

The Commoner

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To President Harding

Premier Lloyd George, who is the outstanding figure at Genoa, is quoted as saying:

"I wish America were here. Some people think we want the United States for some selfish purpose. This is not true. We want America because she exercises a peculiar authority; her very aloofness gives her the right to speak. America could exercise an influence no other country could command. She could come here free and disentangled, and, with the prestige which comes from her independent position, she would come with the voice of peace. But America is not here; so Europe must do her best to solve the problems in her own way. . . .

"We triumphed in the war, but our triumph will not last forever. If our victory develops into oppression, vengeance will follow, just as Germany's action, which started the world war, was followed by vengeance. We must be just and equitable and show strength; we must realize that Europe is not on good terms, and that storms are arising which we must deal with. We had hoped that the end of the great war meant the end of brute force, but unless Europe's problems are solved there is no assurance that force has given way to right."

He is dealing with a very trying situation and he needs the help of the United States. It would not hurt us to have a representative there if he went empowered to advise only and with the understanding that our nation is not bound by any conclusions reached, except as our people, acting through Congress and the President, or at a referendum, may expressly approve.

The failure of the United States, to enter the League of Nations was a national and international calamity, the responsibility for which was divided between the refusal of Republicans to ratify the Covenant WITHOUT reservations and the refusal of the Democrats to ratify the treaty WITH reservations. The Covenant was so much more important than the reservations that it was unspeakable folly for either side to subordinate the idea of international cooperation to the minor details about which they differed.

The League permitted any nation to withdraw on two year's notice. If the Treaty had been accepted WITHOUT reservations our nation could have made its stay in the League dependent upon such changes as it desired. Likewise, if our nation had ratified the Treaty WITH reservations, the reservations could have been changed afterwards. As it is, both sides will share in history the shame of shirking a solemn responsibility.

But a mistake in the past should not prevent wiser action in the present and future. It matters little whether it is called a League of Nations or an Association of Nations or anything else, our nation should use its influence to aid in securing world peace. Lloyd George is right when he says: "America could exercise an influence no other country could command. She could come here FREE and disentangled, and, with the prestige which comes from her inde-

pendent position, she would come with the voice of peace."

What excuse can this nation give before the final judgment bar for its failure to respond to such a call of duty at such a time?

The day after the armistice was signed Lloyd George announced that the treaty of peace should inaugurate on earth the rule of the Prince of Peace and President Wilson cabled his approval of the lofty sentiment. But the Treaty of Versailles did not inaugurate the reign of the Prince of Peace. The gaping wounds and the hot blood, the spirit of revenge and the remembrance of injuries that had been inflicted obscured the path to peace. The Allies lost a golden opportunity to lay the foundation for an enduring peace in friendship and cooperation. The Arms Conference took a step toward disarmament on sea but it failed to reduce land armaments, without which world peace is impossible.

Now the opportunity comes again; the world is wiser—a wisdom that has come partly from reflection and partly from a clearer understanding of the conditions that bar progress in any other direction, or along any other line.

The world has been wearing the devil's yoke and the devil's burden has become too heavy to be borne. Christ's yoke is not only easy but His burden is the only bearable one. The world needs an anthem in which the world can join and there is no other than the one that startled the shepherds at Bethlehem; "On earth peace, good will toward men."

The world must get back to God and find its hope of reconstruction in the promise of universal brotherhood.

Mr. President, you are a Christian and your sense of responsibility to God must soon compel you to propose an appeal to the estranged nations to forget the past and, with an eye single to the world's future welfare, begin the work of friendly cooperation in the upbuilding of Europe. You made a splendid beginning in calling the Arms Conference, but what will its work avail if Europe is to become again a slaughter house? And how shall we escape, made up as our population is of all the bloods that will be mingled on battlefields, if Europe again beats her plowshares into swords?

You are a man of prayer, Mr. President—you are the first President to include the Lord's Prayer in a public address; I beg you to turn aside a moment from things exclusively national and ask for guidance in this world crisis. "Who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN.

DEMOCRATS:

Are you selecting your best men for the Senate and House? No wet or Wall Street man need apply. The Democratic party can not hope to carry the next congress if it bids for the underworld or for the support of Wall Street. The upper world and the masses are the party's hope.

W. J. BRYAN.

Majority Must Rule

A few days' visit to the east will furnish a very painful surprise to travellers from the west and south. Obedience to the law and deference to public opinion, legally expressed, is supposed to be a national characteristic—in fact, a national boast. We pride ourselves upon our acquiescence in decisions rendered at the polls, and the past justifies the pride.

In 1876 the people passed through a trying experience. The Presidential election was very close—so close that it turned on one electoral vote. Governor Hayes, the Republican candidate, received ONE majority in the electoral college, while Governor Tilden, the Democratic candidate, received a majority of the popular vote. The illustration is made more valuable by the fact that the electoral majority was determined by the decision of an electoral commission made up of eight Republicans and seven Democrats. While five Supreme judges, five senators and five congressmen constituted the commission, their decision on every political question was rendered according to the partisan bias of the member, whether he be judge, senator or congressman. It would be difficult to imagine a severer test of loyalty to law and constitutional government, but the Democrats stood the test. A majority of the people in the nation bowed to the will of a majority of the electors in the electoral college, even though that majority was determined by the partisan bias of one Republican who cast the deciding vote in the electoral commission.

The Republicans have also proved their willingness to abide by the will of the majority. In 1884 the Presidential election turned upon the vote of New York state and the vote in New York state turned on the vote of a few hundred; and it is not improbable that the unwise utterance of one man, just before the election, changed enough votes to give Cleveland his narrow margin in New York. But his election was legal and according to the Constitution and the Republicans acquiesced in the decision as the Democrats had acquiesced eight years before.

Again, in 1916, the Presidential election turned upon the vote of California and the vote of California was determined by a very small majority. While President Wilson had a popular majority of about five hundred thousand that year, he had a bare majority in the electoral college. Again the Republicans acquiesced in the decision, although momentous issues were at stake.

Reference is made to these three instances to show that the people of the United States, without regard to party, believe in popular government and have the political virtue without which there can be no popular government, namely, respect for the will of the people when expressed in accordance with the Constitution. It is surprising, therefore, to find in the east a very considerable element of the population which has no respect whatever for a law that