

Guaranteeing Peace through 'Collective Security' in the 20th Century

“Understand history with an historian point of view on the international security in the XXth century.”

Questions:

- 1-Why W Wilson wants to create the League of Nations? When?
- 2-Explain two failures that reveals the weaknesses of the League of Nations in the 1920s and the 30s.
- 3-When is created the United Nations? Where?
- 4-Give one reason for the creation of the United Nations.
- 5-How peace will be guaranteed by the United Nations? Be precise in your answer (2 answers at least).
- 6-What happens for the world at the end of the Cold War? When? Is it totally true nowadays?

Légende:

☐ in the 20s

☐ in the 30s

☐ in the 50s

☐ since the 1990s

“Hoping to break with the system of alliances and secret diplomacy which was held responsible for the cataclysm of 1914-1918, the American president Woodrow Wilson placed the **creation of the League of Nations at the top of the agenda during the 1919 peace conference**, in order to base the **preservation of peace** on new practices. [...] From 1920, the League also found itself **weakened by the refusal of the United States to join**, [...].

The collective security system **experienced resounding failures in the 1930s**, showing itself incapable of guaranteeing the protections of Article 10 to those members threatened by the aggressive policies of dictatorial regimes. It proved unable in 1931-1932, for instance, to prevent the conquest of Manchuria by Japan, a permanent member of the Council of the League (...or) in 1935 [...the] aggression of Italy against Ethiopia, a member of the League since 1923. [...]

The principle of collective security was nevertheless adopted once more by the United Nations, established by the San Francisco Charter on 26 June 1945. Aware of the weaknesses of the League of Nations, however, its founders attempted to improve the mechanisms of **collective security** by giving a **decisive role to the principal victors of the Second World War**, which became **permanent members of the Security Council** (USA, USSR, China, UK, France)(...) on which **the Big Five have the power of veto(:)** it was given ‘the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security’ (Art. 24). In the case of a threat to peace or act of aggression, the Security Council can decide on economic sanctions (Art. 41) or to ‘take such action by air, sea or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security’ (Art. 42).

The **end of the Cold War provided hope, in the context of a ‘new world order’**, of a revitalisation of the UN and the rebirth of collective security.”

Source: JM Guieu, article « garantir-la-paix-par-la-securite-collective-au-xxe-siecle », www.EHNE.fr, 2016.

Vocabulary:

League of Nations: Ligue des Nations; Société des Nations
resounding failures: échecs retentissants

to weaken: affaiblir

nevertheless: néanmoins

to threaten: menacer

victors: vainqueurs