

TRIUMPHANT PLUTOCRACY

The Story of
American Public Life
from 1870 to 1920

By
R. F. PETTIGREW
Formerly United States Senator
from South Dakota



Printed by THE ACADEMY PRESS
112 Fourth Avenue, New York City

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

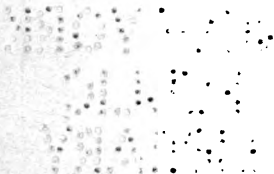
50077A

ASTOR. LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R 1922 L

Copyright 1921 by R. F. Pettigrew.

All rights, including the right of translation into foreign languages, reserved.

Published January 1, 1922.



XXX. THE LEAGUE TO PERPETUATE WAR

The war has just begun. I said that when the Armistice terms were published and when I read the Treaty and the League Covenant I felt more than ever convinced of the justice of my conclusion. The Treaty of Versailles is merely an armistice—a suspension of hostilities, while the combatants get their wind. There is a war in every chapter of the Treaty and in every section of the League Covenant; war all over the world; war without end so long as the conditions endure which produce these documents. The League of Nations is a League to perpetuate war. I do not charge that its sponsors intended this, though I have sufficient respect for the intellectual ability of men like Balfour and Lloyd George, Makino and Orlando to believe that they knew quite well what they were about. But whether by intention or accident, the "Big Five" presented the world with two documents, the attempted enforcement of which is destined to bathe the earth in blood and wipe out what remains of "western civilization."

The advocates of the League of Nations claim for it that it will end war. "If we do not adopt it," says Mr. Wilson, "we will break the heart of the world." If we do adopt it, we shall help to bleed the western world white in the series of frightful international struggles that will follow upon any attempt to enforce the Treaty and the League Covenant as they are written.

Let me state, briefly, my reasons for believing that the League of Nations is a War League rather than a Peace League.

1. The League of Nations is not a league of all nations. On the contrary, three kinds of nations are deliberately excluded from it,—the Socialist nations like Russia; the enemy nations, like Germany; and the "undeveloped nations," like Mexico. The "Big Five" who wrote the Armistice Terms, the Peace Treaty and the League Covenant were Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan and the United States. These are the five great

capitalist empires of the world. They are also the five leaders among the allied nations. The League is therefore a Holy Alliance of capitalist empires against socialist states; a League of the Allies against the Central Powers; a League of the five great exploiting nations of the world against those whom they propose to rob. This situation creates a series of alignments any one of which may lead to an outbreak at almost any moment.

2. On the one hand, there is the alignment against Russia. Ever since the Revolution of 1917, the Allies have done everything in their power to destroy the government of Russia. They have sent their armies against her at Vladivostock and at Archangel; they have attacked her with their fleets on the Black Sea and in the Baltic; they have financed and equipped those like Yudenich, Kolchak, Denikine and Wrangel who were in rebellion against the established government of Russia; they have financed and equipped the Ukrainians, the Finns and the Poles, on condition that they should make war on Russia; they have established a "sanitary cordon" of border states in an effort to cut Russia off from the rest of Europe; they have maintained a blockade which has resulted in the death, by starvation and by disease, of Russian men, women and children. During three long years, the Allies have carried on these activities without succeeding in forcing a declaration of war from Russia.

The Russian people are very patient. They had need of patience under the Czars, but there is a limit to everything. There are a hundred and fifty million of Russians. These people feel bitter against the capitalist governments that have attacked and blockaded them. They have an army—the largest now in Europe, if report speaks true. Some day that army will come into action against the armies of the Allies—come with the fervor and ardor of revolution, and when it comes, Europe will witness another terrible massacre and another fearful destruction of wealth.

3. Then, there are the enemy countries—defeated in the great war, stripped of their navies and of their merchant ships; of their colonies; of their investments in foreign countries; of their coal and iron; dismembered, saddled with heavy indemnities in addition to their onerous taxes. These enemy countries are suffering under the smart of a terrible military defeat. But more than that, after revolting and driving out their despotic rulers they have been subjected to an economic punishment more frightful than any that has ever been administered in modern times. The governing classes feel this; the people feel it, and they are all ready, at the first opportunity, to rush to arms in vindication of their international position and of their national rights, which they believe were grossly violated by the Treaty of Versailles. No opportunity was lost; no effort was spared to humiliate the defeated and to visit upon them a drastic economic punishment. The vanquished and humiliated are preparing to come back, and the Allied Nations know it.

4. There are the exploited countries; the “undeveloped” portions of the earth; the promising investment field; the good markets—Mexico, India, Korea, Egypt, Persia, China and the others. Africa has been under the heel of Western business men for generations. The same thing is true of India and other portions of Western and Southern Asia. These peoples, numbering hundreds of millions, have been kept in ignorance and held in bondage, while the British, German, French, Belgian and other traders and investors made free with their property and their lives. In the Belgian Congo, the black men were treated with indescribable cruelty; the people of India, after a century and a half of British rule, are almost wholly illiterate, while their industries have been deliberately curtailed in order that the Indian market might be open for British manufacturers. Mexico has been victimized again and again by the United States. Hayti, Santo Domingo and Nicaragua have felt the weight

of America's imperial fist. Under the Treaty, with its "Mandates" and its guarantees of territorial integrity, these peoples, comprising the bulk of the world's populations, are to be continued in "tutelage" while Allied Capitalists plunder and allied governments tax and kill.

The Baku Conference of the Eastern People (September, 1920) is the beginning of an organized protest that challenges the right of the west to continue its exploitation of the East. India is aflame with revolt, and the smaller eastern countries are awaiting the signal to begin a holy war, a religious crusade, against the domination of Western Civilization. Whether the proposed expulsion of the Sultan from Europe will start the conflagration, or whether some other spark will set it off remains to be seen. But the spirit of liberation is abroad in the earth, and any group of nations that seeks, with or without a covenant, to continue a system of virtual slavery, is heading for bitter and terrible conflicts.

5. Finally, there is an item of immense significance. The "Big Five" are five capitalist empires, each one of which is struggling for markets and for investment opportunities. Britain and Germany fought the recent war because Germany challenged Britain's economic supremacy. Today each of the Big Five is busy with just such an economic battle as that which preceded the war of 1914. British and American oil interests are in open conflict; Japan is seeking to exclude western bankers from the Chinese field; France and Italy are bitter rivals for the control of the Mediterranean; Britain and France are contending for the resources of Central Europe and of the near East. Besides that, it must not be forgotten that naval and military appropriations are larger among the Big Five than they were before the world war.

Any one of these issues may lead to war—between the Allies and Russia; between the Allies and the Central Powers; between the Allies and the victims of their exploitation; between the Allies themselves. One

or more of them is sure to result in war within a decade, if the Treaty and the League Covenant are enforced. The League of Nations is a League of War; its present form, its very existence spells war.

I have another reason for insisting that the League will make for war rather than for peace—a reason growing out of the League's own record. During its brief existence, the League has witnessed more than a score of wars in Europe, Africa, and in Asia. These wars have been participated in by Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan—the leading exponents of the League. France has sent men and money to back Poland and to uphold General Wrangel's insurrection against the Russian Government, while her armies are busy conquering and subjugating Syria. Great Britain is fighting in Ireland and in Mesopotamia. Spain, France and Italy all are fighting in North Africa, and Thrace is being ravaged by contending armies.

Since the League came into being, Europe has blazed with war. The League is not a war preventor, but a war maker.

So much for the character and history of the League. Now as to its purposes. These are three in number:

1. To crush out Socialism.
2. To safeguard the British Empire.
3. To unite the exploiters against the exploited.

The relation of the League and of its principal members toward Soviet Russia is a sufficient guarantee of the first point. The position of the British Empire, combined with the working of Article X of the League Covenant establishes the second.

British statesmen insisted that they desired nothing as a result of the war. As things turned out, however, they received over two million square miles, including important possessions in East Africa, Mesopotamia, the lands bordering the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, Persia, Thibet, and the German possessions in the South Pacific. This gives the British Empire control over something like a third of the earth, including a

continuous stretch of territory from the Cape of Good Hope to Cairo and from Cairo to Bengal. These things are guaranteed under the Treaty, and Article X of the Covenant provides that: "The members of the League undertake to respect and preserve against external aggression, the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all members of the League." This clause commits all members of the League to back the British Empire in its efforts to hold hundreds of millions of human beings in subjection.

The original Holy Alliance organized in 1815 between Austria, Russia, Prussia and France, carried a mutual guarantee to protect from internal disturbances like the French Revolution, the members of the Alliance. This new Alliance guarantees its members against the possible loss of their colonies and possessions by any form of external oppression. They bind each other to help hold what they have stolen in this and previous wars. According to the original plan, the United States was to furnish the men and the money necessary to carry this Covenant into effect.

The League is intended to organize and unite the exploiter nations. Under Covenant provisions, the exploited nations have no rights that the exploiters are bound to respect. Japanese troops will remain in Korea; British rule stays in India and American Marines hold their ground in Hayti. The robbers will unite and plunder their victims in severalty.

Thus, the League is intended, not to secure freedom and self-determination, but to perpetuate autocracy and the rule of force of which the leading members of the league are the chief exponents.

The Treaty and the League Covenant intensify every cause that led up to the world war. International Capitalism, with its economic rivalries and commercial struggles is perpetuated and consecrated; the exploitation of the weak by the rich and the strong is provided for; out of such a situation there can come nothing less than revolution and a struggle for indepen-

dence on the one hand and the bitterest conflicts between the members of the League on the other. The League will perpetuate, will compel war. It makes peace unthinkable; impossible. It condemns the world to generations of blood-letting and destruction. The League is a logical product of the forces that made the last war and will prove an instrument of immense value in bringing about the next one.