco on 26 June 1945. The United States, now led by Harry S. Truman (1884–1972) (➔ Media Link #bw), was the first of the 51 founder members to ratify the document on 4 July 1945, even though, as one British diplomat admitted, the new organisation bore "an almost embarrassing resemblance to its predecessor".[46]

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The United Nations sought to correct some of the League's shortcomings. A veto for the five permanent members of its Security Council (America, Britain, China, France, and the USSR) recognised the reality that, whilst in theory all states were equal, there were some great powers. The use of force, except in self-defence or in pursuit of UN missions, was specifically banned, but an attempt to create a UN military force was thwarted by the growing rift between the USA and USSR. The Cold War wrecked any possibility of collective action, notwithstanding intervention in the Korean War, which was the result of the USSR being absent from the Security Council and hence unable to veto Resolution 84 on 7 July 1950 (which authorised UN support for South Korea after it had been invaded by North Korea). Instead, the two opposed superpowers created massive and exclusive collective defence alliances, the American-led North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (1949) and the Soviet Warsaw Pact (1955). The only other UN collective security action, namely the liberation of Kuwait following Iraqi occupation in 1990, occurred after the Cold War. Like the Korea intervention, it was dominated by American personnel and leadership. More recent crises have not been met by collective responses.

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Since 1945, we have seen the development of a European Union. Although its members have clearly eliminated war as a means of resolving their internal disputes and have created some means of humanitarian and disaster relief intervention, it has never evolved into a collective defence mechanism. Instead, it depends upon a combination of national armed forces and the protection of NATO for its security.

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Collective security is a seductively simple concept – "All for one, and one for all", as Alexandre Dumas's (1802–1870) (➔ Media Link #bx) musketeers would have it[47] – but its realisation, in the face of political, geographical and ideological realities, has proved to be elusive. Under the influences of national interest and a search for credible means to ensure national survival, states have not relied upon Wilson's "organised moral force of men throughout the world",[48] and collective security remains an unfulfilled ideal.

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Appendix

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Notes

1. ^ See Temperley, Paris Peace Conference 1969, vol. 1, p. 435; Lloyd George, War Memoirs 1936, vol. 2, p. 1516; as well as Wilson, Fourteen Points 1918. I would like to thank Dr Christina Müller and Professor Peter Wilson for their valuable comments on an earlier draft of this chapter.
2. ^ The *Oxford English Dictionary* suggests that Winston Churchill first coined the phrase in 1934. However, there are several references to the term in debates in the House of Commons in that year by Sir Charles Edwards (1867–1954), Clement Attlee (1883–1967) and Churchill himself which suggest that it was already in common usage. See Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Hansard 1803–2005, HC Deb 30 July 1934 vol. 292 cc2376; idem, HC Deb 08 March 1934 vol. 286 cc2062; idem, HL Deb 15 March 1934 vol. 91 cc250-78. I am grateful to Diane Labrosse, the Managing Editor of H.Diplo: Diplomatic History Discussion Network, for these references and also to my colleague Dr Stephen Ryan, who informed me that "Collective Security" was the title of two contemporary international conferences (see Bourquin, Collective Security 1936).
3. ^ See Goldstein, International Relations 2001, pp. 642f.; Kegley / Wittkopf, World Politics 1997, pp. 451f.
4. ^ Ziegler, War, Peace 2000, pp. 199f.
5. ^ Hinsley, Power 1967, p. 3.
6. ^ Hinsley discusses over 30 examples.
7. ^ Ogg, Introduction 1921, p. 8.
8. ^ ibidem, pp. 10f.
9. ^ Anderson, Modern Diplomacy 1993, pp. 216f. Anderson comments on the 17th century: "Schemes for perpetual peace or proposals for compulsory arbitration of disputes had no influence whatever on these rulers or their ministers, the handful of men whose decisions determined events" (ibidem, p. 219). Hinsley, Power 1967, p. 20 and 23.
10. ^ ibidem, pp. 62–80.
11. ^ Quoted in Anderson, Modern Diplomacy 1993, p. 233.
12. ^ Hinsley, Power 1967, pp. 33–45. See also Luard, Balance of Power 1992, pp. 296–303.
13. ^ ibidem, pp. 290–296.
14. ^ Hinsley, Power 1967, pp. 186–210. See Castlereagh's State Paper, 5 May 1820, in Temperley / Penson, British Foreign Policy 1938, p. 54.
15. ^ Anderson, Modern Diplomacy 1993, pp. 236–279.
16. ^ The following paragraphs partly rely on Sharp, Balance of Power 2006.
17. ^ Keynes, Economic Consequences 1920, p. 38.
18. ^ Egerton, Creation of the League 1979, pp. 65–69.
19. ^ Sharp, Versailles Settlement 2008, pp. 51f.
20. ^ UNHCR, Covenant 1919, Article 16.
21. ^ Sharp, Versailles Settlement 2008, pp. 42–80.
22. ^ ibidem, p. 57; Henig, League 2010, p. 36.
23. ^ Armstrong, International Organisation 1982, p. 9.
24. ^ ibidem.
25. ^ English translation quoted from Duroselle, Clemenceau 1988, p. 738; Sharp, Versailles Settlement 2008, p. 62.
26. ^ UNHCR, Covenant 1919, Article 19.
27. ^ Temperley, Paris Peace Conference 1969, vol. 1, p. 439.
28. ^ English translation quoted from Shaw, Peace Conference Hints 1919, p. 65; MacMillan, Peacemakers 2001, p. 31.
29. ^ Henig, League 2010, p. 64.
30. ^ "The Members of the League undertake to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all Members of the League. In case of any such aggression or in case of any threat or danger of such aggression the Council shall advise upon the means by which this obligation shall be fulfilled." (UNHCR, Covenant 1919, Article 10)
31. ^ See UNHCR, Covenant 1919, Article 16.
32. ^ Article 11 stated: "Any war or threat of war, whether immediately affecting any of the Members of the League or not, is hereby declared a matter of concern to the whole League" (Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Documents 1969, pp. 847f.; see also UNHCR, Covenant 1919, Article 11.
33. ^ Henig, League 2001, pp. 94–103.
34. ^ The Swedish-speaking population of the Åland islands, which had only become part of Finland in the 19th century, tried to persuade the Finnish government to give the islands back to Sweden in 1920. Since Finland refused to do so, the League of Nations was asked to settle the dispute. Eventually, the Åland islands became an autonomous province, albeit under the sovereignty of Finland.
35. ^ After several ethnical disputes between the two countries and an incident near the border town of Petrich, Greece tried to invade Bulgaria, but was forced to withdraw by the League of Nations.
36. ^ The city of Mosul and the surrounding district with its important recently discovered oil resources, today part of Iraq, had

been occupied by Great Britain after the end of the First World War. Turkey, seeing itself as the successor of the Ottoman Empire (to which Mosul had belonged in the past), claimed Mosul as part of its territory, but had to give in after the intervention of the League of Nations. Mosul then officially became part of the British Mandate of Iraq.

37. ^ These aspects of the League of Nations are at present being intensively researched by a number of scholars; see www.leagueofnationshistory.org. See also Pedersen, Back to the League 2007, and Clavin, World Economy 2013.
38. ^ Dunbabin, League 1993, p. 426.
39. ^ ibidem, p. 438. The international history of the interwar period is well covered in Marks, Ebbing of European Ascendancy 2002; as well as Steiner, Lights That Failed 2005, and idem, Triumph of the Dark 2011.
40. ^ Walters, League 1969, pp. 412ff.; Armstrong, International Organisation 1982, pp. 28–32.
41. ^ In the League of Nations Union Peace Ballot in July 1935, nearly 11 million British citizens, or over half of the number that would vote in the national election, responded to a series of questions which had increasingly tough implications for employment in the armaments industries and, ultimately, about whether the British public would fight to preserve peace. To the first question (as to whether Britain should remain in the League), 10,642,560 votes said yes, and 337,964 said no, an unsurprising 97 per cent yes vote. The next three questions asked about the desirability of all-round disarmament and the prohibition of international arms trading. The fifth question, in two parts, first asked whether an aggressor should be compelled to desist by economic and non-military means. 9,627,606 (or 94.1 per cent) said yes, whilst 60,165 said no. The second part asked about public support for military sanctions, if necessary, against an aggressor. 6,506,777 people said yes, 2,262,261 voted no, which represented a 74.2 per cent approval for the ultimate sanction of war (Adamthwaite, Making 1977, pp. 140ff.)
42. ^ Kennedy, Ireland 1996, p. 220.
43. ^ This opinion was stated by Colonel Henry Pownall (1887–1961) in May 1936 (Dunbabin, League 1993, p. 441). Pownall later became Chief of the Imperial General Staff.
44. ^ Cecil entitled his autobiography *A Great Experiment.*
45. ^ United Nations, Charter 1945.
46. ^ Sharp, Consequences of Peace 2010, p. 86.
47. ^ Cf. Dumas, Three Musketeers 1999 [1846].
48. ^ Armstrong, International Organisation 1982, p. 9.

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