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PART III SIXTEEN PAGES

THE WEEK IN

PANORAMA

Premature Discussion of League of Nations Imperils Peace

By André Chéradame I propose to demonstrate:

1-The success of the peace conference-hence real and definitive victorydepends in a very large measure on the order in which the different problems to be considered are taken up.

2-The discussion of the league of nations and of the "freedom of the seas" can have most unfortunate consequences if it does not come in its logical order; that is, if it is premature.

THE establishment of a specific Europe). programme of discussion for the conference is necessary for two principal reasons.

In the first place, it is evident that all questions cannot be treated at the same time. Second, there are certain problems that can be resolved only after others apparently unconnected with them have been dealt with.

At an epoch when time is so precious, in order to end sufferings so long endured, it is obviously dangerous to engage in the discussion of unsolvable problems because it has not been foreseen that their solution depends on other and more urgent problems. As that perilous road seems to have been already entered upon, it is time for public opinion to realize the danger in order that its influence may prevent a catastrophe.

Theories and Their Application

To understand the subtle but very real peril before which we stand it is necessary first to grasp a very simple truth, which has, nevertheless, not been made sufficiently plain to the public: A theory, however good, is not necessarily practical.

There are theories whose justice cannot be contested, but the mere attempt to put them in practice leads to a veritable catastrophe. For example, the theories that ruled the Hague conference, put forward by the Czar Nicholas II, were just, but, in fact, those theories contributed powerfully to making the war possible; that is, they killed millions of men

This was so because the Hague conference led the British, the French and other people to think the peace of Euope assured just at the time when Germany was preparing intensively for a war of aggression. Thus, the Hague conference without question put into circulation ideas not in conformity with the times, that were premature, hence unrealizable and by consequence infinitely dangerous. In fact, completely reassured regarding the intentions of Germany, the powers that now compose the Entente neglected the armaments that would have made the Germans renounce their ideas of aggression on account of the risks a fully armed enemy would have entailed. One sees clearly that by its psychological consequences the Hague conference contributed largely to provoke the war and make possible the aggression that surprised the nations now allies.

from the European war, notably the complete destruction of German militarism, realized not by treaties on paper, but by accomplished facts (the destruction in Germany of the machinery specially designed for the manufacture of munitions of war; the imposing on Germany of the payment of annuities, moderate, but spread over a sufficiently long period to assure reparation and amounting to enough so that Germany of anti-pan-German states in Central period.

Once these things have been done a trary, it is clear that an effort to or-

Questions of Immediate Practical Importance Must Be Settled Before the Problem of Confederation Is Taken Up

will not be able to re-arm; the creation fit to the Germans during the armistice reached in history?

state of things will have been created nations and the "freedom of the seas" creating another without knowing how portant, to discuss these immense and favorable to beginning the organization would be at the same time absurd and the one we have will function? No ill-defined problems, such as the league of the society of nations. On the con- playing into the hands of the Boches. engineer would think of building a new of nations and the "freedom of the ganize a society of nations has no must be liquidated with the utmost without knowing how an engine of the chance of success if an attempt is made speed is the most difficult ever known. same type but of 500 horsepower what the Germans want.

to regulate the affairs of Europe on To begin by discussing the league of worked. paper, and if, in consequence, the nations and the "freedom of the seas," Is it not evident that if-for the sake sequence of events:

knowing full well that such a pro- | one group three-fourths of the people | who can do the least cannot do the gramme would be of the utmost bene- of the world, a proportion never before most. This is elementary common

We will now examine the reasons wait to see the results of this league for common sense. why to begin by studying the league of of nations that already exists before The situation created by the war that type of engine of 1,000 horsepower

The Spectre at the Green Table

sense; but, alas! the partisans of the Does not common sense tell us to | league of nations seem to care little

> Finally, and this is much more imseas" before the urgent, concrete problems are solved would be to do exactly tolerable proportions, industries could ble disaster. Hence, it is only nec-

lieve in positive results from the life was saved by her navy and that the negotiations, will demand demobilization.

PART III

The question of reparation will be decided only in principle and on paper.

No police force capable of compelling the Germans to pay their indemnities will be created.

The German people will pay only a very small part of the damage they have caused and will keep the greater part of the loot of all kinds they have stolen everywhere during the war.

Under these conditions the financial situation of the European Allies, and not be reorganized, and Bolshevism The Germans count on the following would be easily spread among the populations by Boche agents.

military spirit is far from being destroyed in Germany. On the other hand, Americans, see-

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REACTIONS TO

THE NEWS

ing the turn of events, are saving, "Let us get back to the Monroe Doctrine and keep out of European affairs, unless we want to see Europe, as soon as her hands are free, mix in our affairs." But the continuation of American intervention in European affairs on a cordial basis is absolutely necessary. American intervention, by its noble, generous and ideal character and its comprehension of the future dangers, is a tremendous page in the history of especially of France, would carry self- | humanity. Anything that could weaken evident consequences. The cost of liv- | the extent of American intervention or ing in France and England reaching in- change its character would be a veritaessary to know what is already being published in certain journals of the Entente to be convinced that the discussion of the league of nations and the "freedom of the seas," because the discussion of these questions is premature, can only tend to weaken instead of strengthen the ties that now exist between America and Europe.

Drogramme Dictated by Common Sense

For many reasons, following the French proverb, Don't put the cart before the oxen. Solve first the most urgent practical problems arising from the war, problems that must be solved in order to bring an end to the sufferings of millions of human beings, sufferings that have already lasted only too long. It is easy to see in what order these essential problem before the conference should be put.

The first is the reparation and restitution the German people must make, both of objects stolen and material damages caused. It is not justice only that demands the immediate solution of this problem. Its solution is the single condition of victory, as has been said. The peace will be durable and assured only if in consequence of her enormous thefts and war expenses Germany will not be able to preserve an economic superiority over the Allies.

The second problem, and which can be taken up at the same time, is that of the territorial reconstruction of Eu rope by the adjustment of frontiers and by forming new states to raise a barrier against the pan-Germanists, such states as Poland, Bohemia, Rumania, the Magyar state and the Jugo-Slav state. The problem of the league of nations comes in the third place, but it will then be in a position for more favorable consideration. It is clear that if the first two problems, reparation and territorial reorganization, are satisfactorily cleared up by the Entente it will be relatively easy to solve the third, as the world, convinced by what the Entente will have done, will want to transform the Entente into a league of nations of greater extent by taking in all the nations worthy of a place. Last comes the question of the "freedom of the seas." And by coming last it has the best chance for success. It is easy to understand that a real and durable solution of that problem can follow only from the extension of the The discussion of great questions | Finally, since the war expenses of league of nations. Such an extension such as the league of nations and Germany have been considerably less implies a real disarmament in Europe, the "freedom of the seas" will divide than those of the Allies, and since, ac- but this disarmament can come about cording to our hypothesis, Germany only after Prussian militarism has The time taken for those discus- would retain her loot, there would be been absolutely destroyed. Land dissions will be lost for the settlement so great a difference of economic power armament having been accomplished, it of concrete problems that Germany in favor of Germany that within a will be relatively easy to disarm on the fears especially, such as reparation. short time she would have attained her seas and from that will result the "free-The Allied armies, ceasing to be- victory, not on the field of battle, but dom of the seas." none the less in reality, as a consequence In short, when England can be asof the economic situation without prece- sured of not being menaced by any dent created in Europe by four years | Continental power she will have no longer any interest in carrying the huge The danger I have described is not burden of naval supremacy. chimerical. Already the discussion of This programme for the consideration the "freedom of the seas," because it of the problems before the peace conis premature, has caused divergencies ference is only an application of comamong the Allies. As soon as it was mon sense. But it is indispensable to intimated recently that England would assure victory that this order shall be be willing to give up her command of followed. Therefore, public opinion the seas Mr. Winston Churchill, as must demand that the league of naspokesman for England, declared that tions and the "freedom of the seas" she would never think of such a thing. shall be discussed only in their logical It was a very natural reply, if one re- place, that is, after all the urgent probmembers that the suggestion was made lems growing directly out of the war to England on the morrow of an expe- have found a practical solution. rience that has demonstrated that her



This example, drawn from the Hague conference, makes it plain that an idea may be theoretically good, but that its application would not be practical until there has been a further considerable advance in social evolution.

Absolutely the same result can be looked for from certain questions in the Allied peace programme, notably the league of nations and the "freedom of the seas."

The league of nations cannot be organized until after the solution of certain other problems. Incontestably the failure. league of nations is based on an idea theoretically of the highest justice, but it will end in an immense catastrophe if it is attempted to put it in practice in advance of the solution of other problems infinitely more urgent and the solution of which, moreover, is indispensable to the creation of a state of things in which a league of nations can be developed.

What is the state of things which, according to all evidence, will be most

and not on realities.

It is therefore plain that it is indis- festly absurd.

Ttopians, Bolshevists and the League of Nations

Unfortunately, in each of the Allied nations there are some Utopians who do not understand the situation and say, "Organize the league of nations first and we will negotiate the peace afterward."

This is a party of which some of the most notable members are the French and British Socialists, who both before lavorable for the development of a and during the war showed their inabilleague of nations? It is without ques- ity to comprehend realities. It is the tion the situation that will result from same lack of understanding that charthe liquidation, as completely as pos- acterizes all the Bolshevists of the Ensible, of the essential problems arising tente-Germanophile, in truth, and

league of nations rests on written | which one can talk to infinity, would | of argument-the league of nations | conventions, like those of The Hague, result only in voluntarily complicating we already have should not be practical affairs and would be mani- able, with its infinite resources, to solve

the problems arising from the war (reppensable to follow a well thought out Further, to discuss the league of arations, reorganization of Europe terprogramme in the discussion of the nations as something still to be created ritorially), à fortiori a league of nadiverse problems to come before the is to forget that which already exists- tions still greater would be utterly inpeace conference, and not to follow the Entente. Is not it, such as it is, a capable of doing better. Those who can this programme will lead to certain league of nations, since it brings into do the most can do the least, but those

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the Allies.

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