

FORGOTTEN Highlights of History

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World Peace

After the first World War, Lincoln Steffens tells a story of how, during one of their many private conferences, Clemenceau suddenly demanded of Woodrow Wilson and Lloyd George:

"Gentlemen, you talk of world peace. But are you willing to pay the price of world peace?"

What the old Frenchman meant was simple. Were Great Britain and the United States prepared to surrender control of raw materials, lift economic barriers and make other sacrifices which true world peace demands? It was a brutally embarrassing question. And Steffens does not say whether there was any reply.

From another viewpoint, what Clemenceau, who had not the slightest belief in world peace, wanted to know was, whether the American and the Briton were willing to approach the subject from a positive standpoint.

It is unfortunately true that every attempt at world peace so far made in history has been a *negative* rather than a *positive* one. Of course, we speak here of formal efforts made by statesmen and the suggestions of the great peace organizations of the world.

The truth is that few pacifists have possessed that world-consciousness which is so prerequisite to any reasonable, realistic and positive effort toward world peace. Most of them were either extreme nationalists or sectarian and fanatic religionists.

In the 17th- and 18th-century France there were Dubois, Cruce, Sully, Bossuet, Balzac, Pascal, Gorgas, Cloots and other pacifists. They and their followers dreamed of political and religious measures and designs for uniting all European or all Christian nations.

Why was only Europe to be united? Why only the Christians? A permanent, adequate and workable world peace calls for much more than that. Its roots must be found in the common interests of mankind. Merely

local, regional, national or provincial interests of any one creed, race or nationality will not do. The whole of humanity cannot be united on the basis of any one of its parts.

True, education against militarism and for disarmament may be very effective measures. But, again, this is only a negative approach. The more effective by far would be education for *positive peacemaking*, to include training in practical methods of settling disputes by pacific means, free discussion, mediation, arbitration, conciliation and other procedures of peace.

In my book, "The Road to Peace," I have advanced the idea that achieving and keeping world peace is not the sole responsibility of political states and their statesmen; that it is and should be the business of every one. I pointed out that "The True Essence of Peace" (Ch. I) lies in the character of the individual. To quote:

"In the individual, the basic condition for peace is the development of the sense of peace, as opposed to the sense of conflict.

"Until this has been achieved the development of the sense of peace in the family and the community—all prerequisites of a sense of peace among nations—cannot be achieved.

"The individual is the basis of all human institution."

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To any close student of history this is not difficult to see. The individual has been and is the true reality in life. The abstractions called "nations" and "society" are only a collection of individuals. Therefore, man, the individual, has been and is, necessarily, the sole source and motive power of evolution and progress.

Through all the stages of this evolution and progress, civilization has been seen as a continuous or incessant conflict between the individual or a group of individuals and the State. The greatest battles of history have been waged against man-

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made barriers and artificial obstacles and handicaps imposed on individuals to paralyze their growth and development.

In time, these struggles led to confusion of thought by falsified traditions and customs and perverted false education, all molded in the interests of those who held power and enjoyed economic privileges; that is, by the State and the dominant classes. This constant war, this incessant conflict, this struggle of the individual against the State or against the Society has been the history of mankind. The second World War from which we are now emerg-

ing is the latest but not the last chapter in that history.

A study of history does, I believe, confirm the opinion that it is in the changes in the possession of land and controls of its resources, in the level of wages and prices, and in the consequential alteration in the position of debtors and creditors, and the tax-gatherer, that the secret of social and economic troubles is to be found.

None of these troubles, however, has been taken into account by the San Francisco Security Conference of the United Nations. Their Charter does not provide for specific measures designed to deal with them. What good, then, can come out of that "Jerusalem"?

In "The Road to Peace," I show conclusively, I believe, that universal and lasting world peace cannot be achieved without a fundamental revision of the existing economic concepts. Attacked from this direction, we find that war and poverty are twin symbols of the same evil, and that the problem of war and of establishing and keeping world peace must be approached from this definite root-condition if we are to solve it.

A methodical discussion or analysis of this problem reveals both general and specific causes of war as well as conditions under which the

problem may be solved. Unfortunately, few have made any such a systematic analysis of the problem of war. That is why we continue to be bewildered and confused by superstitions of Statism and State worship.

We hope against hope that our political "Georges" will do this for us. We let them write new charters and new constitutions designed to impose new and greater barriers to freedom in trade and freedom of individual and social action. We continue to shirk what is obviously the responsibility of every individual man and woman everywhere.

Lost in this cobweb of restrictions and barriers our situation has become so complicated that at times it seems nigh hopeless to do anything about it. Yet we have not much choice. Either we completely reverse this process of further enslavement of mankind or go down in the ultimate and utter destruction of this civilization.

The first "step in the right direction" is not any political action on the part of the existing States and their world statesmen, who are able to set up only further cobwebs of human enslavement. The first step in *positive peacemaking* has always been and is today a universal re-education of the minds of men, and their release from the false ideas and ideals which oppress them.