

The Aims of Labor.

(By Right Hon. Arthur Henderson,

WORLD SECURITY.

President Wilson's famous declaration that the supreme inspiration of the military efforts of the Allies against the Central Powers is the desire to make the world safe for democracy will remain for all time one of the classic utterances of real statesmanship. It crystallises in a brief sentence the spiritual yearnings and idealist sentiments of all free peoples. The war itself has exercised a purifying influence on the souls of men and women, has stirred them to the depths of their being, and quickened and intensified their powers of insight and discrimination. The outlook of the individual has been broadened and his sense of real values has become keener and more accurate. He is no longer satisfied by a general recognition of his right to earn the means of existence; he now demands to be guaranteed the right to live in peace and security. He wishes neither to oppress nor to be oppressed. The war, by the frightful ravages and cruel sacrifices which it has entailed, has shown him, perhaps more clearly and brutally than anything else could do, how nearly his own life and domestic happiness are linked up with the national life and welfare of his country. He has learned by keen suffering and bitter experience that the immoral and unscrupulous policy of one nation may plunge the whole world into the lowest depths of misery and desolation. He has realised from the example of Germany that a citizen may be called upon personally to expiate the crimes and follies of his Government. And as a direct consequence of this new and fuller comprehension of his liability as a citizen, he has determined to take a more practical and effectual part in the direction and control of national and international affairs.

In the past, British Governments decided when the nation should make war and afterwards determined the terms that should bring about its settlement. To-day, it is the British people who are at war and the people must decide the terms of peace. Despite the prolonged period of hostilities and military disappointments, they remain steadfast in their determination to defeat the ambitious schemes of aggressive German militarism, and they will not relax their efforts until their war aims are capable of achievement. Speaking of our War ideals, Mr. Asquith said, in his Dublin speech, on Sept. 25th, 1915:

Forty-four years ago, at the time of the war of 1870, Mr. Gladstone used these words. He said: "The greatest triumph of our time will be the enthronement of the idea of public right as the governing idea of European politics . . ." The idea of public right—what does it mean when translated into concrete terms? It means first and foremost the clearing of the ground by the definite repudiation of militarism as the governing factor in the relation of States and of the future moulding of the European world. It means, next, that room must be found and kept for the independent existence and the free development of the smaller nationalities, each with a corporate consciousness of its own. Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, the Scandinavian countries, Greece, and the Bal-

kan States,—they must be recognised as having as good a title as their powerful neighbours—more powerful in strength and wealth—to a place in the sun. And it means finally, or it ought to mean, perhaps by a slow and gradual process, the substitution for force, for the clash of competing ambitions, for groupings and alliances and a precarious equipoise, of a real European partnership based on the recognition of equal rights and established and enforced by a common will.

These are the ideals for which the people of this and the other Allied countries are fighting. It is not against the German people as individuals that their wrath and hostility are directed, but against Germany's policy of aggression and oppression. They do not desire to exterminate the German people, but they are determined to exterminate the policy of military, political, and economic domination which has been and still is a standing menace to the security and freedom of humanity. The power they are fighting against is the set of false ideals which are "the ruthless master of the German people." It is the ambition to world domination, the worship of militarism, and the belief in brute force as a proper instrument of policy. But security will not be obtained by this soulless policy merely changing its nationality from German to British or French or that of any other of the Allies. The idol of rampant and aggressive militarism must be shattered beyond repair, and the faith of all nations in its power and efficacy must be utterly destroyed. Such a policy by whatever nation it might be pursued would inevitably lead to a similar world catastrophe. The British soldiers and the British people are not fighting for British domination or French domination or domination by any of the Allies. The idea of world domination was not "made in Germany" it is as old as world-history itself. Germany is merely the latest nation to be deluded by these impossible dreams, which in the past have ended in defeat, ruin, and disillusionment. The end will be in no wise different for Germany.

It should be quite apparent, therefore, that world security cannot be guaranteed simply by the defeat of Germany's ambitious schemes, but only by the kind of peace settlement which is made after she has been completely frustrated. Peace terms must be based upon principles and justice, and not governed by expediency or selfish national ambition. It must secure restitution of forcibly annexed territory, reparation for all the wanton destruction and wrongs consequent upon Germany's military aggression, full recognition of the rights of all peoples, and guarantees for the security of world peace.

The people have made war in defence of high ideals; they must see to it that when peace comes it shall be governed by wise principles. As President Wilson has courageously declared:—

The treaties and agreements which bring the war to an end must embody terms that will create a peace that is worth guaranteeing and preserving, a peace that will win the approval of mankind, not merely a peace that will serve the several interests and immediate aims of the

nations engaged.

The first step towards making the world safe for all peoples is the establishment of a stable peace founded on the inalienable rights of mankind; a peace which will assuage all legitimate grievances and causes of friction between one nation and another; a peace that will offer a real prospect of the nations living together in amity and concord.

The question which then presents itself for answer is: When such a peace shall have been agreed upon, by what means can its permanency be guaranteed? This is a matter of primary importance, for the hopes of all peoples are centred on security for the future. They are more anxious about this than about anything else: that when this war is terminated the world shall be maintained in peace and tranquillity. This is no new problem which confronts statesmanship. First alliances, then groupings, and finally the system of balance of power, all had for their object security. And each in turn failed lamentably. But if there is not to be a return to the dangerous, sensitive, and ever-fluctuating balance of power what alternative has statesmanship to offer in its place? One thing is certain, namely, that the people will not easily tolerate a return to the precarious conditions of pre-war days. They recognise that the old methods have all ended in disaster and they will readily turn to any practical solution of the problem which may be propounded if for no other reason than that if the worst comes to the worst, it could hardly plunge the world into greater agony and distress than the previous attempts to secure international peace.

At the present moment there is only one proposition which can be regarded as practical and concrete and which contains the essence of real statesmanship, and that is the proposal to form a League of Nations to guarantee the peace and security of the world. It is a reasoned, intelligent, and scientific attempt to construct international machinery to administer justice between nations with a view to disposing of all points of friction which may arise. In reality it will be an International Court of Justice to which all disputes between adhering nations which cannot be settled by diplomatic means must be referred to arbitration. Such disputes may be either justiciable, i.e., disputes which are capable of being decided by recognised international law; or non-justiciable disputes, i.e., disputes which cannot be covered by international jurisprudence but which can be settled by moral law, provided the nations concerned are disposed to accept moral law as being on at least as high a plane as law made by man.

But even this method of maintaining world peace may not be fully satisfactory and successful unless it has the full sanction of the peoples behind it. The spirit of the nation partners must be behind such a League and their moral support must be supplemented by a joint organised power—military, economic, and commercial—capable of enforcing the decisions of the League on any recalcitrant member, and of defending any member which may be attacked by a non-adhering nation that may refuse to refer the dispute between them for settlement by pacific means.

A PEOPLE'S PEACE.

The war has clearly demonstrated the extraordinary power invested in

free peoples. Take the case of the United States. For several months President Wilson had recognised that his country must eventually intervene in the war on the side of the Allies and in the defence of the great principles of freedom and liberty, but it was not until the American people were convinced beyond all doubt of the righteousness of this course that he was empowered to organise his country for war. In Britain the publication of Lord Lansdowne's letter was almost sensational in its effects, inasmuch as it compelled statesmen to recognise that the question of peace terms so vitally concerned the people that its consideration could not be postponed until the close of hostilities but demanded immediate discussion and definition. Hitherto the nation has been more or less content to remain in ignorance of the details of our peace terms: they have been satisfied with general references which were mainly confined to the statement of broad principles. Now they are aware that while there may be universal agreement on general principles, the method of the application of those principles may differ very materially according to the interpretation of each nation, and it is only by a comparison of the explicit and concrete peace terms of each of the belligerent groups that the world can judge what now constitutes the obstacles to a real and lasting peace. The people have their own ideas of peace, and they are only concerned with the difficulties to be surmounted before that peace can be obtained; they do not care what obstacles prevent the attainment of a Government's peace unless that peace is in strict harmony with their own ideals. They have no sympathy with selfish national interests or ambitions; they are shouldering the oppressive and painful burdens of the war with courage, fortitude, and determination, not merely to overthrow German tyranny and her scheme for world domination, but more especially in order to secure as will permit all the peoples of the world to live together, under conditions of freedom, equality, and security. They realise that there can be no national safety without international security, that the national development and happiness of a people are indissolubly linked up with international tranquillity and goodwill. They appreciate more than ever that nationalism is not the final stage of a nation's development, but that it is only an intermediate step to complete world internationalism. The effects of the war have been felt by the whole world; there have been no national barriers to the pain, suffering and sacrifices of the great Armageddon. The whole of humanity has been crucified. And humanity, bleeding and torn, cries out for a radical and complete solution of all the factors which contributed to the present world-catastrophe.

Such a solution can only be found in a peace which will remove all old grievances, prevent the imposition of new injustices, establish a world recognition and practice of the principle of the right of self-determination and of free development of all peoples, great and small. It must offer guarantees for the security of world peace in the future. Security is the greatest of all questions for humanity, but whatever provisions may be made with a view to establishing means for the maintenance of world peace, they will surely prove

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