PEACE IS EVERYBODY'S CONCERN

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THE common war against Germany is by no means yet won. That stark fact must still remain the keynote of our existence. Despite generally increasing successes — despite reserves—the chief sustained effort of the United Nations is yet before us. Unmeasured quantities of treasure and material, of human lives and human happiness, will be thrown in the balance before victory can result. But already (and not too soon) there are signs that the allied peoples are preoccupied with the organization of the peace: this time, perhaps a permanent peace.

Peace-planners in the midst of total war inevitably meet with some criticism. The single-minded insist with vehemence that all such schemes are premature while the war is yet unwon. But it is readily demonstrable that such narrow devotion to our immediate purpose—admirable in itself—is dangerously short-sighted. No relaxation of our military effort is possible; at the same time, no apology need be made for exhaustive consideration of the terms of the future peace. For that peace is the whole object of the bitter sacrifices of war.

A total peace is the vitalizing hope that sustains mankind through total war. Such a peace is the primary concern of every participant: and in present-day warfare all of us, without exception, are participants. As H. M. King George said in 1939, "This time we are all in the front line." Now, in the midst of war, is the time to concern ourselves with peace if we are to avoid the necessity of again concerning ourselves with war during another interim peace. Now is the time for each individual to consider how best to prevent the flower of the youth of our nations being sacrificed in another quarter of a century. Now is the time for each of us to ask himself how best he can help in this, and what rôle he must play. Since world peace is indivisible—as events once more have proved—now is the time for every individual to realize a universal theorem; that he is not only a citizen of his own country, but also a citizen of the world; that he, too, is responsible in the measure of his capacity for world peace. Is this not a logical conclusion to draw from a war in which every combattant is not only a soldier of his own national army, but also a soldier of the United Nations?

Now, not some indefinite "later", is the time for individuals to explain to their fellow citizens of the world their difficulties,

their problems and their particular conception of the peace. Such an exchange of opinion cannot do otherwise than develop mutual understanding.

There is valid historic excuse for the examination of peace terms while yet at war. In 1918 the armistice took everyone by surprise—people, politicians and soldiers alike. The trial had been lengthy and severe for the people: so joy at unexpectedly early victory was correspondingly great. Their gratitude to their leaders was at its height when the first chill apprehensions about the use to be made of the hard won victory began to be felt.

There is little point at this time in conducting a *post mortem* on the Treaty of Versailles; still less in drawing therefrom positive conclusions as to what it would be desirable to include in a coming peace treaty. To undertake so complex a task would be presumptuous even if all the involved facts were available. But it is possible to draw certain profitable lessons from what happened twenty-five years ago.

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The *Treaty of Versailles* as a general document presented three principal characteristics which in themselves, or through the importance given them, made the Europe which emerged from the treaties of 1919-1920 at once unstable and incapable of regaining her equilibrium without a grave crisis—even conflict. First, it scorned history; second, it substituted the theories of economic experts for the teachings of centuries; and finally, it was designed in the hope of being known to history as the first truly moral treaty.

The peace of 1919 was intended to be a "moral" peace; but the adjective, like the object, was subjected to interpretation. It was in the name of morality—not mere justice—that Germany was forced to return to her neighbors the territory she had wrested from them. It was moral that war criminals—the Kaiser appropriately heading the list—should be tried for murder. It was moral that Germany be compelled to pay for the damage she had done others. Indeed, eulogizing the Treaty before the House of Commons of July 3, 1919, the British prime minister, Mr. Lloyd George said: "I hope that Germany will understand that her defeat has been her salvation, for it has rid her of the Junkers and the Hohenzollern military clique. She has paid a high price for her deliverance. I believe she will find that it has been worth it."

It was also said to be for a moral purpose—certainly not to palliate political apprehension—that Germany was deprived of her navy and her colonies. Mr. Lloyd George defended these acts in the same strain of high morality: " . . . To leave the navy and colonies in the hands of Germany," he insisted, "would be to broaden the realm of injustice in the world, and perhaps to offer Germany new opportunities of doing wrong in the future."

At the same time, the Treaty exhibited a certain inconsistent versatility. France, which had been invaded by Germany twice in a generation, asked for a guaranteed Rhine, and the partition of the German political system, so that Europe, no less than Africa, might be preserved from injustice. Such harsh realism, it was conveniently discovered, was not morality but politics. This point can now be made without bitterness; but not without regret. For Europeans, who have suffered from this strange subjectivity in the moral sense of the Versailles negotiators, have been keenly resentful of it.

The first hope for the next peace, therefore, must be that it will be truly moral. Not a canting morality, not the self-interpreted morality of self-interest, but a peace based on just and objective moral laws. Into that account must go the fact that the greatest crime of this century has been the vast slaughter instigated by Germany, first in 1914 and again twenty-five years later. Some eight million soldiers were killed in the first world war; twelve million others were wounded to various degrees of civilian incapacity. This war so far has claimed only a part of the huge price in human lives that must be paid to defeat the Germans. A repetition of this monstrous crime against mankind must be avoided at all costs. Every measure that will prevent the recurrence of such a holocaust is just and right; and if it respects the fundamental laws of humanity, it can give rise to no problems of conscience. That is the fundamental consideration that must animate the next peace treaty if it is to be truly moral.

The second characteristic of the *Treaty of Versailles* is that it was a highly technical treaty. The clauses relative to trade and commerce, customs regulations and tariffs, railways and waterways, were all drafted with expert skill. The foremost specialists of all the allied countries were consulted, and their advice received with all the deference due to the pronouncements of experts. The tracing of frontiers was entrusted to geographers and ethnographers—irrefutably distinguished—whose errors, if

any, could not be technical ones. Of human or realistic political considerations, there was less evidence. For when the plans were completed and adopted, it was difficult for the observant European to realize that Germany had lost the war. Certain modest national aspirations had caused the creation of a number of new states. Thus Europe, as a hegemony, was weaker; but there in the heart of Europe, like a greedy animal, still crouched a defiant, unmolested Germany: still a *Reich* and still a Great Power. The neighboring Revisionist States, weak and inexperienced, were readily intimidated by their ancient foe. Even the most superficial observer with the most casual knowledge of Europe felt a premonitory shiver of fear. As one French historian put it (as early as 1920): "There is not a single border post on the Czechoslovakian frontier which has not been placed according to the most expert scientific advice. As for how long these posts can remain in their places and what chance they have of staying there, this was clearly not the business of the land surveyors." It is indisputable that the technical experts did splendid work: but the peace settlement could not hope for permanency when the broad political concepts were left to sentimental amateurs.

Then, too, there were the economists. These experts promised a new heaven and a new earth, provided they were not limited by such obsolete psychological considerations as a German desire for revenge. Professor J. M. Keynes (as he then was), the chief advocate of this attitude, produced a best seller with the characteristic title *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, a Cassandra-like warning as to what would happen if economic sanctions were used against Germany. The fate of poor defeated Germany was deplored *ad nauseam;* and again and again was repeated the slogan that the victorious nations must rebuild Germany if they wanted to prevent European chaos and further wars.

With the presumption of youth, economic science undertook to analyse everything, explain everything, settle everything. Political and historic factors were ignored. The twentieth century, it was vehemently maintained, was keyed to one determining factor—the economic. And this specious theory was demonstrated by an over simple but apparently convincing syllogism: war doesn't pay—that has been proved; Germany has found that out by trying and failing; therefore Germany will never make war again.

This dangerous — and not very logical — simplification

became the slogan of the day. In 1919 a leading London newspaper presented its attitude in two trenchant sentences: "The German is not naturally warlike. He has just learned that war doesn't pay." What troubled this paper most was the possible militaristic tendencies of the new revisionist countries such as Czechoslovakia, Poland, Austria and Yugoslavia; but none the less, it was hopeful, adding benignly, " . . . New States still have to learn that lesson (that war doesn't pay). It is the rôle of the League of Nations to teach it to them."

There remained yet one more step on this road of *naïveté:* vigorously to condemn those whom the essential ill logic of this so-called reasoning had not convinced. France was considered the leading recalcitrant. For France had viewed this weird European reconstruction with misgivings. Not that France was clairvoyant, but simply because she had *per force* acquired a wide knowledge of, and a deep experience with, German psychology. The bitter story of France's historic duel with the Germans—Prussia, the German Empire, the *Reich*; any and all of the manifestations of the German will-to-conquer—had been burned into the French national consciousness. These misgivings, however, were not shared by those nations to whom geography had given natural defences against possible German aggression: defences so tragically lacking in just those countries which, by virtue of propinquity, were in greatest peril.

French distrust of the peace settlement was widely denounced, particularly by the champions of its economic clauses. It was urged that France sought to establish her hegemony over Europe; others maintained that France's leaders were blinded by their hatred for Germany. This charge was levelled particularly against Clemenceau, but no French leader escaped it. Of Clemenceau there is told regarding this period a characteristic story, which makes a useful but neglected point. Triumphantly asked by an opponent if he had ever been to Germany of which he pretended to know so much, the French premier replied quietly, "Never, sir. But the Germans have been twice in France in my lifetime."

Some may have now forgotten that even Pierre Laval was accused of an exactly similar attitude. In 1931 he went to Washington to protest that it was no longer fair for the United States to demand her war debts of France when the Hoover Moratorium cancelled Germany's war debt from which such payments might be made. Laval, blinded by his hatred of Germany?

Throughout this period the emphasis was put in the wrong place with tragic consistency. The possible warlike spirit of the smaller nations was feared and deplored; while Germany was coddled as a repentant. There was a similar onesidedness to the help given in reconstruction. France and Belgium, both of whom had suffered the agony and devastation of invasion, were left to themselves. But vast quantities of foreign capital flowed into Germany in a steady stream. If that gold could have been sunk in the sea, it might have made some positive contribution to European peace. In fact, it was used to rebuild and expand Germany's economic—and thus her war—potential, while her industrial superiority over France was already the greatest menace to Europe in 1919.

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These hard facts of the last peace now fall into a grim pattern for all to see. And that pattern must be kept in mind when planning the reorganization of the world after this war . . . For at the roots of what in our time was called "Munich defeatism" lies the profound disappointment of 1919: the wicked sabotage of a hard-won victory. The nervous system of many a man who had withstood the hardships of war gave way before the disillusionment of the peace.

Fortunately Germany's second attempt at world domination within twenty-five years has opened the eyes of many of those who might be called the materialistic Utopians. But the breed is by no means extinct. There are still people who insist, vaguely, that this war was caused by an economic crisis in Germany. There is, as it happens, a slight grain of truth in that contention. But the whole theory falls to the ground when it is realized that Germany's economic difficulties, insofar as they existed, were artificially created by the German government itself. The German people had a choice, and they took it deliberately. Indeed, had anything like unanimity prevailed in Europe, such acts of aggression would have been impossible. But circumstances were ideal for Germany's plans.

Had these international conditions been exactly contrary, there would have been no economic crisis in Germany. Butter would have been abundant, and guns scarce. Had her technical efforts been so bent, and the vast sums of foreign capital that she acquired been so spent, Germany between Hitler's ascent to power and 1939 could have revolutionized her internal economy. Instead she gambled on a vast rearmament scheme

that might have brought her the whole world—and butter as well as guns.

It would appear then, even from so facile a survey, that the economic interpretation of the causes of war is by no means complete, for however important economic factors may be, political factors are overwhelming; nowhere is the primacy of politics more marked than in the international field.

The second hope for the coming peace treaty must be, then, that these facts will be recognized as such. Just as the architect assigns to each workman the limits of his task and the kind of material to use, likewise the statesmen must assign to financiers, engineers, economists and military men the tasks expected from each one of them, without allowing them to overstep their respective provinces. In all events, it behooves the statesman to decide the relative value he intends to grant to their various arguments.

It so happens that Great Britain has now as leader a man whose vision and courage had for twenty years before the war inspired the admiration of Europe as well as the wrath of Hitler. It so happens, also, that British foreign policy is directed by one of those men who saw clearly, and remained firm, in the hours of confusion preceding the war. It is to be hoped that the freedom of decision of such men and of their partners in the United Nations will not be thwarted by any manoeuvre or campaign. It is to be hoped that world opinion, keeping trust in the guides of darker days, will not be led astray by the naive theories that were at the basis of the 1919 failure.

The *Treaty of Versailles* disregarded history and ignored political realism. It is a fact that after a war that brought into play all the forces and faculties of most of the nations of the world, the very idea of politics fell into discredit. "Perhaps it gives one a headache" commented our historian with bitter irony.

The Europe that emerged out of Versailles presented on the one hand a Germany whose unity was respected, even strengthened. On the other hand—aside from France—a multiplicity of small states with divergent interests, sometimes opposed. On the one hand, Germany with 65 million inhabitants; on the other, France with 41 million. On the one hand, a Germany that had not suffered invasion; on the other, France with an industrial potential half that of Germany in normal times, her richest countryside devastated, her mines flooded, her factories scientifically destroyed; a France that had, propor-

tionally, paid more in human casualties. On the one hand, a Germany preserving the same strong administrative body; on the other hand—again apart from France—new countries which had to build from scratch their own political traditions, while creating a new administrative personnel.

For not only was German unity respected. The centralization of the German federal state was vastly strengthened by the Allies. Having asserted their intention not to intervene in German internal policy, the Allies in fact dealt only with Berlin, thus unconsciously ratifying and consolidating the former predominance of Prussia. Indeed the *Treaty of Versailles* has resulted in identifying Germany with Prussia, thus perfecting the work of Frederic II and of Bismarck. That treaty imposed upon Germany a war tribute to be paid over a generation, (never to be paid at all in that event); it restored territories stolen from France, Belgium, Denmark and, in the East, from Poland. At the same time, that treaty left Germany demographically and industrially the most powerful state in the Europe of the time—with full political power: the power that engenders all others. "A peace too soft for what is hard in it," wrote the historian Jacques Bainville as early as the summer of 1919. That judgment has been ratified by bitter experience.

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Were it not presumptuous, an exact collation of these considerations should present a complete theory of the peace to come after this war. However, if a recent past can illuminate the present, there are a few simple rules that can be outlined as general guide posts.

1. The existence in the heart of Europe of a mass of eighty million Germans forces the creation, from the military point of view at least, of solid blocks with a united strength superior to that of the Germans.

2. These strong national states must be kept in existence independently of the eventual fate of German unity. That is obviously imperative if the artificial Prussia—dominated *Reich*—is once again continued by treaty. It is not less imperative if neighboring states must for a generation or more guard a dismembered or partitioned Germany.

3. The political status of the German state or states will for a time rest with the Allies, and must be subject to narrow

restrictions. Such firm control is all the more necessary since Germany is now waging biological war against occupied countries in an only too successful effort to ensure the physical inferiority of her neighbors for several decades. Lord Vansittart's twelve-point programme is in this respect a very useful first project. It should not be forgotten, however, that the former Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs clearly stipulates that his programme cannot ensure peace: but without this minimum no real peace is possible.

4. Whatever the programme generally outlined by the capital powers, it will have to win the sincere approval of Germany's neighbors, and their pledge to contribute to its maintenance. It would be Utopian to conceive that one can organize Europe without the Europeans, or to control Germany without the help of her neighbors. Any split among them would be immediately exploited by Germany, and the experience of 1919-39 would begin all over again.

5. Recent history proves that it is still in Western Europe that world domination is won or lost. (That world domination is at stake, no one longer doubts.) The Rhine is not only, as Mr. Stanley Baldwin used to say, the frontier of Great Britain; it has become the frontier of the United Nations. So it was in 1914, but the world did not need to be aware of it then; France withstood the shock. Therefore that part of the world more than any other is, and will remain for a long time probably, the focal point of the world's anxieties. From it a new war might be launched if this peace with Germany is not more soundly devised than the peace of 1919. And since war in this world of to-day is waged with the blood, sweat and tears of all, it follows that peace has become the concern of each and every one of us.