

# The League of Nations

There is quite a little controversy going on just now, relative to what is called "The Freedom of the Seas," and a "League of Nations." Now what exactly does those two phrases connote? What is their significance? Let us take a look at the latter phrase first. When we understand that, the former will become clearer.

According to its sponsors, a League of Nations seems to connote an agreement, to be entered into, between a number of nations, for the avowed purpose of settling amicably, whatever disputes may arise between them; and as a corollary, to abolish war. Let us bring the terms a little closer, ask, what is the nature of the disputes occurring between nations? How comes it that disputes arise at all? Why can not they be settled peaceably now? And what occasions war? To answer those questions with any degree of explicitness, we must first understand the nature of our social fabric. This is where I propose to help stir the tea-cup.

In the present organization of society, those things essential to the maintenance of life, are produced, quite naturally, under the terms of that organization. And the terms are: that the resources and machinery of production, and distribution, as well as the total of what is produced, are wholly owned and controlled by one class in society, the capitalist class, and that no other section of society can have access to those means of supporting life, saving upon the condition imposed by capital-production for sale, at a profit. Unless, therefore, capital derives a profit from the operation of industry, that industry comes to a standstill. But if capital sees that profit forthcoming, it will put forth every effort, apply every invention; adopt every device; to operate that industry to the fullest limit of capacity, with the object of increasing the volume of production, since the greater that volume is, the greater is the profit thereof.

But before profit—which is contained in the commodities produced—can be realized, those commodities must be sold. But where sold? Not at home, certainly, because owing to the competition of the workers among themselves for jobs, that portion of them, actually engaged in the production of commodities, receive as wages the mere subsistence necessities of life. And since those wages, by no means represent the value of what is produced, and since the purchasing power of the market is measured by wages capacity, capital is left with a vast surplus to dispose off elsewhere. And elsewhere can only be the international market.

Since, however, all countries produce under this system of capitalist commodity production, then, necessarily, all countries must look to the world market for the sale of their goods; necessarily the capitalists of all countries must compete, not only as rivals for the sale of their goods, but also for possession of the market itself, and necessarily again not all of those capitalist countries can be successful competitors. Two supremacies can not exist in one market. And it is never to be forgotten, that in this relentless and merciless rivalry, there is no sickly sentimentalism of "live and let live." "enough is as good as a feast," and other similar hoary platitudes. There is but the stern "must," of irrevocable necessity.

Again, successful and efficient production, involves the co-ordination of the productive forces. The capitalist class of any country must so adjust its internal economy so as to produce in the most efficient manner, the maximum of production, with the minimum of friction. If not, it can not possibly be a successful world competitor. It is with this end in view, (bungling as it may be,) that industrial commissions, arbitration, wage boards and other capitalistic contrivances are organized under the supreme control of the central

executive government. And precisely as co-ordination of function and relation, is an indispensable condition of industrial efficiency, so, co-ordination of the machinery, requisite for the disposal of the surplus becomes likewise an imperative need. For, just as friction is the certain concomitant of capital in the realm of production, so is it the unavoidable accompaniment of capitalist rivalry in the commercial sphere.

It is at this point that the central government comes into play. It establishes a foreign office; organizes a foreign service; appoints foreign ministers; sets up embassies and legations; has its advisory councils; listens to the behests of foreign syndicates; all organized and adjusted by the capitalist class executive government, in the sole interests of the capitalist class; for the express purpose of controlling the world market. All the powers have representatives at every court where there is any bearing of interest, and it is their business to see that the government to which they are accredited does not overreach the government they represent in the diplomatic quities of "concessions," "spheres of interest," and other such slave guarding schemes. When this over-reaching is successful, it involves, of course, greater freedom of the market for the state which secured the favorable deal and obviously, a limitation for the loser.

The small States, because they are small States, and live off the rivalry of their big brothers, are compelled to listen to the "advice" and "suggestions" of the foreign office of the great powers, insofar as the policies of the little States conflict with the capitalist interests of the great powers. If they do not show inclination to the "reason" of the great powers, there is a change of government in that country, and the new executive is, of course, (since it is amenable to "advice," "safe," "honorable," "appreciative of order," "with democratic principles" and so on, ad nauseum. This is where secret diplomacy gets in its fine work. But this political method of action does not obtain—it can not indeed, between the great powers themselves, knowing each other's methods and objectives. They possess huge fighting machines; mobilizing organization in instant readiness; vast stores of reserves of all kinds; almost unlimited resources. They are ready to resent and prepared to "defend" any infringement of what they call "right," with powerful self-contained organizations of prostitute press and rostrum, to help along the due appreciation of "democracy," and if a breach is opened, and beyond the power of diplomacy to stop it up, war is the inevitable result.

Now let us look at the "League of Nations" in the light of this philosophy. The statement, that this league will be capitalistic, needs no defence. Being capitalistic, it implies the old anarchy of industry, production for sale, and as already pointed out, production for sale, entails a market to realize the profit. The existence of the small States in this league (or out of it,) has no influence in this matter. Therefore the great capitalist power, daily comes into closer contact and ever-sharpening antagonism, with another similar power, and soon or late, out of their necessarily conflicting interests, a clash is bound to come. They can not avoid it, because the tremendous forces of social production, generated within themselves, compel them to obtain a market for their goods, in order to keep their wage slaves working, or else—the inevitable alternative—those slaves, co-ordinated and organized by capitalist industry, in enforced idleness and facing starvation, will abolish both the capitalist State and its markets.

And the "Freedom of the Seas," what of it? Simply this, that the great power, alive to its in-

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## SPAIN.

(From the "Daily Herald," Aug. 26.)

The Barcelona correspondent of the "Paese," a Madrid Republican paper, makes a sensational exposure of the part played by the Employers' Association in the recent disorders, wires our Santander Correspondent.

The assassinations of Sabater and the rest, and the bomb explosion seem to have been the work of a gang of ruffians, some of whom were members of the police force.

It has been virtually proved that this gang was paid by members of the Employers' Association to create a reign of terror in Barcelona, which would bring about military suppression of the Unions.

Interests in the world market, must control the trade routes leading to that market, on penalty of losing its commercial supremacy. For whatever may obtain in times of peace, when the clash comes, the power controlling the trade routes at once cuts off all communication of external resource; shuts off Allied assistance; bars all outside supplies. And the beleaguered one, must adopt every device that ingenuity can devise to break that blockade. Just as nothing can prevent the natural rivalry of capital, so nothing can offset the tactics of military necessity and, just as no law can obviate the irresistible economies of the machine, neither can any league, or covenant, or treaty, or guarantee, however solemnly engaged upon, turn aside the titanic necessities of social production. R.