

# League of Nations to Avert International Anarchy

[By Samuel J. Graham, Assistant Attorney General of the United States. Published in the New York Times, January 12, 1919.]

I wish to direct attention briefly to the international anarchy that rioted through Europe for fifty years prior to this war, and which caused it, and the international anarchy that existed among our thirteen original states during the period intervening between the close of the Revolutionary war and the adoption of the constitution, and was wiped out by the institution of a league of nations, known as the United States of America.

By the word anarchy I mean what its derivation from two Greek words, one meaning "without" and the other "government" implies: A state of lawlessness or political disorder; a state of lawless confusion; a condition of society where there is no law or supreme power and the absence of regulating power in any sphere.

## IRRESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL NATIONALISM

For fifty years or more prior to this war Europe internationally has been in a state of lawlessness and confusion and political disorder. Its nations were each in a way a law unto itself, or trying to be. Each was controlled in its actions toward the other nations solely by its own purposes and seeming interests. Each pursued a policy of irresponsible individual nationalism, as distinguished from collective nationalism and international concert. There was an absence of supreme directing and restraining control of the purposes and interests of all. There was confusion and disorder as far as their relations with each other were concerned.

Many of their leaders and reputed statesmen were anarchists in the sense that they were promoters and creators of international lawlessness and disorder. For instance, Bismarck was an anarchist in that he had no regard for the rights or the lives, and was willing at any time to take the property, of any neighboring people, and deliberately played the part in the three wars which Germany wantonly waged while he was controlling her policies.

International anarchy, and its hand maiden, diplomacy, consort with neither morals nor conscience. It represents the reign of physical force, and is a perpetual struggle for mastery, as is the balance of power policy, its twin brother. The power that relies on the sword never shares or limits its authority.

This international anarchy was the child of the policy of individual nationalism, which controlled the life of Europe before and during the period above mentioned, and the life of the thirteen states, as stated, prior to the adoption of the constitution. It produced in Europe its logical result, war. It was abandoned in time by our thirteen states and replaced by collective nationalism in the form of a league of nations, which is merely a combination of free peoples, a system by which certain phases of the life in nations, where their common interests are affected, is controlled by a central authority under given limitations and restraints, upon the principle that what is for the benefit of the whole is good for each part.

And here it should be remembered that each of these thirteen individual states was, for all practical purposes at the time mentioned, an individual nation controlling its own affairs, and with its own form of government. It was by resorting to this policy of collective nationalism through an unwritten league of friendship in which they pooled their armies, navies, and resources, that the United States, Japan, and the Allies and other nations fought this war to a successful finish. They had abandoned to a very large extent the previously existing principle of individual nationalism to do it.

The potent instrument of individual nationalism in this international anarchy in Europe has been a system of international deception, trickery, and haggling termed diplomacy, the practices and accomplishments of which have shown it to be but chicanery dressed in the garb of unbridled officialism and the pomp of power. It has always been a "back-stair" business, and in the language of the street, a game of "sim-

flam." The persons who have practiced it most successfully and true to accepted form have shown themselves, to put it plainly, to have combined either the characteristics of the gunman and the "green goods man," as in the case of Bismarck, or of the "confidence man" and the "card sharp," as in the case of Metternich.

Diplomacy has acted on the principle of "do your neighbor or he will do you," and "every man for himself." It was parent of the international anarchy which stalked through Europe in bloody boots prior to this war, which has just filled the world with horror and disgust. Its system was stealthy and secretive, even to its own people its acts were not revealed, and too often its ignoble methods and results were attired in some high-sounding phrase or boast to hide its deformity.

So much in general. Now, to be more particular, I wish to point out how individual nationalism in Europe by creating international anarchy brought on war, and how international anarchy, born of the same policy, among the thirteen original states, which held high carnival in this country during the period from the close of the Revolution to the adoption of the constitution, was arrested and put out of business and peace established by these states abandoning the policy of individual nationalism, and adopting the policy of collective nationalism, or international concert, as embodied in the constitution of the United States, the first great league of free peoples, and which established peace for each and all of them.

The history of Europe for sixty years prior to the late war, and that of the states for five years prior to the adoption of the constitution, each present pictures of international anarchy produced by individual nationalism. The events in each case can only be touched upon very briefly in this communication.

## NO CO-OPERATION FOR COMMON GOOD

Beginning with the year 1850 and down to August, 1914, when this war began, each state in Europe was operating as an individual nationality, with relations more or less intimate with other individual nationalities. There was no general co-operation among them for the common good. Each was seeking its own interests, preparing for either offensive or defensive war. Each was controlled in its own passions, prejudices, and purposes, and went its own way without any particular regard for the rights of the others, except so far as they affected its own interests favorably. During this period of sixty-four years eight different wars occurred in Europe, not counting this last war, in one or the other of which, at times in one, at other times in two or three, the following governments were engaged: Prussia, Austria, Russia, France, Italy, Turkey, Serbia, Rumania, Greece, Bulgaria, Poland, and Denmark.

This state of international anarchy began with the rape of Denmark by Prussia and Austria, and ended in the lawless invasion and spoliation of Belgium and the horrors and crimes of the war just ended. Most of these were wars of aggression, deliberately planned and criminally carried out. Their known purpose was either commercial brigandage or territorial robbery, worked out without the least regard for the lives, rights, and happiness of the individual human beings, or the nation as a whole, affected.

In this style Prussia and Austria made war on little Denmark and robbed her of territory; Prussia made war on France after, through crooked diplomacy, arranging it that no other nation would come to her aid, and robbed her of territory and a big indemnity. And so on through the criminal and disgusting roll of these wars, while anarchy laughed to see the sport.

The climax of this carnival of blood and crime was reached in this last terrible war which sucked into the burning vortex most of the nations of the world. Shall the condition and systems which produced these results be permitted to continue? Shall no effort be made to effect a change though the history and experience in the formation of our constitution which have shown that there is an effective remedy by

limiting irresponsible individual nationalism and substituting collective nationalism?

Even had the world no such tested plan, it would be foolish and cowardly not to try to work out one. While this many-headed beast lies wounded and crippled among the corpses of its victims, shall no weapon be used and no effort made to finish it? It is always easier to follow precedent and let the world wag than to think or know history and draw light from its lessons and act upon them. It is safer always to stand by and see murder done by a gunman than to attempt to protect his victim and arrest him.

## CONDITIONS CONSTANTLY CHANGING

Forms of government, whether despotisms, monarchies, or democracies, are, in the last analysis, experiments in human housekeeping. The world is, has been, and always will be in transition and in a flux. Conditions are constantly changing, which necessitate changes in the methods of governmental housekeeping. There is no trick of perpetual motion in government any more than in machinery. What under the conditions of yesterday was impossible becomes not only possible, but necessary today. There was a time when each man lived in his own house, and stoves were not known for cooking and modern methods of architecture were not practiced. Today he lives gregariously in apartment houses.

At the time when our constitution was adopted the thirteen states were as remote from and had less communication with each other than the peoples of the world have with each other today. So that the government housekeeping that was impossible for the world at that time may be possible today, and the accepted method in the near future.

As times go on, each generation has a larger store of clarified experience, material and improved methods with which to build.

Had collective nationalism been in existence in Europe in the form of a league of nations, combining the moral, physical, and economic forces of the nations, Denmark would not have been wantonly attacked and ravished, nor would any of these wars probably have occurred. The balance of power policy was in full swing during this period, and instead of acting as a preventive of international anarchy it proved to be a breeder of it.

Now a word or two as to the second part of my proposition:

After the conclusion of the Revolutionary war lethargy and lack of interest in the general welfare of the states as a whole developed, and vital ambition and the spirit of co-operation seemed in a measure to have flown. The government, under the articles of confederation, seemed to have lost its purpose and the reason for its existence. Each separate state began to be absorbed entirely with its own small affairs and neglect its duty toward the common interest. The articles themselves were without effective means of effecting their purposes.

The states began to pass discriminatory tariffs against each other, to issue each its own irredeemable paper money as legal tender for debts. One state refused to surrender criminals to another state because it approved of their criminal acts. The people of Pennsylvania and Connecticut were actually at war, plundering and killing each other in the Wyoming Valley. Shay's rebellion occurred in Massachusetts. Mobs at certain points in Massachusetts broke up the courts. Generally the states almost to their limit indulged in petty hostility toward each other. There was a jealous spirit among them, striving each for its own advantage and watchful of a chance to do injury to some other state.

## ANARCHY AMONG THE STATES

Confusion and discord and international anarchy where everywhere present, due to each state having adopted again a policy of individual nationalism, which they had abandoned in their league of friendship for the common interest of all during the Revolutionary war. It is not possible here to picture fully the deplorable conditions of international anarchy among the states which existed at this period. Any one who has, or will, study the history of the period will, I am sure, agree with my statement that international anarchy existed in most forbidding and threatening shape. Washington, speaking of this state of international anarchy, said:

"It is as clear to me as A B C that an extension of Federal power would make us one of the most happy, wealthy, respectable, and powerful nations that ever inhabited the terrestrial