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THE PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE

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## ADVOCATE OF PEACE

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## THE PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE

AS THE ADVOCATE goes to press there is much concerning the personnel, technical procedure, aims, and probable achievements of the Peace Conference which it is quite impossible to venture to write about with even a customary degree of assurance. Very few of the unprecedented number of nations desiring a chance to be heard and to participate formally or informally in the deliberations and in the decision have officially announced the make-up of their delegations, and even fewer of such commissions have their representatives on the ground ready to act. A definite decision as to whether the first or the last item on the program to be settled by the victorious Allies and the United States shall be a definition of the ideals and governing procedure of a federation of nations has yet to be given.

Moreover, since the armistice was signed and later extended, conditions have arisen within defeated Germany and Austria and have taken acute form in Russia, and in some of the aspiring, newly created republics of southeastern Europe, which make it difficult for the wisest of statesmen and best-intentioned of diplomats and jurists to decide upon a policy that will help save Europe from a class war and all that that implies. Settlements that not so long ago might have been hoped for on conventional lines, involving only determination of boundaries, recognition of the rights of newly born democracies, and assent to a union of States with common ideals of good faith and fairplay between peoples and

governments, are now complicated and made more difficult to attain because of the invasion of problems involving the structure of society as a whole—issues that the men who sat at the Congress of Vienna or at the Congress of Berlin, or even as recently as at The Hague, could ignore.

Such being the situation, broadly stated, it has been inevitable that the process of pre-conference negotiation and sounding-out should be prolonged; and for the same reason it is likely that the Conference itself will last longer than any one supposed that it would when the armistice was signed and military victory came.

Several aspects of the situation, however, are such as to encourage lovers of the ideal of a "governed world." The presence of the President of the United States in Europe, his personal conference with heads of States, with leaders of the important groups of Christian, Jewish, and Mohammedan religionists, with spokesmen of the massed forces of labor, including conservatives, moderates, and radicals, and his public exposition of the ideals of a commonwealth of nations for which he stands, have had an educational effect upon official and upon public opinion. They tend to bring about ultimate agreement on certain ethical practices among nations and between classes, which agreement the Conference dare not evade formulating. Even at this date a sufficient number of sovereigns, premiers, party leaders, and international jurists have gone on record as favoring a genuine effort to provide for a governed world with a minimum reliance on force, to make it unlikely that by use of any devious methods, imperialists, militarists, or champions of classes—capitalistic or proletarian—can thwart the people's will to have done with the old dynastic, national, racial, economic strifes and physical combats on a smaller or colossal scale. Defeat of this popular demand now will damn forever the nations or the classes or the individuals responsible for it, and will help make a social revolution universal that now is only local.

Another aspect of the world situation which the nations' representatives sitting in Paris will face, which may encourage champions of a law-controlled world, is this: The very extremity of the world's need, fiscally, economically and materially considered, as it sits down (1) to count the cost of the war, (2) to see how it is to maintain national, corporate, and personal credit with an "Ossa on Pelion" of indebtedness, (3) to bridge the

chasm between want and poverty on the one side and a depleted stock of food on the other, and (4) to adjust the war-created standards of wages to post-war costs of production of the necessaries of life, is compelling the peace-makers at Paris to tend toward an ultimate decision hostile to national individualism, competition, and economic war.

New sorts of advisers, new bodies of evidence, new motives for joint action making for a higher nationalism and sounder internationalism already are in evidence, and even now are forcing upon combatants and neutrals control of all, by all, for all. Franklin's memorable saying at the signing of the Declaration of Independence, "We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately," may now be adapted, "We must all hang together, or we shall all starve, and repudiate debts, and revert to primitive anarchy together." Seeing this to be true in a realm of affairs too often in the past untouched by anything like unity of purpose or high moral standard, the nations, large and small, have begun (1) to pool their surviving material assets, (2) to agree to supervision on an international scale of their stocks of food, (3) to consider standardization of wages for mariners who thread the waterways of the seven seas, and (4) to debate whether it may not be necessary to internationalize the process of financing and extinguishing decades or centuries hence the debts created by the war. Having made such concessions in this field, how can there be any consistent opposition to the ideal of similar co-operative action when it comes to creating a formal government for a federalized, law-governed, rationalized, and justly administered world?

The Paris Conference also bids fair to succeed in doing what the masses of men want it to do, because they are in a better position to watch it and check it up as it goes along, than they ever were at any prior gathering of the kind. The Government of the United States did not provide the press men who went to The Hague Conferences with transportation across the Atlantic. No previous monarch of England ever welcomed a body of journalists to Buckingham Palace as did King George V the representatives of the press of the United States, who were the guests of the British Government during a side-trip from Paris. "The Fourth Estate of the Realm," that Macaulay described as having entered the reporters' gallery of the House of Commons to become thereafter a factor in the affairs of the empire, is to have a fairer chance at the Paris Conference than it has had at any previous council of the nations; and this in part because of its own accretion of power and capacity for service; but more due to the fact that "secret diplomacy" is doomed, if not as to its details, certainly as to its broader outlines and ultimate conclusions. The American, Brit-

ish, and French democracies, however much they differ on other issues and on details of administration of the Conference, are likely to be at one on this point. They take this position partly as a matter of theory, of abstract justice, of reading of history; but also because of their journalists' experiences with censorship during the war. They also have in mind the "Nicky Willy" correspondence between the now dethroned heads of the Romanoff and the Hohenzollern dynasties, the disclosures as to the extent to which the Allies were willing to partition Europe among them in the early stages of the war if thereby they could only agree to hold together long enough to defeat Germany; and they expect further revelations of the same sort when the officials now in control in Bavaria, Prussia and Austria publish their promised chronicles of what went on at Munich, Potsdam, and Vienna, in the form of court and foreign office correspondence. Moreover, these three democracies are encouraged to believe that the day of open diplomacy and abolition of secret statecraft is dawning, because nominally at least it has the backing of so many of the governments assenting to the program defined by President Wilson. To make the nominal assent the real practice must be one of the first acts of the Conference. It is a theory, of course, that like others can be ridden to absurd extremes, and the more complex a situation and the more interests there are to be reconciled and the greater the number of governments and classes that have to "save their faces," to use a Chinese expression, the more obvious the need of display of wisdom in making the theory work. But this having been said, it still remains true that the people do not want and will not stand for any closeted manipulation of pawns or castles or kings at this Paris Conference after the manner of Talleyrand, Mazarin, Cavour, Disraeli, or von Bülow.

Of course there are still journalists of the older school, who have their purchase price and are quite willing to play the game of any schemer for national, class, or personal aggrandizement, and they will shape their reports and interpretations of this Conference accordingly. Others there are, above and beyond intellectual prostitution and not mere hirelings, who will do the same partisan reporting on grounds of alleged patriotism or loyalty to a caste or class ideal. But a majority of the journalists present at Paris will go there anxious to both know and tell the truth; and thus early in the stage of the *ADVOCATE'S* comment on the historic assembly it bespeaks for the "Fourth Estate," there gathered, more confidence in the integrity and more appreciation of the industry of the journalists than it is the habit of many people today to give to them.

As a practical counsel for persons wishing to know just what is done and said there (apart from the formal

documents and speeches that all the reading public of the world is destined to get simultaneously through the great news-distributing agencies) the *ADVOCATE* would urge getting the points of view of as many different interpreters as is possible. There is a variety of emphasis, judgment, intuitive insight, pictorial power, and closeness of touch with commissioners and men behind the scenes in the output of any such corps of trained correspondents and special writers as are covering this world-constitutional convention, that make it quite impossible, for a variety of reasons, for any one journal, even your "favorite," to give you the right notion of what is going on and what is being done and who are doing it. The best synthetic judgment will follow the widest analytic investigation.

May a reference to the history of another great assembly of federalists be pardoned, if only to call attention to the difference on this very important detail of publicity about high statecraft which exists between 1787 and 1919. If James Madison had not had a "sense of historicity," if he had not been a great reporter as well as a fertile, fundamental thinker in the realm of politics and law, the people of the United States never would have known just how they came to have the Constitution which at this hour is the best model for the commissioners in Paris to follow if they wish to make organic, and operative on the governmental side, the ideals to which they are summoned imperatively by the world to give form and body.

Who, from the inside, will do for the Paris Conference what Madison did so supremely well for the Philadelphia Convention remains to be seen. Never did an assembly of this or any other type meet so documented with data bearing upon all conceivable aspects of the problems to be solved, and so equipped for registering from the different national standpoints the course of events, formal and informal. On the technical side, with the interests of contemporary and coming historians in mind, the nations have made immense strides during the century in meeting the immediate needs of those who shape the procedure and decisions of such national and international assemblies, as well as the desires of historians. But fortunate will it be for the Paris Conference if it has its Madisonian interpreter as well as chronicler, a man of it but in some ways out of it and above it.

Whether he appears or not, it would be well if those journalists who do report it from day to day and week to week as discriminatingly and honestly as they know how, albeit of necessity more or less superficially and at long range, would read over the statement made by Madison as to just why he set about his self-imposed task. He was fully aware of the solemn significance of

the process of note-taking and explanation of motives and words and votes which he was to carry on. He had grounded himself in all available knowledge about the subjects which he was to hear discussed. He used shorthand, but delayed not in writing out his notes and in recording his impressions. He had studied the personal characteristics, mental and moral, of most of the men whose words and votes he was to record and explain. He was present at every day's sittings, and absent, as he quaintly says, "not more than a casual fraction of any day."

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## AN EDUCATIONAL ENTENTE

**I**N OUR last issue we called attention to the eminent commission of scholars from France then in the United States studying methods and achievements in the realm of higher education. It is still here and lately has been busy investigating the State universities of the mid-west and west. Simultaneously a similar commission of British university and college officials has been closing its quest with a like purpose and has been formulating the report it will make to the authorities who sent it westward to spy out the land.

Both of these commissions are important co-operating agencies in a general plan for binding together as never before the American, British, and French academic worlds; and their reports not only must induce more or less fraternization of the three peoples in a confessedly important and noble field of thought and activity, but also incidentally cause more or less reconstruction of the several national systems of higher education, according to the wisdom derived by the comparative process of study. To illustrate: It is not conceivable that the British Commission can fail to have some favorable recommendations to make as to extended State aid to university development within the United Kingdom, after they have seen what this policy does for the commonwealths of what has come to be the dominating political and wealth-producing region of the United States. On the other hand, it is quite certain that from the contact of the American educators who have acted as hosts with the representatives of French university life, there will be a determination to steer college and university graduates seeking postgraduate work in Europe to Paris rather than to Berlin, to Bordeaux rather than to Jena.

To create an educational entente among the college-bred and university-trained men of Europe and the Americas is so wholly admirable in theory and has taken on such practical form already, that it is not necessary to argue for it here. The Entente should include all nations that have common ideals of a civilization based