

UNSEEN FORCES CHALLENGE

WAR; SPIRITUAL SPRINGS AID

Deeply Grounded Peace Movement Draws From Spiritual Springs to Aid Beginnings of International Organization — Present Age, Disinclined to Political Building, Called On to Integrate World.

(Bacon once said: "Truth comes out of error more easily than out of confusion.") Truly the pall of confusion hangs heavily over man's efforts to build up peace on collective security.

The whole question of the League of Nations, with its preliminary machinery for world conciliation and world justice, has been blurred by a confusion of thought that would have been unaccountable were it not that confusion of thought in major issues has almost necessarily become one of the prevailing difficulties of our age.

It would be absurd to pretend that our capacity for clear reasoning is below that of previous ages. On the contrary, for general mental alertness we can probably outshine any age in the world's history. But the problems have to cope with, thanks largely to discoveries in natural science, come upon us so quickly and in such overwhelming hordes, that our reasoning faculties have literally become jammed in the struggle to keep abreast of the situation.

Fleeting Goals

We tend to discard the traditional, slow-moving laws of justice and right and work for quick, temporary results. Many times it seems simpler to accept an accomplished fact when some venturesome character achieves a notable feat in the conquest of time, space or someone else's territory, rather than to inquire at length into the wisdom or rectitude of his performance and its effect upon the community at large.

We bow ourselves gracefully out of a tight situation urging expediency or "realistic" provocation without considering the long-range difficulties that our exit may have set in motion.

We have become susceptible to confusion through taking a short-range view of long-range issues. When the League of Nations is in question, we are liable to seize on some temporary defect and proceed to argue as though it vitiated the whole movement for collective security.

It is scarcely to be wondered at that in the matter of political development—which is of necessity a slow-moving process, needing patience, faith and a long-range vision—we have but a moderate record, considering that out great achievements have been in the direction of quick absorption of new scientific discoveries. But it is one of the tragedies of our age that we whose genius runs unwillingly to political construction, should be called upon to begin erecting the greatest and most vital political structure the world has ever known.

Staggers Imagination

The mere effort to get the imagination to work on this world government project—this society of nations—is so great that many are tempted to shelve it in confused thinking and go on with their national mechanics. Yet with the whole social structure of humanity apparently ready to crumble, we know that it is no longer safe to shirk any responsibilities in helping mankind to revive its hopes of peace and security.

Previous articles in this series have discussed some of the deeplying problems that the League of Nations idea today has to face. It is the purpose of this contribution to consider some of the less tangible but no less vital aspects of the League idea, and to point to some of the pitfalls that hinder our thought on the subject.

In any political institution, there

are two distinct aspects which should not be confused. In the British constitution, for example there is that strange conglomeration of customs and laws that could only be collected by searching untold thousands of documents. There is also that element of the constitution that resides in the thought of the British people, who make this ill-assorted constitution one of the most efficient in the world by their attitude toward it—by their respect for tradition and their willingness to accept change in moderation according as the need arises.

Invisible League

In the same way there are two aspects of the League of Nations. There is the visible and in many ways imperfect expression in the existing organization at Geneva. Behind this is humanity's yearning for peace, its "philanthropic passions," in the words of President Wilson, "its passion of pity, its passion of human sympathy, its passion of human friendliness and helpfulness"—all that volume of human idealism that brought about the formation of the League in the first instance and that as surely stands back of it today. The League idea has been likened by William James to a sandbank gradually forming in a stormy sea.

Without that greater League in human thought, the Geneva beginnings could not for a moment continue. With it, the newly-founded society can never be destroyed. It may be crushed through temporary want of faith, but it must rise again after fresh purification by fire and sword. When the League idea sustained its shattering blow as Geneva seemed powerless to prevent Japan's resort to arms in Manchuria, its supporters were dismayed not so much at the threatened eclipse of the League, for that could only be temporary, as at the promise of more heavy punishment for humanity before the protective hand of the League could be restored.

Peace Has Deep Hold

It seemed as though humanity would only cry for a regime of peace when reduced to the condition of that "little limping group of wounded Italian soldiers," whom President Wilson described as coming to him, when in Italy after the World War, to present a petition in favor of the League of Nations.

Yet however much the world may

resound today with the rattling of swords and the cheers of mobs roused by inflaming propaganda to ecstatic support of national adventures in arms, those forces which stood for a society of nations 15 years ago are the same today as then. When the clouds of the war-makers have blown away, and the worthlessness of their gains have been recognized, the vast body of quiet conviction and silent faith behind the idea of a League for peace will move forward with irresistible weight.

One need not search far for evidences of the firm hold of this peace idea. Americans today, regardless of what their government may decree, are foremost among its upholders. Since Edward Ginn nearly 30 years ago gave a first \$1,000,000 to the endowment of peace, followed by Andrew Carnegie with \$10,000,000 and a Palace of Peace at The Hague, the peace idea has grown in the country until there are at present more than 100 societies working for peace, with most of the outstanding preachers and university presidents indefatigable workers in the same cause.

Multiple Evidence.

In Britain the fact that 97 per cent of 12,000,000 votes backed the League in a recent referendum came as an unexpected reminder of the real strength of the League idea among the less articulate citizenry.

As this article is being written, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom is conducting a campaign for 50,000,000 signatures of men and women throughout the world in a peace mandate to the governments, and the representative youth of the universities of 24 nations is meeting at Geneva to support the League. A few days before the World Alliance for International Friendship, meeting at Montreux, Switz., and drawing delegates from 30 countries, issued an appeal, stating: "A new foundation must be laid through a firm determination to banish war by promoting arbitration and general disarmament, by engendering respect for treaties, and by strengthening and making more effective the League of Nations."

At the same time, another great meeting, that of the International Christian Endeavor conference, bringing 5000 delegates from 27 countries to Budapest, was declared to be the

largest peace meeting ever held in that city.

Such evidence, which can be multiplied indefinitely, indicates the overwhelming presence of that greater League in human thought that makes the growth of the visible League substantial and inevitable.

Responds to World Opinion

In view of this fact, it is the less easy to explain the confusion of thought that characterizes the League's outspoken critics. Leaving aside those who merely ridicule the League as the fumbling handiwork of idealists and who, in their firm loyalty to the national arms idea, neither present, nor desire to present, any improvement on the Geneva organization, one finds a tendency to give the League credit for some minor settlements and for much good work of a nonpolitical nature. But the League, one is told, is no better than the governments that form it—in other words it is a collection of astute politicians who have for the time being transferred their wiles from the chancelleries to the halls of Geneva.

To make this charge is to ignore the steady effect of world opinion on the delegates at Geneva; it is to ignore the fact that the League, despite its failures, is becoming so effective a medium for the expression of world opinion that the role of the leader about to embark on war is becoming more and more embarrassing to sustain; it is to ignore such significant signs as the fact that in the British Government—the most potent democracy as yet enrolled in the League—one powerful faction of younger members in the Cabinet led by Anthony Eden, is waging a determined fight to strengthen the influence of the League.

Long-Range View Needed

Again, the League is said to have been vitiated by too close a tie with the Versailles Treaty. It is accused of having assumed too static a form—that is, incapable of adapting itself to the needs of nations that must progress or expand.

Here is a typical short-range criticism of a singularly long-range institution. What importance can it be in the long run that a concern with a prospective life of thousands of years ahead of it has a few paragraphs that need changing? That League has only been in existence some 15 years. It can scarcely make vital changes in its constitution until the foremost democracy of the world can make up its mind to take its seat and assume its rightful responsibilities. Constitutional defects are surely the least of its defects in the eyes of those who have its interest at heart.

Finally, it is said that the League is dominated by France or some other country and that foreign entanglements await the nation drawn into Geneva's toils. President Wilson replied to these critics in his own country by saying: "I cannot imagine how they can be Americans and set up a doctrine of careful selfishness thought out to the last detail...I have heard nothing except: 'Will it not be dangerous for us to help the world?'"

United States Holds Aloof

If, however, the criticism arises less from selfishness than from fearfulness it at least shows a strange inability to imagine the difference that the addition of the great democracy of America would make in Geneva's counsels. It overlooks the obvious fact that some nations are hard put to it to help perpetuate the League and at the same time work for their own self-preservation, and that with America's entry into the League some of the difficulties would automatically disappear.

The most fundamental necessity for the League—without which it can only operate imperfectly—is its completeness. The League requires full representation of all nations worthy of the name. The purpose of such a complete membership, as President Taft pointed out in his speech at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, on March 4, 1919, is an arrangement which will disentangle all the alliances of the world, for entanglements come from selfish combinations against someone else, not from arrangements with all the world.

The voice of confused criticism in the different countries is scornful and loud, but let it not deceive us into forgetting the presence of that great urge for peace in the thought of mankind that is the true foundation for what we see in its imperfect form at Geneva. There is nothing confused about this "Affirmation of Christian Faith" made by a great collection of churchmen two years ago:

Affirmation of Faith

"We are convinced: "I. That God at this time is calling the nations of the world to learn to live as one family;

Another Arctic Mirage

Some two centuries ago a British sea captain named Gilles, looking over the prow of his ship, sighted what appeared to be a mass of land in the Arctic ice fields northeast of Spitzbergen. On his return to London he found a new territory in the Arctic near the eighty-second parallel of latitude. About thirty years ago a Russian captain, commanding the ship Yervak, believed he saw land in the same locality. The latest glimpse of the phantom land was reported by an Englishman in 1925. A dispatch from Moscow this week goes far to settle the age-long mystery. The Soviet ice-breaker, Sadko, after a thorough search in the vicinity of the supposed "Gilles Land" reported that nothing had been seen except packed ice. After cruising for three days in the area, an air pilot took off from the ship and flew over the Arctic wastes, but saw no sign of land. It is generally agreed among scientists that certain atmospheric conditions will cause ice to resemble land. Hence there is no need to suppose that old Captain Gilles was not in his sober senses when he looked over the prow and thought he saw land or that northern sea-waste two hundred years ago.—New Outlook, Toronto.

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"2. That the machinery of international co-operation provided by the League of Nations, while not yet perfect, affords the best available means of applying the principles of the Gospel of Christ to stop war, to provide justice, and to organize peace;

"3. That the application of these principles constitutes the only practical politics at the present time.

"4. That Christian people should pray, and resolve that by these means faith shall be kept, confidence restored, and there shall be no more war."

Nor is there confusion in the words of another great laborer for peace when, on her appointment as founder of the then active Association for International Conciliation, Mary Baker Eddy wrote in "The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany," page 283:

"To aid in this holy purpose is the leading impetus of my life. Many years have I prayed and labored for the consummation of 'on earth peace, good will toward men.' May the fruits of said grand Association, pregnant with peace, find their birthright in divine Science."

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