

IS THE WAR ENDING IN DISAPPOINTMENT?

BY L. P. JACKS

THAT the Treaty of Peace has caused a general disappointment hardly admits of dispute. Disappointment is to be read not only in that large section of the press, in all nations, which openly attacks the treaty as giving us a bad peace, but equally in the other which defends it as giving us a good one. For a peace which requires so much defense and puts so severe a tax on the ingenuity of its defenders is clearly not the kind of peace in which they, any more than their opponents, can find a real satisfaction.

There is reason to suspect that not only the general public but the authors of the peace themselves are disappointed with the results of their labors. What they think of it in their innermost minds we are not, of course, permitted to know; shining candor is not a mark of modern statesmanship. Even President Wilson, whose superior candor led him, before the treaty was framed, to lay down the Fourteen Points, has said nothing to indicate that he is greatly satisfied with the result. His appeals, as I read them, take the form of urging us to make the best of a bad job. Much the same may be said of Mr. Lloyd George, Lord Robert Cecil, and General Smuts. Mr. Lloyd George, defending the treaty before the House of Commons, presented an elaborate argument to prove that it was just. A really just treaty would have needed no such defense, and the vehemence of Mr. George's argument suggests that he was aware of this. Lord Robert Cecil has been apologizing for the treaty ever since

it was framed, and a mind like his can hardly be unaware of the implication. As for General Smuts, his reasons for signing the treaty may be gathered by anyone who will read between the lines of the appeal he addressed to the public just before leaving for South Africa. He signed because not signing would have been the greater evil — in which, no doubt, he was not alone. In all these utterances we look in vain for a firm belief that the Peace Treaty has been built upon the rock. The most hopeful thing they say to us is that if we take the situation in a right spirit all will come well in the end — a doctrine which holds true of misfortune in general. What we hoped for was a peace which should help us to take things in the right spirit. A peace which itself betrays the wrong spirit, and can only be made effective by being taken in the right, leaves us worse off than we were before, and is indeed the thing we dreaded most of all. What civilization needs in the present state of its affairs is, precisely, an object lesson in the right spirit, and for six long months our eyes have been turned upon Paris in the hope that it would be forthcoming. Had it been produced, the effect would have been most salutary, not only on international politics but on the social conflicts which are now threatening us with a more disastrous form of war than that from which we have just emerged. The failure to produce it is the summary cause of our disappointment, which grows the more bitter when the authors of the treaty ask us

to redeem its errors by showing 'the right spirit.' That is what they should have done themselves. Are we not all growing a little tired of the type of statesmanship which creates 'bad jobs,' or allows them to be created, and then appeals to the public to make the best of them?

The reasonableness of our disappointment is of course conditioned by the nature of our previous expectations. So far as these were exaggerated or absurd we have no just cause of complaint. And it must be confessed that the idealism, so plentifully displayed during the war in those who 'did their bit' by reconstructing the world from their study chairs, was frequently marked by an extraordinary want of common sense and by ignorance of elementary psychological fact. Indeed, it is a remarkable circumstance, and one that goes far to explain our present disappointment, that during the whole course of the war, which has been so scientific in other respects, psychology has been treated with a neglect which is hardly distinguishable from contempt, and this in spite of the fact that it holds the key to every one of the major problems to which the war has given rise. In the early months of the struggle it was a common saying that the Germans were ignorant of psychology. In this there was a measure of truth, but subsequent events seem to indicate that the charge must now be extended to the whole body of the belligerents. And nowhere has this ignorance of psychology been more apparent than among the idealists, in all countries, who were dreaming of a 'new world' that was to come into being through the action of political peace makers. That a polyglot assembly of statesmen, representing the very traditions that needed reform, would suddenly turn their backs on the habits

of thought in which they had been trained was in the highest degree improbable. Yet the whole literature of 'reconstruction,' so much of which has already become a dead letter, shows abundant evidence of a widespread belief that something of the kind was going to happen. The scantiest acquaintance with the psychology of habit would have convinced us from the first that all expectations resting on such a basis were doomed to disappointment. And, we may add, they deserved the disappointment which they have now incurred.

There were others, again, who staked their hopes on the emergence of a dominating personality; and when President Wilson began his policy of active intervention many believed they had found their man. But in fairness to President Wilson, and to all others who have failed to manifest the dominating influence expected of them, it should be remembered that the conditions with which they were faced were exceptionally difficult to dominate. It is characteristic of the modern man to clamor for 'a great leader,' and at the same time to make up his mind not to be 'led' by anybody, if he can help it. Hence the difficulty of our times is not so much in finding the leaders as in finding the followers who will consent to be led. A world conference of modern politicians would present this difficulty in its acutest form. We have here to deal with a mass of exceptionally recalcitrant material, and it may well be doubted if human greatness — sacred personalities apart — has ever yet appeared in a form sufficiently potent to 'dominate' a complex of wills so various, so self-assertive, so deeply resolved to submit to nobody. When we thought of Mr. Wilson as a possible 'great man' overpowering the Paris Conference by the vigor of his moral

idealism, we ought at the same time to have reckoned up the other great men, or would-be great men, whose consent to a back seat would have to be obtained; and I think we should have found that the total was zero. The trouble arose not from the absence of a great leader, but from the presence of too many candidates for the same position. It was inevitable that they would tend to neutralize each other's personalities, and produce a result which was not on the level of the 'greatness' of any one of them, but a kind of lowest common measure of the greatness of them all. In supposing, therefore, as many of us did suppose, that Mr. Wilson's greatness would dominate the situation we took account of only one of its factors, ignored the psychological reactions he was certain to encounter, and exposed ourselves once more to a deserved disappointment.

Had unlimited time been at the disposal of Mr. Wilson and of his sympathizers, it is possible that he might have effected the conversion of the worldly-minded diplomats who surrounded him. But unlimited time was not at his disposal; the nations were in no mood to brook delay, and an immense chorus of voices was clamoring for a speedy decision. An amount of business inconceivably vast had to be cleared off at high pressure, and most of it was of a kind in which the intrusion of the moral idealist is apt to be resented. It is hard to conceive of an atmosphere more unfavorable to the political prophet, or of conditions in which his rejection could be more confidently predicted. That Mr. Wilson was rejected is more than I would venture to say; but he certainly would have been had he refused accommodation to the forces opposed to his principles. All of which might easily have been foreseen had we taken the

trouble to read the conditions in psychological terms. When the conflict between old principles and new is hurried to a decision by external pressure, as it was in the present instance, the old invariably get the best of it. Habit is on their side; and international politics are rooted in habits to a degree of which idealists have hardly formed an adequate conception. To suppose, as many of us did, that their force could be broken by a few months of ethical propaganda, or even by the shock and suffering of the war, was a misreading of human nature for which we are paying a just penalty in our present disappointment. We ought to have foreseen that the immensity of the business to be transacted would leave the Conference with no leisure for idealism and in no mood to embark upon moral adventures. We ought to have foreseen that the tendency would be to seek solutions on traditional lines as the easiest way out of the intolerable confusion; that in the process of adjusting a multitude of differences so vast and unmanageable, the ethical movement would be not upward but downward, until the ground of agreement was finally reached on the level of the accepted, the habitual, the commonplace. Safety was the watchword of the Conference: its mind worked in terms of safeguards, precautions, penalties, deterrents. Of *peace-making*, which is the most gracious of all the arts, being founded on charity (as defined by St. Paul), it seems to have had no adequate notion. Its thoughts were centred on *peace-keeping* — a rude and negative process which works by means of external restraints, mostly ineffective, on the motives which lead to war. This decline toward the commonplace, as the only possible ground of agreement, is equally apparent in the 'justice' of the peace, which Mr.

Lloyd George is so anxious to vindicate. Of the higher justice, which is kindred to pity, there is no trace. Agreement was found in the idea of punishment for wrong — the lowest, the least adequate, but the most widely accepted, of the many forms which the conception of justice can assume. All this was to be expected. At least it 'will surprise nobody who has ever heard of original sin.'

But while at many points the prevailing disappointment is due to the causes I have mentioned, there remains an important residuum which cannot be so dismissed. Not all the hopes that have been frustrated were foolish. Behind the millennial dreamers who have been so much in evidence during the war, there was and still remains a large body of moderate and sober-minded people whose demands took a much more reasonable form. Fully aware of the enormous difficulties which the best-intentioned statesmanship would have to surmount, these people were far from expecting that the end of the war would be immediately followed by the sudden birth of a new era in politics, morality, religion, or anything else. They knew that the peace would bear traces of having originated at a passionate moment in the world's history. They knew that from the nature of the case it could not be in all respects a work of pure reason nor of pure morality. They knew that the war, which was giving rise on the one hand to so much noble idealism, was also liberating powerful forces of a contrary nature, and that particular statesmen, however lofty their own motives might be, would not be able to escape wholly from the sinister pressures behind and around them. They knew, moreover, that it was not possible to evolve a perfect working instrument all at once out of so vast a multiplicity of con-

licting interests. At all these points moderate men were prepared to allow a generous margin for imperfection and failure. Indeed, when the nature of the business before the conference became more fully known, it seemed doubtful at times whether the human mind, either singly or collectively, possessed the intellectual powers necessary for dealing with a situation so unimaginably complex and dangerous. Most assuredly they were not forthcoming. It has been a common saying that the men engaged in the conference were not big enough, either intellectually or morally, for their work. This, I think, is true; but moderate men have not forgotten that the work in question was on a scale of difficulty beyond any against which human powers have previously had to match themselves. The intellectual powers were out of their depth.

And yet it is precisely in circumstances such as these, when the human entanglement is at its worst, and the mechanical method has broken down, and 'policy' has come to the end of its limited tether — it is precisely then that noble minds perceive their opportunity and take it. For, as every psychologist knows, the mechanical method which devises 'instruments' for the regulation of motive and desire, and the 'policy' upon which these inventions are founded, have at best but a secondary function in human life. Happily, the power man has to control his destiny is not confined to the narrow area indicated by such conceptions. Other methods are at his disposal for bringing harmony out of the chaos of wills, and never in the history of the world has a larger opportunity been given for their exercise. These methods will be found described by St. Paul in his thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians.

We live in an age when quarreling

has become a chief occupation of mankind. Man is by nature a quarrelsome animal, and 'civilization,' far from eradicating this tendency, as under happier auspices it might have done, has on the one hand multiplied the motives to quarreling, and on the other provided both individuals and communities with new facilities for conducting the business of strife. It has been too commonly assumed that the organization of society by drawing men more closely together would bring them to like-mindedness and to a unitary purpose. And so no doubt it would have done, and may yet do, if men were to organize for the pursuit of any noble aim, for art or beauty, or joy or religion, or the education of the human spirit. On any of these grounds men would inevitably discover their common interest, and a spirit of friendly coöperation would grow up of its own accord. But they have chosen instead to organize for the production and acquisition of material wealth. The rights of property, which are the most dubious and the most provocative of dispute, have become the typical form of human right. By organizing on this ground society has taught its members to discover, not their unity, but their differences; and at the same time created means and opportunities for asserting the differences to the uttermost. Whether the process of 'bringing men together' leads to friendship or enmity depends on the purpose in view. If the purpose is the acquisition of wealth, the tendency to quarrel among the seekers will increase with their proximity and with the growing knowledge of each other's designs which proximity brings; in which case it were wiser, in the interests of peace, to keep them as far apart as possible. A miser, for example, is always a solitary person, condemned to isolation by the nature

of his calling. He must needs live like a spider if he is to live at all. A guild or league of misers is clearly an impossible conception; and this holds true of miserly communities and miserly civilizations as well as of miserly individuals. They gain nothing in the way of friendship or good will by learning to know one another, by meeting one another every day, by reading of each other's doings in the daily papers, or by sitting together at a round table, with telephones at their elbows. On the contrary, the more contact is established between greedy forces the more certain they are to fall out. And thus it is that modern civilization by increasing contact has developed that quarrelsome spirit, both internecine and international, which has become so marked a feature of the present age, and has found its great expression in the recent war. What then, we may well ask, would be gained by forming a League of Nations if we are still to be faced by the certainty that as they learn to know one another more they will also learn, as covetous nations needs must do, to like one another less?

Surely we were entitled to expect that the collective wisdom of the world's greatest statesmen would pay some regard to these conditions—that they would view their task in its connections with the general needs of a covetous and strife-ridden age, and do their best to make their work a model of conciliatory method, set as it were at the apex of the world's affairs. Important as it may have been to vindicate the claims of punitive justice, it was infinitely more important to set an example not only to the new states that were being created, but to the factions, class interests, and predatory movements which are everywhere threatening disaster to the fabric of human society. The call for a gener-

ous spirit was clear and urgent beyond all else that the occasion demanded. But it was not heeded. With an amazing lack of the sense of proportion, the mind of the peacemakers allowed itself to be dominated by a conception not only without value as a peace-making instrument, but highly dangerous in such a connection — that, namely, of justice as it is understood in the criminal courts. A worse starting point for the work in hand could hardly have been found, and the result has been to produce a model which will not bear imitation. There need be no hesitation in saying that if the model were widely followed in dealing with the many forms of internal strife that now threaten the integrity of states, disaster would be inevitable. Suppose, for example, that the 'war' between labor and capital were to come to a definite result in the victory of the former, and that victorious labor in imposing its terms upon vanquished capital should proceed after the manner of the peacemakers of Paris. The war which was to end war ought surely to have ended in a manner very different from this.

Here it is that we reach the grounds of legitimate disappointment. The heroism with which the war had made us familiar led us to hope that the peace would display at least some traces of the same quality — and the value of a trace would have been enormous. We look for it in vain, and are left with the impression of an anticlimax to an heroic episode in the history of the world.

Broadly speaking, the treaty falls into two sections: the first dealing with the League of Nations, and the second with the conquered foe. A third section might be found in the clauses which deal with the creation of new states; but as these are mostly formed

out of the territories of the vanquished, the twofold division is sufficient.

The wisdom of including the creation of the League and the imposition of terms on the conquered in a single document has been gravely doubted from the first; and as things have turned out it would seem that the doubt was justified. On one condition only was it possible to effect so difficult a combination — the simple condition that the spirit, motives, and principles applied to the one thing should be in complete harmony with those applied to the other. If justice, faith, reason, and mutual respect were to be the keynote of the League, then passion, mistrust, and fear must not be suffered to influence, still less to dominate, the terms imposed on the conquered foe. The mere suspicion that these motives were active must be avoided at all costs. A degree of mutual confidence among the nations far higher than existed either before the war or at the end of it, had to be created; failing which, it was clear from the outset that no League of Nations, however ingeniously contrived its 'machinery' might be, would have the least chance of success. To create this feeling would have been difficult enough even if the formation of the League had been the only problem before the conference. It was rendered enormously more difficult by conjunction with the other, in which, from the nature of things, passion and unreason were certain to be clamorous. To provide a common ethos for two objects so disparate in their nature, the first born of a lofty idealism, the second so liable to be swayed by motives of greed and revenge; to accomplish with the one hand a work of reconciliation among the peoples, and with the other to deal out justice to an offender who had become a focus for hatred and been judged in advance; to do both things

in such a spirit that each should reinforce its fellow — here was a task to put statesmanship to the test. This was the danger point of the whole operation. It would have been better, a thousand times better, to forego nine tenths of the advantages which custom allows to the victor, and to err greatly on the side of lenience than to commit the contrary error of pressing the victor's rights to their extreme limits. For the effect of taking this latter course could only be to confirm the prevalent belief in the selfishness of nations, a belief absolutely fatal to the project of a league, until some signal act of international generosity has proved it to be false. I do not say that this act would have been easy. It would have required a degree of courage parallel to that displayed by the allied peoples in the darkest days of the war, of which, indeed, it would have been a noble and fitting consummation. It would have alarmed the timid; it would have angered the rapacious; it would have fluttered the dovescots of journalism; it would have caused a number of eminent persons to be denounced, for nine days, as 'pro-Germans'; but it would have laid a solid foundation for the League, and the hearts of the peoples would have leaped for joy. In short, it would have been the beginning of that 'new era' which so many have prophesied as the sequel to the war, but which, as things now are, has still to begin.

It has been wisely said that no great or worthy action ever proceeded from the motive of fear. Yet there is reason to believe that fear is intensely active in the minds of the statesmen who now rule mankind. It is a motive that grows with the increase of great possessions. Hence it is that the thing known as 'policy' (which I should be sorry to have to define), and international policy most of all, takes more

and more the form of creating 'safeguards,' whose ultimate object is the protection of material wealth. It is noteworthy, for example, that Mr. Lloyd George, when defending the treaty in the House of Commons, laid much emphasis on the fact that 'the world has had a great fright.' One by one he pointed out the various 'guaranties' provided by the treaty against the future misconduct of nations; and when he came to the supplementary guaranty, in the compact of Great Britain and the United States to protect France against further attacks from Germany, he justified the whole mass of these precautions by appealing to the frightened state of the world. In this the Prime Minister unconsciously gave the key to the whole Treaty of Peace, and to the policy which has determined its form. It is the product of a thoroughly frightened world. It represents the misgivings, the mistrusts, the dark suspicions, the apprehensions for the morrow, and the consequent incapacity for great action to which governments are reduced when fear has taken possession of their souls. In the elaboration of its safeguards, its precautions, its guaranties, and, most of all, its penalties, we may read a profound distrust of mankind, of which the focus rests upon Germany and the penumbra extends over the whole body of nations. One is reminded of the man in Mark Twain's story who was afraid of lightning. There was a lightning conductor at every corner of his house; they formed its principal feature; the whole structure bristled with them. At the first thunderstorm the conductors did their duty, attracted the lightning, and the house was wiped out of existence.

A paper contributed by Lord Robert Cecil to *The League of Nations Journal* for August seems to me to point the same moral. Lord Robert writes:

'Marshal Foch told a body of journalists the other day that the secret of victory was to have no doubts. In war he who doubts is lost. The maxim is true of all great enterprises. . . . The conception of the League of Nations is firmly rooted in the faith, the will, the humanity of millions of people, and they may be trusted to insist on such modifications of its structure as will cure its first defects.'

This is admirable doctrine, though I cannot help thinking that the application of it is somewhat belated. It should have been preached, and effectively preached, to those who were engaged in drawing up the Treaty of Peace. It is they who should have been told to dismiss their doubts and fears. They should have been warned against allowing either doubt or fear to become a predominant motive in determining the treatment allotted to the conquered foe, or in framing the measures that were intended to secure the peace of the world. Had this been effectively done, the public would have had less difficulty in resisting its doubts at the present moment. At least there would have been fewer doubts to resist. It is not so easy to dismiss them in regard to the working of an instrument which shows so many signs of being itself the creation of a doubting, fearful mind.

Had this propaganda against doubt and fear been launched at the right moment and taken to heart by the assembled statesmen of the world, who needed it far more than the peoples they represent, it is easy to imagine the difference that would have been made in the general form of the peace. The nature of the terms imposed upon the Central Empires—the chief object of the doubts and fears in question—would have been brought more closely into line with the British

tradition in dealing with a conquered foe, which is not based upon fear. The British are by no means averse to punish an enemy, but they have been generally satisfied with the punishment which consists in beating him to his knees on the field of battle, always a terrible form of punishment for a high-spirited nation. This done, our custom has been to regard the demands of punitive justice, to which, as I have said, we are not indifferent, as in the main satisfied. To pursue punishment to the extreme limits which victory renders possible, to cripple the fallen foe so that he cannot rise, to deprive him of his self-respect, to penalize his unborn generations—all this is not only offensive to our dignity as a warrior people, but has come to be regarded, by enlightened statesmen, as opposed to the plainest dictates of common sense, as bad business of the most deplorable kind. Had it been otherwise, the British Empire would never have come into existence. The statesmanship which has built up the empire has perceived that mankind needs all its resources, economic, intellectual, and moral, for maintaining its footing on the planet, and that the British Empire had everything to lose and nothing to gain by the destruction of any part of the human heritage. Hence its principle has been to enlist the beaten foe, with whatever culture or power he might possess, under its own banners, and not to reduce him to a state of impotence or ruin. This is the principle which many of us hoped would have a modest share in the making of the peace. It is not that we were affected with tenderness for the Germans, nor that we were indifferent to their repentance. But as Britons, with the history of the empire behind us, we knew that spoliation was bad business and that any excess of punitive justice would not only fail of its

object, but create immense obstacles to the repentance of Germany. And we naturally hoped that our companions in victory would be induced to profit by our experience, especially in regard to the foundation of the League.

When, for example, the Sikhs had been conquered, what we said to them was, in effect, something like this: 'You people have proved yourselves good in using a gun. Throw in your lot with us, and we will provide you with a better gun than you have ever used before.' That worked extremely well. In like manner we said to the Boers, 'You people have shown great qualities. We desire their conservation, and promise you that within the empire you shall have the widest scope for their exercise.' That also has worked well, for the result of it has been—General Smuts. Imagine, then, the difference that would have been made if a similar style, a similar attitude, had been adopted by the peace-makers of Paris to the conquered Germans. 'You people,' they might have said, 'have excellent brains and have proved yourselves capable thinkers. Our terms as conquerors are that these thinking powers of yours, which you have hitherto abused, shall be passed on intact to the service of the society of nations we are now trying to form. We need your intellectual resources for the vast works we have in hand. Your faculty of organization, your mental thoroughness, your habits of discipline, and all else on which you base your claim to be a cultured nation, are now to enter a new service, where they will be cured of their attendant vices and provided with a

higher field of exercise, and become a much-needed contribution in helping the world to bring order out of the chaos which in the evil past you did so much to create.'

When we remember the vast number of generals they have, or recently had, in Germany, it is hardly possible to doubt that at least one of them may have in him the making of another General Smuts. Even if they can produce only one, that one, merely as a thinking force, would be worth more to the League of Nations than the Kaiser's head or another thousand million of indemnity. The gravest charge that can be brought against the peace is that, for the present at least, it closes the prospect of any such happy event.

I submit, then, that we have just reasons for our disappointment. None the less, let us heed Lord Robert Cecil's advice, and abstain from nursing our complaints. Thankful that things are not much worse than they are, as they certainly would have been without his presence and that of a few others like him at the Conference, let us resolve, as he bids us, to make the best of a bad job. Our political history has provided many opportunities of practising this virtue in the past; we are indeed far from being novices in this sort of thing. Doubtless, we can do it again. In the present instance, however, the 'bad job' will not be made the best of until the whole structure of the Peace Treaty as well as its spirit has been fundamentally changed. What form the change must take has, I trust, been sufficiently indicated.

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MIGHT, RIGHT, AND INTELLIGENCE

BY PAUL GAULOT

HUMANITY is a tributary of might. Only when might guarantees the nations their most precious possessions, liberty and order, are they happy. Since the dawn of the world things have been so arranged and, let not visionaries who dream of transforming society take offense, so shall it always be, for the first condition of the transformation of society is the transformation of the men who compose it, and no one can change human nature.

In a certain sense, Christianity understood this problem and its solution, if solution there is. Unlike Utopians who strive to build a perfect society of imperfect men; the Christian church strove to improve men, but the task presented such huge difficulties that it met with but little success. Where are the baptized or unbaptized Christians to-day who love their neighbor as themselves?

Thus chained to Might, Humanity struggles, but can break its bonds only when Might takes service with the powers of evil, and seeks to destroy those institutions which are Humanity's reason for existence. There are times when the world seems nearing a promised goal, when an advance seems permanently won; then, presently, a new conflict arises whose violence breaks down the fragile barrier opposed to evil instincts, and once more Civilization retreats before Barbarism. How true are those words of Rivarol, 'The most civilized empires are as close to barbarism as the most polished steel is to rust; nations, like metals, shine only on the surface.'

Fifty years have passed since the triumph of the Bismarckian formula, *Might makes Right*. The world endured it for half a century, and would have seen an extension of its empire, if the efforts of the Allies had not overthrown the bad actor who succeeded Bismarck, the fortunate adventurer. Why, after so recent an escape from so fearful a peril, must the world now be exposed to a still more dreadful danger? Of what use is it to crush the theory that Might makes Right, if we must now battle against the formula 'Might outweighs Intelligence'?

The danger, which is so acutely at hand, does not date from yesterday, and it is an error to regard it as one of the consequences of the war. It existed long before the terrible *melée*; but was seen only by far-seeing men, who were not, however, able to foretell the rapidity with which it was destined to develop. To-day we are beholding the struggle of the muscle with the brain, and muscle seems almost about to win the day. To hear those who are fighting for the supremacy of manual labor, the victory is already at hand.

When our revolution of 1789 abolished the old privileges and proclaimed the equality of all Frenchmen, it took care to add that the only future distinctions between citizens would be 'those of their virtues and their talents.' This was the language of good sense, a tongue then understood by all the nation. But it is not the same to-day, and this phrase is quite out of fashion, not because of the 'virtues' but because of the 'talents' which