

CHAPTER XIII

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The League of Nations

The United States should have nothing to do with the League of Nations. It is a device to maintain peace among the European nations without removing the causes of war.

The main cause of war among European nations is that the important nations have privileges in other countries, such as natural resource concessions, spheres of influence, trade concessions and privileges, mandates or the control of sovereignty over people. France, England and Germany all had these privileges in such lands as India, China and Africa. The encroachments of one nation upon the privileges of another, or the fear of such encroachments in the future, are the underlying causes of the last war. The Allies stripped Germany of all of these privileges, and imposed upon Germany unbearable burdens, particularly in the creation of the so-called Polish Corridor. Germany will never submit permanently to the Polish Corridor, and it will have to be abrogated in the end by agreement or by war.

Japan is in a position where its governing class believes it is necessary to have an outlet for its increasing

population, and is proceeding to acquire the necessary territory from China by war. The League of Nations was unable to prevent this war or to bring about its termination. It was unable to do anything to Mussolini when Italy resorted to an act of war against Greece in the Corfu affair.

It is the existence of these privileges that makes the next war possible if not probable in the not distant future. Those who are the beneficiaries of these privileges in each nation control the government of that nation. Therefore the League can not do anything effectively to remove the cause of war. The most that can be expected of it is that while the principal nations are suffering the dreadful consequences of the last war, the League may postpone for a time the outbreak of the next war. With these European involvements the United States has no interest or concern which could be realized by our participation in the League. If we are in the League we would have no more influence in averting the war than we have as a mediator outside of the League, and would be much more likely to become involved in any war that might ensue.

If we were in the League attention of our government and our people would be continually diverted by these old world problems from the consideration of the present problems of privilege which confront us at home. This has already happened in the case of our government attempting to control the action of Japan in China. It fills our newspapers with foreign affairs, and keeps public attention away from the great problem of privileges in the United States.

No Danger of War if We Keep Out of European Affairs

There is no possibility of a war between the United States and any other European country, unless we are the aggressors. For a generation at least the important powers of the old world could not finance a war against the United States, and there is nowhere in sight any cause of war unless we meddle in European affairs. The best contribution we can make to the peace of the world is to take the lead in disarmament.

The development of the airplane will make battleships useless, if they are not already so. We should discontinue the enormous navy and army expenses, and confine our appropriations for war purposes to subsidizing commercial aviation, upon condition that these commercial planes be constructed so that they could be used for offensive or defensive war purposes in case any nation undertook to attack this country. If we devoted a small part of our immense expenditures for the maintenance of the army and navy to the creation of such a fleet of commercial planes, we would have the best and most up-to-date means of defense, and in the meantime these planes would be performing a useful service in the transportation of goods and passengers. Of all the important nations we are in a position to lead the world in disarmament by disarming.

These are the fundamental reasons why we should keep out of the League of Nations, and why that League can never succeed in establishing permanent peace in Europe.

The World Court

The same reasoning applies to our participation in the World Court. This Court is in no sense a judicial body, but is controlled by the larger nations, and its decisions will not be based upon the evidence of a public good, but upon a private interest of those nations. This has already been demonstrated in the one important question which has been submitted to it, which had to do with proposed tariff arrangements between some of the European nations. The larger nations quickly vetoed this arrangement because it threatened some of the privileges of their governing class, and the World Court responded to its control.

If we were in the World Court an attempt would be made to have the question of the cancellation of our debts submitted to that Court. If we agreed to submit the question to the Court the Court would decide for the cancellation of the debts. If we refused to submit the question to the Court it could only be upon the ground that we distrusted the good faith of the Court, which would lead to disagreeable consequences.

No reason can be advanced for our joining the World Court that does not apply to our joining the League of Nations.

THE CANCELLATION OF THE DEBTS

A most skillful propaganda is being carried on to prepare the public mind for the cancellation of the debts owed to us by foreign nations. The principal reason for this propaganda is that the American international bankers have loaned vast sums of money to corporations and municipalities abroad, principally in

Germany, and have advanced other huge sums of money to enable Germany to meet its reparation payments. These bankers feel that these corporation and municipal loans are much more likely to be repaid if France, England and Italy are relieved of their obligation to pay the debts their governments contracted. The arguments advanced in support of this policy are fallacious. They are in effect that the cancellation of the debts is necessary to restore normal conditions in Europe, and that the restoration of such conditions is of prime importance to the United States, because it will restore a market for our exports.

The cancellation of these debts will have practically no effect upon the conditions which threaten the stability of European relations for the reasons already advanced.

The payment of the debts as now adjusted would not involve over 2 or 3 percent of the total budget of any of the debtor nations. If it be argued that the cancellation of these debts would enable our Allies to cancel the reparations due from Germany, this is equivalent to asking us not only to cancel the debts owed us by the Allies, but to assume the reparations imposed upon Germany. We would then be in the position of having saved the Allies by contributions of men, materials and money in the war, and paying to the Allies after the war the penalty imposed upon Germany as a losing nation.

None of these arguments ever come down to details. The fallacy that runs through the propaganda is the assumption that France and England trade with the United States, or can affect that trade by any other ar-

rangement than the tariff. Foreign trade is composed of individual transactions between business concerns in this country and similar concerns in other countries. The transaction is consummated when each side can make a profit. No citizen of a foreign country will refuse to make a profitable trade with business men of this country, because of our government's action or non-action on the question of debts.

Such transactions can be hindered and are now substantially blocked by the insane mania that has seized all the nations of the world, of erecting tariff barriers against every other nation. As Mussolini says this tariff is now a negation which operates only to block trade. If this government says to the French government, "We will cancel your debt on condition that you lower your tariff on American products," instantly a protest will go up on the part of the French producers of similar products, to the effect that their business will be ruined by the invasion of the American products, and these privileged interests control France as they control England, this country, and every other country except Russia. The French government may say possibly, "We will reduce our tariff on American goods if the United States will reduce their tariff on French goods," whereupon a tremendous clamor will arise from the protected interests of this country, and upon that subject the Democratic party is hopelessly split.

This reasoning confirms the view that we should devote our energies to the solution of our own problems, which are of an extraordinarily difficult nature and of immense importance, and leave the European nations to solve their own problems.