ГЕРБЕРТ УЭЛЛС

IN THE FOURTH YEAR: ANTICIPATIONS OF A WORLD PEACE

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Содержание

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PREFACE

In the latter half of 1914 a few of us were writing that this war was a "War of Ideas." A phrase, "The War to end War," got into circulation, amidst much sceptical comment. It was a phrase powerful enough to sway many men, essentially pacifists, towards taking an active part in the war against German imperialism, but it was a phrase whose chief content was its aspiration. People were already writing in those early days of disarmament and of the abolition of the armament industry throughout the world; they realized fully the element of industrial belligerency behind the shining armour of imperialism, and they denounced the "Krupp-Kaiser" alliance. But against such writing and such thought we had to count, in those days, great and powerful realities. Even to those who expressed these ideas there lay visibly upon them the shadow of impracticability; they were very "advanced" ideas in 1914, very Utopian. Against them was

an unbroken mass of mental habit and public tradition. While we talked of this "war to end war," the diplomatists of the Powers allied against Germany were busily spinning a disastrous web of greedy secret treaties, were answering aggression by schemes of aggression, were seeing in the treacherous violence of Germany only the justification for countervailing evil acts. To them it was only another war for "ascendancy." That was three years and a half ago, and since then this "war of ideas" has gone on to a phase few of us had dared hope for in those opening days. The Russian revolution put a match to that pile of secret treaties and indeed to all the imperialist plans of the Allies; in the end it will burn them all. The greatest of the Western Allies is now the United States of America, and the Americans have come into this war simply for an idea. Three years and a half ago a few of us were saying this was a war against the idea of imperialism, not German imperialism merely, but British and French and Russian imperialism, and we were saying this not because it was so, but because we hoped to see it become so. To-day we can say so, because now it is so.

In those days, moreover, we said this is the "war to end war," and we still did not know clearly how. We thought in terms of treaties and alliances. It is largely the detachment and practical genius of the great English-speaking nation across the Atlantic that has carried the world on beyond and replaced that phrase by the phrase, "The League of Nations," a phrase suggesting plainly the organization of a sufficient instrument by which war may

be ended for ever. In 1913 talk of a World League of Nations would have seemed, to the extremest pitch, "Utopian." To-day the project has an air not only of being so practicable, but of being so urgent and necessary and so manifestly the sane thing before mankind that not to be busied upon it, not to be making it more widely known and better understood, not to be working out its problems and bringing it about, is to be living outside of the contemporary life of the world. For a book upon any other subject at the present time some apology may be necessary, but a book upon this subject is as natural a thing to produce now as a pair of skates in winter when the ice begins to bear.

All we writers find ourselves engaged perforce in some part or other of a world-wide propaganda of this the most creative and hopeful of political ideas that has ever dawned upon the consciousness of mankind. With no concerted plan we feel called upon to serve it. And in no connection would one so like to think oneself un-original as in this connection. It would be a dismaying thing to realize that one were writing anything here which was not the possible thought of great multitudes of other people, and capable of becoming the common thought of mankind. One writes in such a book as this not to express oneself but to swell a chorus. The idea of the League of Nations is so great a one that it may well override the pretensions and command the allegiance of kings; much more does it claim the self-subjugation of the journalistic writer. Our innumerable books upon this great edifice of a World Peace do not constitute a scramble for

attention, but an attempt to express in every variety of phrase and aspect this one system of ideas which now possesses us all. In the same way the elementary facts and ideas of the science of chemistry might conceivably be put completely and fully into one text-book, but, as a matter of fact, it is far more convenient to tell that same story over in a thousand different forms, in a text-book for boys here, for a different sort or class of boy there, for adult students, for reference, for people expert in mathematics, for people unused to the scientific method, and so on. For the last year the writer has been doing what he can – and a number of other writers have been doing what they can – to bring about a united declaration of all the Atlantic Allies in favour of a League of Nations, and to define the necessary nature of that League. He has, in the course of this work, written a series of articles upon the League and upon *the necessary sacrifices of preconceptions* that the idea involves in the London press. He has also been trying to clear his own mind upon the real meaning of that ambiguous word "democracy," for which the League is to make the world "safe." The bulk of this book is made up of these discussions. For a very considerable number of readers, it may be well to admit here, it can have no possible interest; they will have come at these questions themselves from different angles and they will have long since got to their own conclusions. But there may be others whose angle of approach may be similar to the writer's, who may have asked some or most of the questions he has had to ask, and who may be actively interested in the answers and the

working out of the answers he has made to these questions. For them this book is printed.

H. G. WELLS.

May, 1918.

It is a dangerous thing to recommend specific books out of so large and various a literature as the "League of Nations" idea has already produced, but the reader who wishes to reach beyond the range of this book, or who does not like its tone and method, will probably find something to meet his needs and tastes better in Marburg's "League of Nations," a straightforward account of the American side of the movement by the former United States Minister in Belgium, on the one hand, or in the concluding parts of Mr. Fayle's "Great Settlement" (1915), a frankly sceptical treatment from the British Imperialist point of view, on the other. An illuminating discussion, advocating peace treaties rather than a league, is Sir Walter Phillimore's "Three Centuries of Treaties." Two excellent books from America, that chance to be on my table, are Mr. Goldsmith's "League to Enforce Peace" and "A World in Ferment" by President Nicholas Murray Butler. Mater's "Société des Nations" (Didier) is an able presentation of a French point of view. Brailsford's "A League of Nations" is already a classic of the movement in England, and a very full and thorough book; and Hobson's "Towards International Government" is a very sympathetic contribution from the English liberal left; but the reader must understand that these two writers seem disposed to welcome a peace with an unrevolutionized

Germany, an idea to which, in common with most British people, I am bitterly opposed. Walsh's "World Rebuilt" is a good exhortation, and Mugge's "Parliament of Man" is fresh and sane and able. The omnivorous reader will find good sense and quaint English in Judge Mejdell's "*Jus Gentium*," published in English by Olsen's of Christiania. There is an active League of Nations Society in Dublin, as well as the London and Washington ones, publishing pamphlets and conducting propaganda. All these books and pamphlets I have named happen to lie upon my study table as I write, but I have made no systematic effort to get together literature upon the subject, and probably there are just as many books as good of which I have never even heard. There must, I am sure, be statements of the League of Nations idea forthcoming from various religious standpoints, but I do not know any sufficiently well to recommend them. It is incredible that neither the Roman Catholic Church, the English Episcopal Church, nor any Nonconformist body has made any effort as an organization to forward this essentially religious end of peace on earth. And also there must be German writings upon this same topic. I mention these diverse sources not in order to present a bibliography, but because I should be sorry to have the reader think that this little book pretends to state *the* case rather than *a* case for the League of Nations.

I
THE WAY TO CONCRETE REALIZATION

More and more frequently does one hear this phrase, The League of Nations, used to express the outline idea of the new world that will come out of the war. There can be no doubt that the phrase has taken hold of the imaginations of great multitudes of people: it is one of those creative phrases that may alter the whole destiny of mankind. But as yet it is still a very vague phrase, a cloudy promise of peace. I make no apology therefore, for casting my discussion of it in the most general terms. The idea is the idea of united human effort to put an end to wars; the first practical question, that must precede all others, is how far can we hope to get to a concrete realization of that?

But first let me note the fourth word in the second title of this book. The common talk is of a "League of Nations" merely. I follow the man who is, more than any other man, the leader of English political thought throughout the world to-day, President Wilson, in inserting that significant adjective "Free." We western allies know to-day what is involved in making bargains with governments that do not stand for their peoples; we have had all our Russian deal, for example, repudiated and thrust back upon our hands; and it is clearly in his mind, as it must be in the

minds of all reasonable men, that no mere "scrap of paper," with just a monarch's or a chancellor's endorsement, is a good enough earnest of fellowship in the league. It cannot be a diplomatist's league. The League of Nations, if it is to have any such effect as people seem to hope from it, must be, in the first place, "understanded of the people." It must be supported by sustained, deliberate explanation, and by teaching in school and church and press of the whole mass of all the peoples concerned. I underline the adjective "Free" here to set aside, once for all, any possible misconception that this modern idea of a League of Nations has any affinity to that Holy Alliance of the diplomatists, which set out to keep the peace of Europe so disastrously a century ago.

Later I will discuss the powers of the League. But before I come to that I would like to say a little about the more general question of its nature and authority. What sort of gathering will embody it? The suggestions made range from a mere advisory body, rather like the Hague convention, which will merely pronounce on the rights and wrongs of any international conflict, to the idea of a sort of Super-State, a Parliament of Mankind, a "Super National" Authority, practically taking over the sovereignty of the existing states and empires of the world. Most people's ideas of the League fall between these extremes. They want the League to be something more than an ethical court, they want a League that will act, but on the other hand they shrink from any loss of "our independence." There seems to be a conflict here. There is a real need for many people to

tidy up their ideas at this point. We cannot have our cake and eat it. If association is worth while, there must be some sacrifice of freedom to association. As a very distinguished colonial representative said to me the other day: "Here we are talking of the freedom of small nations and the 'self-determination' of peoples, and at the same time of the Council of the League of Nations and all sorts of international controls. Which do we want?"

The answer, I think, is "Both." It is a matter of more or less, of getting the best thing at the cost of the second-best. We may want to relax an old association in order to make a newer and wider one. It is quite understandable that peoples aware of a distinctive national character and involved in some big existing political complex, should wish to disentangle themselves from one group of associations in order to enter more effectively into another, a greater, and more satisfactory one. The Finn or the Pole, who has hitherto been a rather reluctant member of the synthesis of the Russian empire, may well wish to end that attachment in order to become a free member of a worldwide brotherhood. The desire for free arrangement is not a desire for chaos. There is such a thing as untying your parcels in order to pack them better, and I do not see myself how we can possibly contemplate a great league of freedom and reason in the world without a considerable amount of such preliminary dissolution.

It happens, very fortunately for the world, that a century and a quarter ago thirteen various and very jealous states

worked out the problem of a Union, and became – after an enormous, exhausting wrangle – the United States of America. Now the way they solved their riddle was by delegating and giving over jealously specified sovereign powers and doing all that was possible to retain the residuum. They remained essentially sovereign states. New York, Virginia, Massachusetts, for example, remained legally independent. The practical fusion of these peoples into one people outran the legal bargain. It was only after long years of discussion that the point was conceded; it was indeed only after the Civil War that the implications were fully established, that there resided a sovereignty in the American people as a whole, as distinguished from the peoples of the several states. This is a precedent that every one who talks about the League of Nations should bear in mind. These states set up a congress and president in Washington with strictly delegated powers. That congress and president they delegated to look after certain common interests, to deal with interstate trade, to deal with foreign powers, to maintain a supreme court of law. Everything else – education, militia, powers of life and death – the states retained for themselves. To this day, for instance, the federal courts and the federal officials have no power to interfere to protect the lives or property of aliens in any part of the union outside the district of Columbia. The state governments still see to that. The federal government has the legal right perhaps to intervene, but it is still chary of such intervention. And these states of the American Union were at the outset so independent-

spirited that they would not even adopt a common name. To this day they have no common name. We have to call them Americans, which is a ridiculous name when we consider that Canada, Mexico, Peru, Brazil are all of them also in America. Or else we have to call them Virginians, Californians, New Englanders, and so forth. Their legal and nominal separateness weighs nothing against the real fusion that their great league has now made possible.

Now, that clearly is a precedent of the utmost value in our schemes for this council of the League of Nations. We must begin by delegating, as the States began by delegating. It is a far cry to the time when we shall talk and think of the Sovereign People of the Earth. That council of the League of Nations will be a tie as strong, we hope, but certainly not so close and multiplex as the early tie of the States at Washington. It will begin by having certain delegated powers and no others. It will be an "*ad hoc*" body. Later its powers may grow as mankind becomes accustomed to it. But at first it will have, directly or mediately, all the powers that seem necessary to restrain the world from war – and unless I know nothing of patriotic jealousies it will have not a scrap of power more. The danger is much more that its powers will be insufficient than that they will be excessive. Of that later. What I want to discuss here now is the constitution of this delegated body. I want to discuss that first in order to set aside out of the discussion certain fantastic notions that will otherwise get very seriously in our way. Fantastic as they are,

they have played a large part in reducing the Hague Tribunal to an ineffective squeak amidst the thunders of this war.

A number of gentlemen scheming out world unity in studies have begun their proposals with the simple suggestion that each sovereign power should send one member to the projected parliament of mankind. This has a pleasant democratic air; one sovereign state, one vote. Now let us run over a list of sovereign states and see to what this leads us. We find our list includes the British Empire, with a population of four hundred millions, of which probably half can read and write some language or other; Bogota with a population of a million, mostly poets; Hayti with a population of a million and a third, almost entirely illiterate and liable at any time to further political disruption; Andorra with a population of four or five thousand souls. The mere suggestion of equal representation between such "powers" is enough to make the British Empire burst into a thousand (voting) fragments. A certain concession to population, one must admit, was made by the theorists; a state of over three millions got, if I remember rightly, two delegates, and if over twenty, three, and some of the small states were given a kind of intermittent appearance, they only came every other time or something of that sort; but at The Hague things still remained in such a posture that three or four minute and backward states could outvote the British Empire or the United States. Therein lies the clue to the insignificance of The Hague. Such projects as these are idle projects and we must put them out of our heads; they are against nature; the great

nations will not suffer them for a moment.

But when we dismiss this idea of representation by states, we are left with the problem of the proportion of representation and of relative weight in the Council of the League on our hands. It is the sort of problem that appeals terribly to the ingenious. We cannot solve it by making population a basis, because that will give a monstrous importance to the illiterate millions of India and China. Ingenious statistical schemes have been framed in which the number of university graduates and the steel output come in as multipliers, but for my own part I am not greatly impressed by statistical schemes. At the risk of seeming something of a Prussian, I would like to insist upon certain brute facts. The business of the League of Nations is to keep the peace of the world and nothing else. No power will ever dare to break the peace of the world if the powers that are capable of making war under modern conditions say "*No*." And there are only four powers certainly capable at the present time of producing the men and materials needed for a modern war in sufficient abundance to go on fighting: Britain, France, Germany, and the United States. There are three others which are very doubtfully capable: Italy, Japan, and Austria. Russia I will mark – it is all that one can do with Russia just now – with a note of interrogation. Some day China may be war capable – I hope never, but it is a possibility. Personally I don't think that any other power on earth would have a ghost of a chance to resist the will – if it could be an honestly united will – of the first-named four. All the rest fight

by the sanction of and by association with these leaders. They can only fight because of the split will of the war-complete powers. Some are forced to fight by that very division.

No one can vie with me in my appreciation of the civilization of Switzerland, Sweden, or Holland, but the plain fact of the case is that such powers are absolutely incapable of uttering an effective protest against war. Far less so are your Haytis and Liberias. The preservation of the world-peace rests with the great powers and with the great powers alone. If they have the will for peace, it is peace. If they have not, it is conflict. The four powers I have named can now, if they see fit, dictate the peace of the world for ever.

Let us keep our grip on that. Peace is the business of the great powers primarily. Steel output, university graduates, and so forth may be convenient secondary criteria, may be useful ways of measuring war efficiency, but the meat and substance of the Council of the League of Nations must embody the wills of those leading peoples. They can give an enduring peace to the little nations and the whole of mankind. It can arrive in no other way. So I take it that the Council of an ideal League of Nations must consist chiefly of the representatives of the great belligerent powers, and that the representatives of the minor allies and of the neutrals – essential though their presence will be – must not be allowed to swamp the voices of these larger masses of mankind.

And this state of affairs may come about more easily than logical, statistical-minded people may be disposed to think.

Our first impulse, when we discuss the League of Nations idea, is to think of some very elaborate and definite scheme of members on the model of existing legislative bodies, called together one hardly knows how, and sitting in a specially built League of Nations Congress House. All schemes are more methodical than reality. We think of somebody, learned and "expert," in spectacles, with a thin clear voice, reading over the "Projected Constitution of a League of Nations" to an attentive and respectful Peace Congress. But there is a more natural way to a league than that. Instead of being made like a machine, the League of Nations may come about like a marriage. The Peace Congress that must sooner or later meet may itself become, after a time, the Council of a League of Nations. The League of Nations may come upon us by degrees, almost imperceptibly. I am strongly obsessed by the idea that that Peace Congress will necessarily become – and that it is highly desirable that it should become – a most prolonged and persistent gathering. Why should it not become at length a permanent gathering, inviting representatives to aid its deliberations from the neutral states, and gradually adjusting itself to conditions of permanency?

I can conceive no such Peace Congress as those that have settled up after other wars, settling up after this war. Not only has the war been enormously bigger than any other war, but it has struck deeper at the foundations of social and economic life. I doubt if we begin to realize how much of the old system is dead to-day, how much has to be remade. Since the beginnings

of history there has been a credible promise of gold payments underneath our financial arrangements. It is now an incredible promise. The value of a pound note waves about while you look at it. What will happen to it when peace comes no man can tell. Nor what will happen to the mark. The rouble has gone into the Abyss. Our giddy money specialists clutch their handfuls of paper and watch it flying down the steep. Much as we may hate the Germans, some of us will have to sit down with some of the enemy to arrange a common scheme for the preservation of credit in money. And I presume that it is not proposed to end this war in a wild scramble of buyers for such food as remains in the world. There is a shortage now, a greater shortage ahead of the world, and there will be shortages of supply at the source and transport in food and all raw materials for some years to come. The Peace Congress will have to sit and organize a share-out and distribution and reorganization of these shattered supplies. It will have to Rhondda the nations. Probably, too, we shall have to deal collectively with a pestilence before we are out of the mess. Then there are such little jobs as the reconstruction of Belgium and Serbia. There are considerable rectifications of boundaries to be made. There are fresh states to be created, in Poland and Armenia for example. About all these smaller states, new and old, that the peace must call into being, there must be a system of guarantees of the most difficult and complicated sort.

I do not see the Press Congress getting through such matters as these in a session of weeks or months. The idea the Germans

betrayed at Brest, that things were going to be done in the Versailles fashion by great moustached heroes frowning and drawing lines with a large black soldierly thumbnail across maps, is – old-fashioned. They have made their eastern treaties, it is true, in this mode, but they are still looking for some really responsible government to keep them now that they are made. From first to last clearly the main peace negotiations are going to follow unprecedented courses. This preliminary discussion of war aims by means of great public speeches, that has been getting more and more explicit now for many months, is quite unprecedented. Apparently all the broad preliminaries are to be stated and accepted in the sight of all mankind before even an armistice occurs on the main, the western front. The German diplomatists hate this process. So do a lot of ours. So do some of the diplomatic Frenchmen. The German junkers are dodging and lying, they are fighting desperately to keep back everything they possibly can for the bargaining and bullying and table-banging of the council chamber, but that way there is no peace. And when at last Germany says snip sufficiently to the Allies' snap, and the Peace Congress begins, it will almost certainly be as unprecedented as its prelude. Before it meets, the broad lines of the settlement will have been drawn plainly with the approval of the mass of mankind.

II
THE LEAGUE MUST BE REPRESENTATIVE

A Peace Congress, growing permanent, then, may prove to be the most practical and convenient embodiment of this idea of a League of Nations that has taken possession of the imagination of the world. A most necessary preliminary to a Peace Congress, with such possibilities inherent in it, must obviously be the meeting and organization of a preliminary League of the Allied Nations. That point I would now enlarge.

Half a world peace is better than none. There seems no reason whatever why the world should wait for the Central Powers before it begins this necessary work. Mr. McCurdy has been asking lately, "Why not the League of Nations *now*?" That is a question a great number of people would like to echo very heartily. The nearer the Allies can come to a League of Free Nations before the Peace Congress the more prospect there is that that body will approximate in nature to a League of Nations for the whole world.

In one most unexpected quarter the same idea has been endorsed. The King's Speech on the prorogation of Parliament this February was one of the most remarkable royal utterances that have ever been made from the British throne. There was

less of the old-fashioned King and more of the modern President about it than the most republican-minded of us could have anticipated. For the first time in a King's Speech we heard of the "democracies" of the world, and there was a clear claim that the Allies at present fighting the Central Powers did themselves constitute a League of Nations.

But we must admit that at present they do so only in a very rhetorical sense. There is no real council of empowered representatives, and nothing in the nature of a united front has been prepared. Unless we provide beforehand for something more effective, Italy, France, the United States, Japan, and this country will send separate groups of representatives, with separate instructions, unequal status, and very probably conflicting views upon many subjects, to the ultimate peace discussions. It is quite conceivable – it is a very serious danger – that at this discussion skilful diplomacy on the part of the Central Powers may open a cleft among the Allies that has never appeared during the actual war. Have the British settled, for example, with Italy and France for the supply of metallurgical coal after the war? Those countries must have it somehow. Across the board Germany can make some tempting bids in that respect. Or take another question: Have the British arrived at common views with France, Belgium, Portugal, and South Africa about the administration of Central Africa? Suppose Germany makes sudden proposals affecting native labour that win over the Portuguese and the Boers? There are a score of such points upon

which we shall find the Allied representatives haggling with each other in the presence of the enemy if they have not been settled beforehand.

It is the plainest common sense that we should be fixing up all such matters with our Allies now, and knitting together a common front for the final deal with German Imperialism. And these things are not to be done effectively and bindingly nowadays by official gentlemen in discreet undertones. They need to be done with the full knowledge and authority of the participating peoples.

The Russian example has taught the world the instability of diplomatic bargains in a time of such fundamental issues as the present. There is little hope and little strength in hole-and-corner bargainings between the officials or politicians who happen to be at the head of this or that nation for the time being. Our Labour people will not stand this sort of thing and they will not be bound by it. There will be the plain danger of repudiation for all arrangements made in that fashion. A gathering of somebody or other approved by the British Foreign Office and of somebody or other approved by the French Foreign Office, of somebody with vague powers from America, and so on and so on, will be an entirely ineffective gathering. But that is the sort of gathering of the Allies we have been having hitherto, and that is the sort of gathering that is likely to continue unless there is a considerable expression of opinion in favour of something more representative and responsible.

Even our Foreign Office must be aware that in every country in the world there is now bitter suspicion of and keen hostility towards merely diplomatic representatives. One of the most significant features of the time is the evident desire of the Labour movement in every European country to take part in a collateral conference of Labour that shall meet when and where the Peace Congress does and deliberate and comment on its proceedings. For a year now the demand of the masses for such a Labour conference has been growing. It marks a distrust of officialdom whose intensity officialdom would do well to ponder. But it is the natural consequence of, it is the popular attempt at a corrective to, the aloofness and obscurity that have hitherto been so evil a characteristic of international negotiations. I do not think Labour and intelligent people anywhere are going to be fobbed off with an old-fashioned diplomatic gathering as being that League of Free Nations they demand.

On the other hand, I do not contemplate this bi-cameral conference with the diplomatists trying to best and humbug the Labour people as well as each other and the Labour people getting more and more irritated, suspicious, and extremist, with anything but dread. The Allied countries must go into the conference *solid*, and they can only hope to do that by heeding and incorporating Labour ideas before they come to the conference. The only alternative that I can see to this unsatisfactory prospect of a Peace Congress sitting side by side with a dissentient and probably revolutionary Labour

and Socialist convention – both gatherings with unsatisfactory credentials contradicting one another and drifting to opposite extremes – is that the delegates the Allied Powers send to the Peace Conference (the same delegates which, if they are wise, they will have previously sent to a preliminary League of Allied Nations to discuss their common action at the Peace Congress), should be elected *ad hoc* upon democratic lines.

I know that this will be a very shocking proposal to all our able specialists in foreign policy. They will talk at once about the "ignorance" of people like the Labour leaders and myself about such matters, and so on. What do we know of the treaty of so-and-so that was signed in the year seventeen something? – and so on. To which the answer is that we ought not to have been kept ignorant of these things. A day will come when the Foreign Offices of all countries will have to recognize that what the people do not know of international agreements "ain't facts." A secret treaty is only binding upon the persons in the secret. But what I, as a sample common person, am not ignorant of is this: that the business that goes on at the Peace Congress will either make or mar the lives of everyone I care for in the world, and that somehow, by representative or what not, *I have to be there*. The Peace Congress deals with the blood and happiness of my children and the future of my world. Speaking as one of the hundreds of millions of "rank outsiders" in public affairs, I do not mean to respect any peace treaty that may end this war unless I am honestly represented at its making. I think everywhere there

is a tendency in people to follow the Russian example to this extent and to repudiate bargains in which they have had no voice.

I do not see that any genuine realization of the hopes with which all this talk about the League of Nations is charged can be possible, unless the two bodies which should naturally lead up to the League of Nations – that is to say, firstly, the Conference of the Allies, and then the Peace Congress – are elected bodies, speaking confidently for the whole mass of the peoples behind them. It may be a troublesome thing to elect them, but it will involve much more troublesome consequences if they are not elected. This, I think, is one of the considerations for which many people's minds are still unprepared. But unless we are to have over again after all this bloodshed and effort some such "Peace with Honour" foolery as we had performed by "Dizzy" and Salisbury at that fatal Berlin Conference in which this present war was begotten, we must sit up to this novel proposal of electoral representation in the peace negotiations. Something more than common sense binds our statesmen to this idea. They are morally pledged to it. President Wilson and our British and French spokesmen alike have said over and over again that they want to deal not with the Hohenzollerns but with the German people. In other words, we have demanded elected representatives from the German people with whom we may deal, and how can we make a demand of that sort unless we on our part are already prepared to send our own elected representatives to meet them? It is up to us to indicate by our own practice how we on our side, professing

as we do to act for democracies, to make democracy safe on the earth, and so on, intend to meet this new occasion.

Yet it has to be remarked that, so far, not one of the League of Nations projects I have seen have included any practicable proposals for the appointment of delegates either to that ultimate body or to its two necessary predecessors, the Council of the Allies and the Peace Congress. It is evident that here, again, we are neglecting to get on with something of very urgent importance. I will venture, therefore, to say a word or two here about the possible way in which a modern community may appoint its international representatives.

And here, again, I turn from any European precedents to that political outcome of the British mind, the Constitution of the United States. (Because we must always remember that while our political institutions in Britain are a patch-up of feudalism, Tudor, Stuart, and Hanoverian monarchist traditions and urgent merely European necessities, a patch-up that has been made quasi-democratic in a series of after-thoughts, the American Constitution is a real, deliberate creation of the English-speaking intelligence.) The President of the United States, then, we have to note, is elected in a most extraordinary way, and in a way that has now the justification of very great successes indeed. On several occasions the United States has achieved indisputable greatness in its Presidents, and very rarely has it failed to set up very leaderly and distinguished men. It is worth while, therefore, to inquire how this President is elected. He is neither elected

directly by the people nor appointed by any legislative body. He is chosen by a special college elected by the people. This college exists to elect him; it meets, elects him, and disperses. (I will not here go into the preliminary complications that makes the election of a President follow upon a preliminary election of two Presidential Candidates. The point I am making here is that he is a specially selected man chosen *ad hoc*.) Is there any reason why we should, not adopt this method in this new necessity we are under of sending representatives, first, to the long overdue and necessary Allied Council, then to the Peace Congress, and then to the hoped-for Council of the League of Nations?

I am anxious here only to start for discussion the idea of an electoral representation of the nations upon these three bodies that must in succession set themselves to define, organize, and maintain the peace of the world. I do not wish to complicate the question by any too explicit advocacy of methods of election or the like. In the United States this college which elects the President is elected on the same register of voters as that which elects the Senate and Congress, and at the same time. But I suppose if we are to give a popular mandate to the three or five or twelve or twenty (or whatever number it is) men to whom we are going to entrust our Empire's share in this great task of the peace negotiations, it will be more decisive of the will of the whole nation if the college that had to appoint them is elected at a special election. I suppose that the great British commonweals over-seas, at present not represented in Parliament, would

also and separately at the same time elect colleges to appoint their representatives. I suppose there would be at least one Indian representative elected, perhaps by some special electoral conference of Indian princes and leading men. The chief defect of the American Presidential election is that as the old single vote method of election is employed it has to be fought on purely party lines. He is the select man of the Democratic half, or of the Republican half of the nation. He is not the select man of the whole nation. It would give a far more representative character to the electoral college if it could be elected by fair modern methods, if for this particular purpose parliamentary constituencies could be grouped and the clean scientific method of proportional representation could be used. But I suppose the party politician in this, as in most of our affairs, must still have his pound of our flesh – and we must reckon with him later for the bloodshed.

These are all, however, secondary considerations. The above paragraph is, so to speak, in the nature of a footnote. The fundamental matter, if we are to get towards any realization of this ideal of a world peace sustained by a League of Nations, is to get straight away to the conception of direct special electoral mandates in this matter. At present all the political luncheon and dinner parties in London are busy with smirking discussions of "Who is to go?" The titled ladies are particularly busy. They are talking about it as if we poor, ignorant, tax-paying, blood-paying common people did not exist. "L. G.," they say, will of course

"*insist* on going," but there is much talk of the "Old Man." People are getting quite nice again about "the Old Man's feelings." It would be such a pretty thing to send him. But if "L. G." goes we want him to go with something more than a backing of intrigues and snatched authority. And I do not think the mass of people have any enthusiasm for the Old Man. It is difficult again – by the dinner-party standards – to know how Lord Curzon can be restrained. But we common people do not care if he is restrained to the point of extinction. Probably there will be nobody who talks or understands Russian among the British representatives. But, of course, the British governing class has washed its hands of the Russians. They were always very difficult, and now they are "impossible, my dear, perfectly impossible."

No! That sort of thing will not do now. This Peace Congress is too big a job for party politicians and society and county families. The bulk of British opinion cannot go on being represented for ever by President Wilson. We cannot always look to the Americans to express our ideas and do our work for democracy. The foolery of the Berlin Treaty must not be repeated. We cannot have another popular Prime Minister come triumphing back to England with a gross of pink spectacles – through which we may survey the prospect of the next great war. The League of Free Nations means something very big and solid; it is not a rhetorical phrase to be used to pacify a restless, distressed, and anxious public, and to be sneered out of existence when that use is past. When the popular mind now demands a League of Free Nations

it demands a reality. The only way to that reality is through the direct participation of the nation as a whole in the settlement, and that is possible only through the direct election for this particular issue of representative and responsible men.

III
THE NECESSARY POWERS OF THE LEAGUE

If this phrase, "the League of Free Nations," is to signify anything more than a rhetorical flourish, then certain consequences follow that have to be faced now. No man can join a partnership and remain an absolutely free man. You cannot bind yourself to do this and not to do that and to consult and act with your associates in certain eventualities without a loss of your sovereign freedom. People in this country and in France do not seem to be sitting up manfully to these necessary propositions.

If this League of Free Nations is really to be an effectual thing for the preservation of the peace of the world it must possess power and exercise power, powers must be delegated to it. Otherwise it will only help, with all other half-hearted good resolutions, to pave the road of mankind to hell. Nothing in all the world so strengthens evil as the half-hearted attempts of good to make good.

It scarcely needs repeating here – it has been so generally said – that no League of Free Nations can hope to keep the peace unless every member of it is indeed a free member, represented by duly elected persons. Nobody, of course, asks to "dictate the internal government" of any country to that country. If Germans,

for instance, like to wallow in absolutism after the war they can do so. But if they or any other peoples wish to take part in a permanent League of Free Nations it is only reasonable to insist that so far as their representatives on the council go they must be duly elected under conditions that are by the standards of the general league satisfactorily democratic. That seems to be only the common sense of the matter. Every court is a potential conspiracy against freedom, and the League cannot tolerate merely court appointments. If courts are to exist anywhere in the new world of the future, they will be wise to stand aloof from international meddling. Of course if a people, after due provision for electoral representation, choose to elect dynastic candidates, that is an altogether different matter.

And now let us consider what are the powers that must be delegated to this proposed council of a League of Free Nations, if that is really effectually to prevent war and to organize and establish and make peace permanent in the world.

Firstly, then, it must be able to adjudicate upon all international disputes whatever. Its first function must clearly be that. Before a war can break out there must be the possibility of a world decision upon its rights and wrongs. The League, therefore, will have as its primary function to maintain a Supreme Court, whose decisions will be final, before which every sovereign power may appear as plaintiff against any other sovereign power or group of powers. The plea, I take it, will always be in the form that the defendant power or powers is engaged in proceedings

"calculated to lead to a breach of the peace," and calling upon the League for an injunction against such proceedings. I suppose the proceedings that can be brought into court in this way fall under such headings as these that follow; restraint of trade by injurious tariffs or suchlike differentiations or by interference with through traffic, improper treatment of the subjects *or their property* (here I put a query) of the plaintiff nation in the defendant state, aggressive military or naval preparation, disorder spreading over the frontier, trespass (as, for instance, by airships), propaganda of disorder, espionage, permitting the organization of injurious activities, such as raids or piracy. Clearly all such actions must come within the purview of any world-supreme court organized to prevent war. But in addition there is a more doubtful and delicate class of case, arising out of the discontent of patches of one race or religion in the dominions of another. How far may the supreme court of the world attend to grievances between subject and sovereign?

Such cases are highly probable, and no large, vague propositions about the "self-determination" of peoples can meet all the cases. In Macedonia, for instance, there is a jumble of Albanian, Serbian, Bulgarian, Greek and Rumanian villages always jostling one another and maintaining an intense irritation between the kindred nations close at hand. And quite a large number of areas and cities in the world, it has to be remembered, are not homogeneous at all. Will the great nations of the world have the self-abnegation to permit a scattered subject population

to appeal against the treatment of its ruling power to the Supreme Court? This is a much more serious interference with sovereignty than intervention in an external quarrel. Could a Greek village in Bulgarian Macedonia plead in the Supreme Court? Could the Armenians in Constantinople, or the Jews in Roumania, or the Poles in West Prussia, or the negroes in Georgia, or the Indians in the Transvaal make such an appeal? Could any Indian population in India appeal? Personally I should like to see the power of the Supreme Court extend as far as this. I do not see how we can possibly prevent a kindred nation pleading for the scattered people of its own race and culture, or any nation presenting a case on behalf of some otherwise unrepresented people – the United States, for example, presenting a case on behalf of the Armenians. But I doubt if many people have made up their minds yet to see the powers of the Supreme Court of the League of Nations go so far as this. I doubt if, to begin with, it will be possible to provide for these cases. I would like to see it done, but I doubt if the majority of the sovereign peoples concerned will reconcile their national pride with the idea, at least so far as their own subject populations go.

Here, you see, I do no more than ask a question. It is a difficult one, and it has to be answered before we can clear the way to the League of Free Nations.

But the Supreme Court, whether it is to have the wider or the narrower scope here suggested, would be merely the central function of the League of Free Nations. Behind the decisions

of the Supreme Court must lie power. And here come fresh difficulties for patriotic digestions. The armies and navies of the world must be at the disposal of the League of Free Nations, and that opens up a new large area of delegated authority. The first impulse of any power disposed to challenge the decisions of the Supreme Court will be, of course, to arm; and it is difficult to imagine how the League of Free Nations can exercise any practical authority unless it has power to restrain such armament. The League of Free Nations must, in fact, if it is to be a working reality, have power to define and limit the military and naval and aerial equipment of every country in the world. This means something more than a restriction of state forces. It must have power and freedom to investigate the military and naval and aerial establishments of all its constituent powers. It must also have effective control over every armament industry. And armament industries are not always easy to define. Are aeroplanes, for example, armament? Its powers, I suggest, must extend even to a restraint upon the belligerent propaganda which is the natural advertisement campaign of every armament industry. It must have the right, for example, to raise the question of the proprietorship of newspapers by armament interests. Disarmament is, in fact, a necessary factor of any League of Free Nations, and you cannot have disarmament unless you are prepared to see the powers of the council of the League extend thus far. The very existence of the League presupposes that it and it alone is to have and to exercise military force. Any

other belligerency or preparation or incitement to belligerency becomes rebellion, and any other arming a threat of rebellion, in a world League of Free Nations.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.