



The Legacies of the League of Nations

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This curriculum unit is recommended for Middle School Social Studies and English
Language Arts

Keywords: League of Nations, World War I, nationalism, diplomacy, balance of power, collective security

Teaching Standards: See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

Synopsis: History is a narrative of the past, yet often this narrative is influenced by contemporary issues. The purpose of this unit is to propose a different chronicle, that is one situated in the discourses of the inter-war years, (1918-1938) as European countries found traditional boundaries challenged by an emerging globalism.

The League of Nations (LoN) was a reaction to the suffering and waste of the First World War. Despite a limited budget, it was a massive and complicated system that became the basis for modern practices including international law, intellectual cooperation, global health initiatives, and freedom of transport. The covenant of the LoN was a part of the Treaty of Versailles and embedded the term collective security in the articles implying that peaceful states would combine their efforts to neutralize aggression. This covenant became the mechanisms for international obligations held in common by the participants. Discussion, arbitration, economic sanctions, and supplies of military units to stop the outbreak of war are among the more well researched legacies of the LoN. The following examinations of historical background, nationalism, border disputes, the balances of power, and international humanitarian actions are representational of much of the existing work.

I plan to teach this unit, modified to fit into upper elementary curriculum to twenty- eight students in Social Studies and English Language Arts.

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Annie Calloway

The League of Nations (LoN) was a reaction to the suffering and waste of the First World War. Despite a limited budget, it was a massive and complicated system that became the basis for modern practices including international law, intellectual cooperation, global health initiatives, and freedom of transport. The covenant of the LoN was a part of the Treaty of Versailles and embedded the term collective security in the articles implying that peaceful states would combine their efforts to neutralize aggression. This covenant became the mechanisms for international obligations held in common by the participants. Discussion, arbitration, economic sanctions, and supplies of military units to stop the outbreak of war are among the more-well researched legacies of the LoN. The following examinations of historical background, nationalism, border disputes, the balances of power, and international humanitarian actions are representational of much of the existing work.

While the decade of the inter-war years is often seen as a golden age in the United States, the legacy of World War I in Europe was far from care-free and glorious. Unimaginable suffering faced the survivors; disease, famine, and the loss of homeland. With borders unstable, refugees seeking asylum, and emerging world powers flexing their political muscles, the League of Nations faced obstacles in a global forum that was unprecedented. Despite being underfunded and faced with critical shortages of supplies, the League created an enduring social inheritance. The Covenant of the League became the mechanism for international obligations held in common by the participants. Discussion, arbitration, economic sanctions, and supplies of military units were used to stop the outbreak of war. These diplomatic methods are still operational in modern arbitration.

This unit came about as a result of a conversation I had with my daughter in late 2014. At that time, the world was facing a large scale refugee crisis. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres reported that the number of displaced people was the highest since World War II, exceeding fifty-one million (<http://www.unhcr.org/53a155bc6.html>). Almost half of these displaced people were from Somalia, Afghanistan, and Syria. Many countries had placed restrictions on large-scale refugee programs. In the United States, passionate debates were burning over issues of immigration and border security.

Somali, Afghani, and Syrian nationalism, my daughter and I agreed, was seriously challenged by the crisis. The very foundations of these cultures were threatened by violence and aggression. As an educator, I began to wrestle with the questions of nationalism, and the ways in which border disputes, public opinion, affiliations between powerful and weak countries, and refugee status continue to challenge world leaders.

To situate the current crisis in historical context, I began reading and researching the League of Nations. The work of scientist and explorer, Fridtjof Nansen, who orchestrated the movement of over 1.5 million refugees from the former Russian empire provided inspiration. Nansen accomplished this with a limited budget and donated ships. At the behest of the League of Nations, he mustered international support and provided a model of diplomacy and cooperation.

While this unit is designed for middle school students, modifications may be made for lower grades. Teachers should use the maps and PowerPoint to help students build background knowledge, understand chronology and provide historical understanding of Europe before World War I and the rich blends of cultures that made up the empires. Analyzing posters used for propaganda will provide students the opportunity to access primary documents, to draw inferences from the details, and to explain the ideas in a historical text. The congressional speeches will offer students primary historical resources to compare and contrast differing perspective. Thinking about diplomatic methods can prove useful in opinion writing. In this activity students will introduce a topic, state an opinion and create an organizational structure using facts to support the idea. Finally, the refugee simulation offers students the opportunity to engage in a range of collaborative discussions, to pose and respond to questions, to contribute to the discussion and to problem solve.

Lesson 1: Background Knowledge: World War I and Nationalism

Teaching Strategies:

Students will be able to define nationalism and how it played a part in causing World War I.

Students will describe how Balkan nationalism contributed to the onset of World War 1.

Words to know:

Nationalism

Culture

Powder keg

Places to know:

Europe

The Balkan Peninsula

The Adriatic Sea

The Mediterranean Sea

The Black Sea

Case study:

The Balkan Peninsula is located in southeast Europe. It was an important trade route joining a large area before World War I began. The countries covered 212,000 square miles and included Bosnia, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, Romania, Bulgaria, and Greece.

The Balkan Peninsula was surrounded by bodies of water that were key to trade, including the Adriatic, Aegean, Black and Mediterranean Seas.

Through history the Balkans were a crossroad of cultures under the rule of a variety of empires. In Ancient Times, the Greeks and Romans heavily influenced the cultures. Later Russian Slavs relocated to the peninsula. By the eve of World War, I the region was a mixture of free states and those that were still parts of empires.

Classroom Activities

Day 1:

Introduce the background knowledge by viewing the Power Point in [Appendix2](#)

Add vocabulary words to journal.

Discuss.

Day 2:

[Appendix3](#)

Gallery walk and discussion of posters from the era.

Discussion/Short response questions: Check for understanding: propaganda, symbols on posters are unusual, simple, and direct.

- Why were posters used as the medium of communication?

Possible answers include: no TV, limited access to radio, posters can be mass produced and reach a large audience.

- Identify the elements in the posters that are most intriguing. Are there common elements?

Possible answers include: justifies involvement in a movement, recruitment, raise money, encourage people to conserve resources.

- Identify the intended audience and the symbols associated with the audience

Day 3:

Make connections with propaganda and display Types of Propaganda ([Appendix 4](#)).

ⁱStudents will further analyze the meanings of the posters by responding in writing journals to the following prompt: Describe the elements in the posters that promote nationalism that is to say the self-interest of the nation, the national independence or self-determination. the techniques.

Day 4:

Students will create a propaganda poster promoting nationalism surrounding a current event. Use [Appendix 5](#) for grading.

**Lesson Two: Aland Islands: An affair “which threatens to disturb the good understanding between nations upon which peace depends”.ⁱⁱ
Autonomy/Self-determination and the needs of states to avoid conflict**

Teaching strategies:

Students will use primary documents to form an opinion in support of the United States joining the League of Nations or against the United States joining the League of Nations. Students will understand the concept of self determination as illustrated in the case study. Students will understand the concepts of autonomy and sovereignty.

Words to know:

Council of the League of Nations

national minority

sovereignty

autonomy

indigenous

self-determination

Places to know:

Aland Islands

Finland

Sweden

Gulf of Bothnia

Baltic Sea

[Appendix 6](#)

Case study:

The 1920s are often remembered as golden years of peace and prosperity in the United States. However, during the decade, the League of Nations participated in thirty disputes, most dealt with by the Council. The Council was the body charged with implementing the Covenant and resolving disputes. Typically, a course of action required a unanimous decision. Under Article 11 of the Covenant, the Council intervened upon request to arbitrate international disputes. Established by the Treaty of Versailles, the Council had five member nations. Originally aimed at five super powers, the United States failed to ratify the Covenants, thus the remaining member nations included Britain, France, Italy, and Japan. Over the twenty-five-year life of the League of Nations, the membership changed as countries withdrew, were expelled or joined.

The first dispute involved the inhabitants of the Aland Islands, positioned between Finland and Sweden. From 1721 until 1809, Sweden occupied the islands which are situated within an archipelago lying at the Gulf of Bothnia. This gulf, the entrance to the Baltic Sea, separates the 300 islands from Finland to the east. Positioned on the west is a deep water channel dividing the islands from Sweden. In 1809, Russia created the Grand Duchy of Finland, thereby incorporating the islands into the Russian territory with the Treaty of Frederickshamm. The Russians fortified the islands until the Russian Revolution in 1917 when Finland declared independence from Russia. At this time, the Aland population was ninety-five percent Swedish.

Inhabitants of the island felt that their culture would be diminished if they were forced to remain a part of Finland. Seizing the opportunity to declare themselves Swedish citizens, the islanders petitioned the Swedish government with over 7,000 signatures to join the Swedish union. Additionally, representatives of the Landsting, the island's governing body, traveled to the Paris Peace conference in 1918 to present the petition. The Finnish government responded by passing laws that offered the inhabitants participatory rights in elections and allowed school lessons to be taught in Swedish. This did not quell the movement and when two islanders were arrested and charged with high treason, the situation escalated.

Unable to reach a compromise, Britain, unsettled by the prospect of military solutions so close to home, referred the case to the council. Swedish accusations that the League of Nations itself favored Finland before the League even began assessing the situation prompted the formation of two commissions. Before mediating the crisis, the League waited for Sweden's invitation and used the first commission to support the League's reasons for entry into the conflict. A second committee, the commission of Inquiry examined the geographical aspects, as well as historical, legal, political, and military considerations.

Ultimately the decision favoring the Finns became an example of how the problems of a national minority could become internationalized and produce tensions between neighbors who were friendly. The League successfully warded off meddling from Russia, whose interest in their military investment was at risk. Recognizing that by granting sovereignty to the islands, other border countries might follow suit thereby opening a Pandora's Box of nationalist ambitions and produce pressure on Europe's borders.

The League did recognize the need for autonomy and arrived at certain safeguards to this end. School lessons would continue in the Swedish language, indigenous groups were guaranteed the right of first refusal in land transactions, the island people had a right to elect district representatives, and the island's governor had to be approved by the people. Finally, the island was neutralized militarily. Ultimately, the residents of the island were Finnish citizens in name only; continuing to lead Swedish lives. The borders remained unaltered and thus the political needs of the state were balanced with the practical needs of the residents of the Aland islands.

Given the nationalistic leanings that led to World War 1 and the efforts of Woodrow Wilson and the LoN to preserve the nationalistic characteristic of self-determination, this case is a study in the balance negotiated to preserve autonomy and self determination. After the horrific losses and devastation of the war, Europeans had little taste for conflict. This was likely a factor in the ability of the negotiators to secure a compromise.

As one of the principal architects of the articles of peace, Wilson outlined his principles of self determination in his "Fourteen Points" speech to Congress. Wilson believed that

each ethnic group should form its own state. However, self-determination was in fact a principle without legal backing. Because Europe had become so intertwined ethnically Wilson saw the LoN as a blueprint for non military solutions.

Because in the war there were also clear winners and losers, students should also understand the matter of self-determination was not equally shared by the new states and as a result became a political principle. Thus the sovereignty of Finland as a political principle outweighed the interest of islanders who were forced to accept a compromise.

Day 1: Students will read the following case study as a group and discuss the positions of both sides of the debate.

Day 2: Students will then use the primary documents in Appendix 7 and 8 to form an opinion regarding the position of the United States. Students will respond to the short answer questions in each appendix. Students will defend this position using text evidence to support their claim. Students will engage in a debate regarding their positions but must be allowed to change their opinion as well.

[Appendix 7](#)

[Appendix 8](#)

Lesson Three: Albania and Greece: The Corfu Incident: Diplomatic Practices

Teaching strategies:

Students will be able to define foreign policy and identify key components of diplomacy. Students will use this knowledge to role play scenarios of current events and provide diplomatic solutions and defend those positions.

Words to know:

Council of Ambassadors

Paris Peace Treaty

Collusion

Indemnity

Place to know:

Albania

Greece

Corfu

[Appendix 9](#)

Case study:

The Council of Ambassadors on the LoN was established in the early 1920 to oversee undecided matters arising from the Paris Peace Treaty. Representative members included France, Britain, Italy, Japan and Greece. In late August 1923, the newly negotiated border between Albania and Greece was under construction by a team from the Council when the car they were driving was ambushed and the occupants, including Italian General Enrico Tellini were assassinated about a thousand yards into the Greek frontier. The Greek press sought to implicate Albania in the murder. The press widely reported accounts from a witness who stated he had observed Albanian officials and a hired assassin escape into the forest. In fact, the Albanian government sought co-operation in an immediate cross-border investigation. The Greek government, under the leadership of Benito Mussolini, refused to supply information regarding the deaths thereby arousing suspicion of collusion in a political crime committed in their interest. The Delimitations Commission, presided over by Tellini had determined that Greek occupied villages near Korce would be awarded to Albania. The Greek press played a pivotal role in propagandizing favoritism of Tellini toward the Albanians.

The Albanian government ordered the publication of two documents claiming to substantiate that the murders were in fact organized and carried out by the Greeks. The Albanian Foreign minister visited the Greek Foreign Ministry to register a protest and to formally request the arrest of the assassins. In response, on August 29th the following demands were made of the Greek government under the direction of Italian dictator Benito Mussolini:

- Full and official apologies to the Greek government
- A memorial service in honor of the victims attended by all members of the cabinet, in the Catholic church located in Athens
- Military honors rendered to the Italian flag by the Greek fleet
- A full inquiry supervised by the Italian military attaché
- All those found guilty to suffer capital punishment
- An indemnity of fifty million lire to be paid within five days
- Military honors for the victims

On August 30, Greece responded to these ultimatums by promising to do its best to satisfy most of the Italian demands with the exception of indemnity. At the same time Greece asked the Council of the League of Nations to appoint a commission of Inquiry.

On August 31, Mussolini rejected the Greek response as unacceptable and ordered the Italian navy to the coast of Corfu, one of the Ionian islands. Warships opened fire on the coastal villages, killing civilians. Landing parties then demanded the surrender of the island. Four smaller islands were occupied as well. By September 13, the commission had determined that the indemnity should be paid and by September 27th the incident was concluded.

While many historians conclude that this first test of the power of the League was a failure, others suggest that Robert Cecil, one of the architects of the Covenants of the LoN, and the British government used the court of public opinion to further the mission of the League. This strategy had three consequences. By imposing a strict timeline for resolutions, diplomacy between the British, the French and Italian governments were severely limited. Secondly the Commission required a majority vote and France relied heavily on Italy for trade and could not be persuaded to support public reprimands against Mussolini. In addition, France relied on Italy for military support in the defense of the Ruhr valley. Britain, initially a supporter of Greece, feared sanctions from Mussolini and refused to enter negotiations. Finally, Mussolini's threatening gestures were negated by the evacuation of Corfu.

Classroom Activities:

Generate discussion:

How did the Corfu Incident define the following tenets of the LoN policies?

- Nations self-interest over the global common good
- Economic interests
- Security of borders
- Ideological debates

Day 1: As a group, define foreign policy or define what it is we want foreign policy to accomplish, record all answers. Use red card green cards or a show of hands to take surveys on the following questions:

- The U.S. should support people who rise up to fight for democracy against dictators and repressive regimes in their countries.
- American foreign policy should be focused on international relief efforts and humanitarian aid in troubled regions.
- The US should push poor countries to change their policies to ones that will encourage foreign investment in profitable industries.
- The U.S. should be less involved and intrusive in the affairs of other countries and let the nations in troubled regions work out their own solutions.
- To protect American workers, we should make it more difficult for countries that promote cheap labor and poor working conditions to sell their products in our country.
- The US should let the European Union bear a greater share of the burden of global security and encourage them to take greater responsibility for maintaining security in regions troubled by civil unrest, terrorist groups, and regional warfare.

- American foreign policy makers should not look to the United Nations or any other international organization for consensus on when to intervene in international problems and trouble spots; we should decide and act on our own when we believe our interests are involved.
- The U.S. should support and respect international institutions, international law, and collective international action.

As a class categorize these statements into generalizations. Accept and record all answers on a flip chart.

Day 2: Defining goals and roles in foreign policy. Explain that our list of general aims should help in our next step as we determine what national interests should guide our foreign policy. Reveal the Goals and Roles Chart [Appendix 10](#) and explain that one way to begin figuring out national interest is to break all the various things that might be essential to the survival and wellbeing of the nation into three main categories: (1) interests related to our security as a nation; (2) interests related to our economic health as a nation; (3) interests related to our core values, that is to say the ideas and beliefs that define our national persona. Ask students to think about how the ideas in the “Goals and Roles’ chart might fit with the various ideas of what national interests might be. Return to the list of statements from activity one and ask students to re-categorize the ideas under the banner of diplomacy, military or ideological actions. Display the list of national interests chart and discuss. [Appendix 11](#)

Day 3: Students will use prior knowledge to determine alternate steps which might have been taken as an alternative to the invasion of Corfu. Using the “Tools of Foreign Policy Chart”, students will respond by writing a letter to the Council proposing an alternate solution using tools from the chart. [Appendix 12](#)

Day 4: Students will respond to the following questions:

- Based on your new understanding of foreign policy and your own values, are there any tools on the foreign policy list that you would not use under any circumstances?
- Are there tools that you believe are currently used too often or too quickly. Are there tools which are used too hesitantly? How much of your answer depends on the circumstances? Explain your thinking.
- Would it be legitimate to prioritize the list into separate categories? How would your list reflect the most important tool to the least important tools? Does this make your analysis unprincipled? In what way?
- Defend your proposed action using what you believe to be an appropriate set of national interest priorities.

Mosul: Self Determination and the Ecology of Affiliation

Teaching Strategies:

Students will be able to differentiate between positive and negative stereotypes. Students will write adjectives describing various regional people. Students will build a list of positive and negative stereotypes. Students will understand the pluralistic nature of the culture as a challenge to the LoN mission of self-determination. Students will understand the problems with taxonomies.

Words to know:

pluralistic

taxonomy

obstructionist

de-facto

Places to know:

Mosul

[Appendix 13](#)

Case study:

In the midst of World War One, Britain and France met to divide the Ottoman Empire. Mosul, situated between Syria, Iran, and the newly formed independent republic of Turkey, had long been active in trading with its neighbors. Sending grains to the north and textiles to the south, merchants formed partnerships that crossed ethnic lines and presented a challenge to the commission sent to determine the will of the people in 1925.

Originally included in the French realm of colonies, the government relinquished control of Mosul to Britain. For seven years, Britain remained the occupying force by default as Mosul was considered to be a part of British controlled Iran. Turkey, also a member of the League of Nations disputed this claim. However, both countries agreed to accept the ruling of the Commission.

The delegation arrived in Baghdad as Iraqi King Faysel traveled the provinces advocating an Iraqi-British leadership. Suggesting that Turkey would pose an expansionist threat to the region and an on-going military presence might be required, Faysel began to plant seeds of fear into his people. As the dominant police force, the British undertook a heavy handed approach to the work of the commission. Constant police presence, restricted movement due to perceived safety concerns, and open harassment of the Turkish representatives were tactics undertaken by the British-Iraqi provincial governors to undermine the Turkish delegation.

Woodrow Wilson in his “Fourteen Points” speech, advocated the idea of self-determination. His remarks are often credited with some of the ideology of the mandates of the League of Nations. In the twelfth point he suggests “The Turkish portion of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which

are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development”.ⁱⁱⁱ

Responding to this, attempting to avoid the obstructionist tactics of the British officers and pursuant to its mission of self-determination, the delegation took it upon themselves to interview the citizens of Mosul and the surrounding provinces, often secretly. Efforts by the delegation to place the citizens of Mosul into specific taxonomies proved elusive. The mountainous terrain to the north provided shelter for a variety of religious and ethnic groups. Trade routes extended to the north and south. Far from the center of power in Baghdad, the British presence established a de facto governance. Despite great efforts and detailed ethnographies, the Commission concluded that:

Even had we been able to eliminate all political influence and dispel all misgivings, it would have been impossible to determine the percentage of various nationalities in the town, and it would have been still more difficult to estimate the percentage of the origins of the populations. In the towns, mixed marriages are frequent, opportunistic tendencies are stronger, and the intermingling is greater than in any other part of the country.^{iv}

Even among the eighteen sheiks, members of the commission found little consensus. “Seven were pro-Turkish, three favored a Kurdish state, four Arab leaders who subordinated themselves to the opinion of their superior sheiks, (who were pro-Turkish), one who dared not express an opinion, one chief of the ‘smallest Kurdish tribe’ of the area was in favour of Iraq, and two declared themselves willing to serve whichever government”.^v

So despite the efforts of the commission to determine the will of the people, the solution to the dispute came in the form of British propaganda and the presence of British officials. In the seven years that the British had occupied Mosul, much of the trade had been diverted from Syria and Anatolia to Basra and Baghdad. Intermittent military skirmishes interrupted trade with Turkey and the railroads charged exorbitant fees to ship commodities in and out effectively eliminating competition and raising the rate of inflation.

In the end the commission abandoned the notion of self-determination and ruled that Britain should have a twenty-five-year mandate over the Mosulis. “Mosul’s Ottoman economic structures had been refashioned, but her Ottoman demographic legacy was still intact. Home to a remarkable array of religious groups (Sunni, Shi’i,^{vi} Chaldeans, Jews, Yezidis, Protestants, Catholics, Armenians, Jacobites, Armenians, Assyrians and Greek Orthodox), five

languages (Arabic, Kurdish, Turkish, Armenian, Assyrian), numerous tribes, and extensive commercial and trade networks, the people of Mosul were much too varied to fit into the League of Nations' ideas about the way people should be divided.^{vii}

Classroom Activities:

Day 1: Conduct a class discussion about culture using the following questions as starting points:

- Is it possible for someone to belong to several cultural groups? Give some examples.
- Do you have to be born into a cultural group to understand the culture? Explain.
- If someone belongs to several cultural groups, what are some ways that he or she might determine his or her primary culture?
- What are some instances when a person might feel the need to identify his or her primary culture?
- How is cultural identity taught to people (e.g., family celebrations)? Is cultural identity “fixed”? If change is possible, what might cause a change?
- Are there instances when a discussion on culture or cultural heritage might be difficult for a person? Explain (e.g., being adopted)?
- Using the material discussed during this lesson, have students come together to develop a working definition of culture. Post the definition in the classroom. (The following definition of culture from the Anti-Defamation league can be used as a guide: *The pattern of daily life learned by a group of people. These patterns can be seen in people's language, art, customs, music, food, holiday celebrations and styles of clothing*)

Day 2: At the front of the room, have some open plastic containers labeled with regions of the world: Africa, Asia, Antarctica, Australia, Europe, North America, and South America. (For this lesson plan, I'll be dealing with regions of the world. If you are able and/or comfortable, feel free to use ethnic groups, races, or the like.) Review the locations of these continents. Also, ask for a show of hands so that students can share which continent they are from. Ask students to get out a piece of blank paper and tear it up into seven pieces. On each piece of paper, students must write a single adjective describing the type of people who live or might settle in these areas. Try not to give examples. Each student needs to give at least one adjective per continent. Students can use the eighth piece of paper to put an extra adjective in the plastic container of their homeland. As students finish, have them place their adjectives in the proper container. Before the next step, make sure you have supplied each container with at least three adjectives. It is important to have

a hearty collection of adjectives in each container. Collect the pieces of paper in each container and paperclip them together, putting the container labels at the top of each stack. Randomly, choose a paper-clipped set of paper. Post the slips of paper to the board or a wall and read the words aloud as you do so. Do not put up the geographical label. Ask students what continent they think this list represents. If students don't know, don't worry. Simply move on to the next continent. When complete, there should be seven lists of adjectives posted. Label each list with the proper continent. It is important that students help you do this. Pair students together and give each couple a paper for making a "t" chart. As a pair, students should visit each list around the room and organize the words into two lists on their paper, dividing the words into positive, negative and neutral columns. Having students stay with their partners, divide the class into seven groups (or as many groups as you have containers). Assign each group a continent. In their groups, students need to build consensus of the lists. Once the groups have completed their positive, negative and neutral lists, they must go to the original list on the wall or board and organize the lists based on what the group decided. Each group should recreate their lists on the wall or board. Students will revisit the lists and respond to the questions in [Appendix 14](#) Use this appendix to access a rubric of the assignment, [Appendix 15](#)

International Humanitarian Action: The "Era of Refugees"

Teaching Strategies:

Students will be able to define the rights of refugees. Students will determine factors in which countries may or may not be willing to accept refugees. Students will recognize problems refugees might encounter if they are forced to return to the country they are fleeing. Students will recognize the human rights issues at hand. Students will make connections between their knowledge of taxonomies and how refugees are classified. Finally, students will identify the diplomatic tools which are most effective in addressing refugee status.

Words to know:

refugee
enforced population exchange
ethnic cleansing
deportation

Places to know:

Ukraine
Albania

[Appendix 16](#)

Case study:

Unlike the previous cases in which the League of Nations intervened in political disputes, the work of the league in humanitarian efforts was unlike modern responses to

crises; the league sought to offer security rather than welfare. Refugees flooded Europe by the millions after World War I, creating strains on most of the countries on the continent. In Anatolia tensions with Christians and Muslims as well as the conflict between Greece and Turkey caused about two million people to lose their homes. The Russian civil war left thousands destitute while still others fled the country. Famine in the Ukraine in 1921-1922 left more homeless.

Article twenty-five of the Covenant was a call to action to “mitigate suffering throughout the world”. Perfectly aligned with the mission of the League, current world events called for an international response. Sparsely funded, the efforts of Fridtjof Nansen took into account a number of factors that called for international responses; strains on infrastructure and food supplies, disease, unemployment, housing, people in sensitive border regions, and those without the proper documentation to travel internationally. A number of the nations involved in the effort were directly responsible for the pain and suffering of the refugees. While displaced people are often seen as a temporary problem; the crisis on the continents called for long-term solutions

Perhaps the most massive undertaking was the movement of over 1.5 million refugees and Prisoners of War (POWs) from the former Russian Empire. To orchestrate this, the League called on scientist and polar explorer Fridtjof Nansen. Under his leadership German, Austrian, and Hungarian soldiers were transported using donations from Britain and ships from Finland. This work is an example of the international effort Nansen was able to muster in support of what was perceived to be the common international good.

During the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913, Greece increased in size considerably. But by June 1921, another war had broken out over the borders and islands. A brutal affair, Turkey attacked Smyrna and occupied the territory, killing as many as thirty thousand people, mostly Christian Greeks and Armenians. Hundreds of thousands began to move and Nansen’s representative in Constantinople wired the council requesting permission to serve the refugees arriving from both the mainland and the border islands. The political solution to this problem was enforced population exchanges. In the end, about 1.4 million Greeks left Turkey while 400,000 Turks were forced out of Greece. Under the leadership of Henry Morgenthau, the Refugee Settlement Commission arranged inter-government loans and used the funds to resettle the refugees into farms and provide them wages through public works projects.

An independent Armenia was formed only briefly after World War 1. In early 1922 it was annexed by Russia to become part of the Soviet Socialist Republic. As Christians, the Armenians had suffered horrible atrocities during World War I. War-weary and persecuted, they began the flight to Greece at the same time the government was facing other refugee settlement problems. In 1923 the Armenian refugees themselves appealed to the League asking that fifty thousand people be assisted in moving to the desert near

Yerevan. Under the direction of Nansen, the project was approved but ultimately failed since funding could not be secured.

More successful was the movement of 90,000 Armenians who fled to Syria and Lebanon, about half of those settling in Beirut and Aleppo. The project, developed and overseen by the International Labour Office division used international funds to improve sanitation and health facilities for the Armenian refugees. These funds were reinvested over a ten-year period and ultimately offered harbor to over 37,000 Armenians.

The collapse of the great multinational empires of Central and Eastern Europe and The Russian Revolution made it possible for the Allies to play the Wilsonian card against East European revolutionists. Except Russia, the continent became a jigsaw puzzle of new nation-states, created on a fragile national basis. Even a brief glance at this pattern reveals how precarious was an effort to redraw the political map on national lines. Most of the new states were as multinational as the old "prisons of nations" they replaced. For example, German, Slav and Croat minorities in Italy took the place of Italian minorities in the Habsburg empire. A consequence of this ill-considered policy was the mass expulsion of minorities.

Classroom Activity:

<http://www.unhcr.org/473dc1772.pdf>

Permission requested 11-15-2015 and 11-19

Appendix 1

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.A

Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue, acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.B

Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.C

Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.1.A

Introduce claim(s) and organize the reasons and evidence clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.1.B

Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.1.C

Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim(s) and reasons.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.1.D

Establish and maintain a formal style.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.1.E

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented.

List of Materials for Classroom Use

[Appendix 1](#)

[Appendix2](#)

[Appendix3](#)

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[Appendix 17: teacher notes](#)

Reading List for Students

<https://www.ndi.org/>

Offers political background on a variety of countries.

<http://www.unhcr.org/pages/50374a386.html>

Short biography of Fridtjof Nansen

http://www.jstor.org/stable/3409351?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

Article by Dame Crowdy activist in the LoN

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ObaMsmuR29Q>

An introduction to the modern United Nations

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/0/ww1/>

Kid-friendly information on World War 1

Associated topics:

Additional Biographies:

T.F. Johnson

Henry Morgenthau

Joseph Avenol

Eric Drummond

Legacies:

World Health Organization

United Nations High Commissioner or Refugees (UNHCR)

International Labour Organization (ILO)

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Initiatives:

Typhus

Malaria

Opium trade

Human trafficking

Slavery

Bibliography for Teachers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zuYaKVcYLyM>

You Tube version of the excavation of Saigon, may be used as an example of the plight of refugees

http://www.amnestyusa.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/the_refugee_rights.pdf

Amnesty International and the rights of refugees

Sarah Shields. "Mosul, the Ottoman Legacy and the League of Nations," *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies* 3:2 (2009): 217-231.

Ibid 45.

Background knowledge for teaching the Mosul case study

Peter Yearwood, P. (1986). "Consistently with Honour: Great Britain, the League of Nations and the Corfu Crisis of 1923," *Journal of Contemporary History* 21: (1986): 559-579

http://www.jstor.org/stable/260586?&seq=16#page_scan_tab_contents

Background knowledge for teaching Corfu

Click here to learn more about World War I:

<http://www.historyplace.com/worldhistory/firstworldwar/index-1914.html>

primary sources and background on World War 1

Notes

ⁱ Rachel Serinaz. "Poster Visual Analysis Worksheet," *Bringing History Home*, accessed 10-23-2015 from: poster_visual_analysis_worksheet_bringinghistoryhome.pdf.

ⁱⁱ Woodrow Wilson. "President Wilson's Speech in Favor of the League of Nations" Pueblo, Co. September 25, 1919.

ⁱⁱⁱ Sarah Shields, (2009). "Mosul, the Ottoman Legacy and the League of Nations," *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies* 3:2 (2009): 217.

^{iv} Ibid 45.

^v Martyn Housden, *The League of Nations and the Organizations of Peace* (New York: Pearson, 2014).

^{vii} Sarah Shields, (2009). "Mosul, the Ottoman Legacy and the League of Nations," *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies* 3:2 (2009): 225.

Permissions: April Smith November 21, 2015 via e mail