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FOREWORD

It is almost superfluous to say that this book does not claim to be a history, however summary, of the Peace Conference, seeing that such a work was made sheer impossible now and forever by the chief delegates themselves when they decided to dispense with records of their conversations and debates. It is only a sketch—a sketch of the problems which the war created or rendered pressing—of the conditions under which they cropped up; of the simplistic ways in which they were conceived by the distinguished politicians who volunteered to solve them; of the delegates' natural limitations and electioneering commitments and of the secret influences by which they were swayed; of the peoples' needs and expectations; of the unwonted procedure adopted by the Conference and of the fateful consequences of its decisions to the world.

In dealing with all those matters I aimed at impartiality, which is an unattainable ideal, but I trust that sincerity and detachment have brought me reasonably close to it. Having no pet theories of my own to champion, my principal standard of judgment is derived from the law of causality and the rules of historical criticism.

The fatal tactical mistake chargeable to the Conference lay in its making the charter of the League of Nations and the treaty of peace with the Central Powers interdependent. For the maxims that underlie the former are irreconcilable with those that should determine the latter, and the efforts to combine them must, among other untoward results, create a sharp opposition between the vital interests of the people of the United States and the apparent or transient interests of their associates. The outcome of this unnatural union will be to damage the cause of stable peace which it was devised to further.

But the surest touchstone by which to test the capacity and the achievements of the world-legislators is their attitude toward Russia in the political domain and toward the labor problem in the economic sphere. And in neither case does their action or inaction appear to have been the outcome of statesman-like ideas, or, indeed, of any higher consideration than that of evading the central issue and transmitting the problem to the League of Nations. The results are manifest to all.

The continuity of human progress depends at bottom upon labor, and it is becoming more and more doubtful whether the civilized races of mankind can be reckoned on to supply it for long on conditions akin to those which have in various forms prevailed ever since the institutions of ancient times and which alone render the present social structure viable. If this forecast should prove correct, the only alternative to a break disastrous in the continuity of civilization is the frank recognition of the principle that certain inferior races are destined to serve the cause of mankind in those capacities for which alone they are qualified and to readjust social institutions to this axiom.

In the meanwhile the Conference which ignored this problem of problems has transformed Europe into a seething mass of mutually hostile states powerless to face the economic competition of their overseas rivals and has set the very elements of society in flux.

E.J. DILLON.

THE INSIDE STORY OF THE PEACE CONFERENCE

I

THE CITY OF THE CONFERENCE

The choice of Paris for the historic Peace Conference was an afterthought. The Anglo-Saxon governments first favored a neutral country as the most appropriate meeting-ground for the world's peace-makers. Holland was mentioned only to be eliminated without discussion, so obvious and decisive were the objections. French Switzerland came next in order, was actually fixed upon, and for a time held the field. Lausanne was the city first suggested and nearly chosen. There was a good deal to be said for it on its own merits, and in its suburb, Ouchy, the treaty had been drawn up which terminated the war between Italy and Turkey. But misgivings were expressed as to its capacity to receive and entertain the formidable peace armies without whose co-operation the machinery for stopping all wars could not well be fabricated. At last Geneva was fixed upon, and so certain were influential delegates of the ratification of their choice by all the Allies, that I felt justified in telegraphing to Geneva to have a house hired for six months in that picturesque city.

But the influential delegates had reckoned without the French, who in these matters were far and away the most influential. Was it not in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, they asked, that Teuton militarism had received its most powerful impulse? And did not poetic justice, which was never so needed as in these evil days, ordain that the chartered destroyer who had first seen the light of day in that hall should also be destroyed there? Was this not in accordance with the eternal fitness of things? Whereupon the matter-of-fact Anglo-Saxon mind, unable to withstand the force of this argument and accustomed to give way on secondary matters, assented, and Paris was accordingly fixed upon....

"Paris herself again," tourists remarked, who had not been there since the fateful month when hostilities began—meaning that something of the wealth and luxury of bygone days was venturing to display itself anew as an afterglow of the epoch whose sun was setting behind banks of thunder-clouds. And there was a grain of truth in the remark. The Ville Lumière was crowded as it never had been before. But it was mostly strangers who were within her gates. In the throng of Anglo-Saxon warriors and cosmopolitan peace-lovers following the trailing skirts of destiny, one might with an effort discover a Parisian now and again. But they were few and far between.

They and their principal European guests made some feeble attempts to vie with the Vienna of 1814-15 in elegance and taste if not in pomp and splendor. But the general effect was marred by the element of the *nouveaux-riches* and *nouveaux-pauvres* which was prominent, if not predominant. A few of the great and would-be great ladies outbade one another in the effort to renew the luxury and revive the grace of the past. But the atmosphere was numbing, their exertions half-hearted, and the smile of youth and beauty was cold like the sheen of winter ice. The shadow of death hung over the institutions and survivals of the various civilizations and epochs which were being dissolved in the common melting-pot, and even the man in the street was conscious of its chilling influence. Life in the capital grew agitated, fitful, superficial, unsatisfying. Its gaiety was forced—something between a challenge to the destroyer and a sad farewell to the past and present. Men were instinctively aware that the morrow was fraught with bitter surprises, and they deliberately adopted the maxim, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." None of these people bore on their physiognomies the dignified impress of the olden time, barring a few aristocratic figures from the Faubourg St.-Germain, who looked as though they had only to don the perukes and the distinctive garb of the eighteenth century to sit down to table with Voltaire and the Marquise du Châtelet. Here and there, indeed, a coiffure, a toilet, the bearing, the gait, or the peculiar grace with which a robe was worn reminded one that this or that fair lady came of a family whose life-story in the days of yore was one of the tributaries to the broad stream of European history. But on closer acquaintanceship, especially at

conversational tournaments, one discovered that Nature, constant in her methods, distributes more gifts of beauty than of intellect.

Festive banquets, sinful suppers, long-spun-out lunches were as frequent and at times as Lucullan as in the days of the Regency. The outer, coarser attributes of luxury abounded in palatial restaurants, hotels, and private mansions; but the refinement, the grace, the brilliant conversation even of the Paris of the Third Empire were seen to be subtle branches of a lost art. The people of the armistice were weary and apprehensive — weary of the war, weary of politics, weary of the worn-out framework of existence, and filled with a vague, nameless apprehension of the unknown. They feared that in the chaotic slough into which they had fallen they had not yet touched bottom. None the less, with the exception of fervent Catholics and a number of earnest sectarians, there were few genuine seekers after anything essentially better.

Not only did the general atmosphere of Paris undergo radical changes, together with its population, but the thoroughfares, many of them, officially changed their names since the outbreak of the war.

The Paris of the Conference ceased to be the capital of France. It became a vast cosmopolitan caravanserai teeming with unwonted aspects of life and turmoil, filled with curious samples of the races, tribes, and tongues of four continents who came to watch and wait for the mysterious to-morrow. The intensity of life there was sheer oppressive; to the tumultuous striving of the living were added the silent influences of the dead. For it was also a trysting-place for the ghosts of sovereignties and states, militarisms and racial ambitions, which were permitted to wander at large until their brief twilight should be swallowed up in night. The dignified Turk passionately pleaded for Constantinople, and cast an imploring look on the lone Armenian whose relatives he had massacred, and who was then waiting for political resurrection. Persian delegates wandered about like souls in pain, waiting to be admitted through the portals of the Conference Paradise. Beggared Croesus passed famishing Lucullus in the street, and once mighty viziers shivered under threadbare garments in the biting frost as they hurried over the crisp February snow. Waning and waxing Powers, vacant thrones, decaying domi-

nations had, each of them, their accusers, special pleaders, and judges, in this multitudinous world-center on which tragedy, romance, and comedy rained down potent spells. For the Conference city was also the clearing-house of the Fates, where the accounts of a whole epoch, the deeds and misdeeds of an exhausted civilization, were to be balanced and squared.

Here strange yet familiar figures, survivals from the past, started up at every hand's turn and greeted one with smiles or sighs. Men on whom I last set eyes when we were boys at school, playing football together in the field or preparing lessons in the school-room, would stop me in the street on their way to represent nations or peoples whose lives were out of chime, or to inaugurate the existence of new republics. One face I shall never forget. It was that of the self-made temporary dictator of a little country whose importance was dwindling to the dimensions of a footnote in the history of the century. I had been acquainted with him personally in the halcyon day of his transient glory. Like his picturesque land, he won the immortality of a day, was courted and subsidized by competing states in turn, and then suddenly cast aside like a sucked orange. Then he sank into the depths of squalor. He was eloquent, resourceful, imaginative, and brimful of the poetry of untruth. One day through the asphalt streets of Paris he shuffled along in the procession of the doomed, with wan face and sunken eyes, wearing a tragically mean garb. And soon after I learned that he had vanished unwept into eternal oblivion.

An Arabian Nights touch was imparted to the dissolving panorama by strange visitants from Tartary and Kurdistan, Korea and Aderbeijan, Armenia, Persia, and the Hedjaz — men with patriarchal beards and scimitar-shaped noses, and others from desert and oasis, from Samarkand and Bokhara. Turbans and fezzes, sugar-loaf hats and headgear resembling episcopal miters, old military uniforms devised for the embryonic armies of new states on the eve of perpetual peace, snowy-white burnouses, flowing mantles, and graceful garments like the Roman toga, contributed to create an atmosphere of dreamy unreality in the city where the grimmest of realities were being faced and coped with.

Then came the men of wealth, of intellect, of industrial enterprise, and the seed-bearers of the ethical new ordering, members of economic committees from the United States, Britain, Italy, Poland, Russia, India, and Japan, representatives of naphtha industries and far-off coal mines, pilgrims, fanatics, and charlatans from all climes, priests of all religions, preachers of every doctrine, who mingled with princes, field-m Marshals, statesmen, anarchists, builders-up, and pullers-down. All of them burned with desire to be near to the crucible in which the political and social systems of the world were to be melted and recast. Every day, in my walks, in my apartment, or at restaurants, I met emissaries from lands and peoples whose very names had seldom been heard of before in the West. A delegation from the Pont-Euxine Greeks called on me, and discoursed of their ancient cities of Trebizond, Samsoun, Tripoli, Kerassund, in which I resided many years ago, and informed me that they, too, desired to become welded into an independent Greek republic, and had come to have their claims allowed. The Albanians were represented by my old friend Turkhan Pasha, on the one hand, and by my friend Essad Pasha, on the other — the former desirous of Italy's protection, the latter demanding complete independence. Chinamen, Japanese, Koreans, Hindus, Kirghizes, Lesghiens, Circassians, Mingrelians, Buryats, Malays, and Negroes and Negroids from Africa and America were among the tribes and tongues forgathered in Paris to watch the rebuilding of the political world system and to see where they "came in."

One day I received a visit from an Armenian deputation; its chief was described on his visiting-card as President of the Armenian Republic of the Caucasus. When he was shown into my apartment in the Hôtel Vendôme, I recognized two of its members as old acquaintances with whom I had occasional intercourse in Erzerum, Kipri Keui, and other places during the Armenian massacres of the year 1895. We had not met since then. They revived old memories, completed for me the life-stories of several of our common friends and acquaintances, and narrated interesting episodes of local history. And having requested my co-operation, the President and his colleagues left me and once more passed out of my life.

Another actor on the world-stage whom I had encountered more than once before was the "heroic" King of Montenegro. He often

crossed my path during the Conference, and set me musing on the marvelous ups and downs of human existence. This potentate's life offers a rich field of research to the psychologist. I had watched it myself at various times and with curious results. For I had met him in various European capitals during the past thirty years, and before the time when Tsar Alexander III publicly spoke of him as Russia's only friend. King Nikita owes such success in life as he can look back on with satisfaction to his adaptation of St. Paul's maxim of being all things to all men. Thus in St. Petersburg he was a good Russian, in Vienna a patriotic Austrian, in Rome a sentimental Italian. He was also a warrior, a poet after his own fashion, a money-getter, and a speculator on 'Change. His alleged martial feats and his wily, diplomatic moves ever since the first Balkan war abound in surprises, and would repay close investigation. The ease with which the Austrians captured Mount Lovtchen and his capital made a lasting impression on those of his allies who were acquainted with the story, the consequences of which he could not foresee. What everybody seemed to know was that if the Teutons had defeated the Entente, King Nikita's son Mirko, who had settled down for the purpose in Vienna, would have been set on the throne in place of his father by the Austrians; whereas if the Allies should win, the worldly-wise monarch would have retained his crown as their champion. But these well-laid plans went all agley. Prince Mirko died and King Nikita was deposed. For a time he resided at a hotel, a few houses from me, and I passed him now and again as he was on his way to plead his lost cause before the distinguished wreckers of thrones and régimes.

It seemed as though, in order to provide Paris with a cosmopolitan population, the world was drained of its rulers, of its prosperous and luckless financiers, of its high and low adventurers, of its tribe of fortune-seekers, and its pushing men and women of every description. And the result was an odd blend of classes and individuals worthy, it may be, of the new democratic era, but unprecedented. It was welcomed as of good augury, for instance, that in the stately Hôtel Majestic, where the spokesmen of the British Empire had their residence, monocled diplomatists mingled with spry typewriters, smart amanuenses, and even with bright-eyed chambermaids at the evening dances.[1] The British Premier himself oc-

casionally witnessed the cheering spectacle with manifest pleasure. Self-made statesmen, scions of fallen dynasties, ex-premiers, and ministers, who formerly swayed the fortunes of the world, whom one might have imagined *capaces imperii nisi imperassent*, were now the unnoticed inmates of unpretending hotels. Ambassadors whose most trivial utterances had once been listened to with concentrated attention, sued days and weeks for an audience of the greater plenipotentiaries, and some of them sued in vain. Russian diplomatists were refused permission to travel in France or were compelled to undergo more than average discomfort and delay there. More than once I sat down to lunch or dinner with brilliant commensals, one of whom was understood to have made away with a well-known personage in order to rid the state of a bad administrator, and another had, at a secret *Vehmgericht* in Turkey, condemned a friend of mine, now a friend of his, to be assassinated.

In Paris, this temporary capital of the world, one felt the repercussion of every event, every incident of moment wheresoever it might have occurred. To reside there while the Conference was sitting was to occupy a comfortable box in the vastest theater the mind of men has ever conceived. From this rare coign of vantage one could witness soul-gripping dramas of human history, the happenings of years being compressed within the limits of days. The revolution in Portugal, the massacre of Armenians, Bulgaria's atrocities, the slaughter of the inhabitants of Saratoff and Odessa, the revolt of the Koreans—all produced their effect in Paris, where official and unofficial exponents of the aims and ambitions, religions and interests that unite or divide mankind were continually coming or going, working aboveground or burrowing beneath the surface.

It was within a few miles of the place where I sat at table with the brilliant company alluded to above that a few individuals of two different nationalities, one of them bearing, it was said, a well-known name, hatched the plot that sent Portugal's strong man, President Sidonio Paes, to his last account and plunged that ill-starred land into chaotic confusion. The plan was discovered by the Portuguese military attaché, who warned the President himself and the War Minister. But Sidonio Paes, quixotic and foolhardy, refused to take or brook precautions. A few weeks later the assassin, firing three shots, had no difficulty in taking aim, but none of them took

effect. The reason was interesting: so determined were the conspirators to leave nothing to chance, they had steeped the cartridges in a poisonous preparation, whereby they injured the mechanism of the revolver, which, in consequence, hung fire. But the adversaries of the reform movement which the President had inaugurated again tried and planned another attempt, and Sidonio Paes, who would not be taught prudence, was duly shot, and his admirable work undone[2] by a band of semi-Bolshevists.

Less than six months later it was rumored that a number of specially prepared bombs from a certain European town had been sent to Moscow for the speedy removal of Lenin. The casual way in which these and kindred matters were talked of gave one the measure of the change that had come over the world since the outbreak of the war. There was nobody left in Europe whose death, violent or peaceful, would have made much of an impression on the dulled sensibilities of the reading public. All values had changed, and that of human life had fallen low.

To follow these swiftly passing episodes, occasionally glancing behind the scenes, during the pauses of the acts, and watch the unfolding of the world-drama, was thrillingly interesting. To note the dubious source, the chance occasion of a grandiose project of world policy, and to see it started on its shuffling course, was a revelation in politics and psychology, and reminded one of the saying mistakenly attributed to the Swedish Chancellor Oxenstjern, "*Quam parva sapientia regitur mundus.*"[3]

The wire-pullers were not always the plenipotentiaries. Among those were also outsiders of various conditions, sometimes of singular ambitions, who were generally free from conventional prejudices and conscientious scruples. As traveling to Paris was greatly restricted by the governments of the world, many of these unofficial delegates had come in capacities widely differing from those in which they intended to act. I confess I was myself taken in by more than one of these secret emissaries, whom I was innocently instrumental in bringing into close touch with the human levers they had come to press. I actually went to the trouble of obtaining for one of them valuable data on a subject which did not interest him in the least, but which he pretended he had traveled several thousand

miles to study. A zealous prelate, whose business was believed to have something to do with the future of a certain branch of the Christian Church in the East, in reality held a brief for a wholly different set of interests in the West. Some of these envoys hoped to influence decisions of the Conference, and they considered they had succeeded when they got their points of view brought to the favorable notice of certain of its delegates. What surprised me was the ease with which several of these interlopers moved about, although few of them spoke any language but their own.

Collectivities and religious and political associations, including that of the Bolshevists, were represented in Paris during the Conference. I met one of the Bolshevists, a bright youth, who was a veritable apostle. He occupied a post which, despite its apparent insignificance, put him occasionally in possession of useful information withheld from the public, which he was wont to communicate to his political friends. His knowledge of languages and his remarkable intelligence had probably attracted the notice of his superiors, who can have had no suspicion of his leanings, much less of his proselytizing activity. However this may have been, he knew a good deal of what was going on at the Conference, and he occasionally had insight into documents of a certain interest. He was a seemingly honest and enthusiastic Bolshevik, who spread the doctrine with apostolic zeal guided by the wisdom of the serpent. He was ever ready to comment on events, but before opening his mind fully to a stranger on the subject next to his heart, he usually felt his way, and only when he had grounds for believing that the fortress was not impregnable did he open his batteries. Even among the initiated, few would suspect the rôle played by this young proselytizer within one of the strongholds of the Conference, so naturally and unobtrusively was the work done. I may add that luckily he had no direct intercourse with the delegates.

Of all the collectivities whose interests were furthered at the Conference, the Jews had perhaps the most resourceful and certainly the most influential exponents. There were Jews from Palestine, from Poland, Russia, the Ukraine, Rumania, Greece, Britain, Holland, and Belgium; but the largest and most brilliant contingent was sent by the United States. Their principal mission, with which every fair-minded man sympathized heartily, was to secure for their kindred

in eastern Europe rights equal to those of the populations in whose midst they reside.[4] And to the credit of the Poles, Rumanians, and Russians, who were to be constrained to remove all the existing disabilities, they enfranchised the Hebrew elements spontaneously. But the Western Jews, who championed their Eastern brothers, proceeded to demand a further concession which many of their own co-religionists hastened to disclaim as dangerous—a kind of autonomy which Rumanian, Polish, and Russian statesmen, as well as many of their Jewish fellow-subjects, regarded as tantamount to the creation of a state within the state. Whether this estimate is true or erroneous, the concessions asked for were given, but the supplementary treaties insuring the protection of minorities are believed to have little chance of being executed, and may, it is feared, provoke manifestations of elemental passions in the countries in which they are to be applied.

Twice every day, before and after lunch, one met the "autocrats," the world's statesmen whose names were in every mouth—the wise men who would have been much wiser than they were if only they had credited their friends and opponents with a reasonable measure of political wisdom. These individuals, in bowler hats, sweeping past in sumptuous motors, as rarely seen on foot as Roman cardinals, were the destroyers of thrones, the carvers of continents, the arbiters of empires, the fashioners of the new heaven and the new earth—or were they only the flies on the wheel of circumstance, to whom the world was unaccountably becoming a riddle?

This commingling of civilizations and types brought together in Paris by a set of unprecedented conditions was full of interest and instruction to the observer privileged to meet them at close quarters. The average observer, however, had little chance of conversing with them, for, as these foreigners had no common meeting-place, they kept mostly among their own folk. Only now and again did three or four members of different races, when they chanced to speak some common language, get an opportunity of enjoying their leisure together. A friend of mine, a highly gifted Frenchman of the fine old type, a descendant of Talleyrand, who was born a hundred and fifty years too late, opened his hospitable house once a week to the élite of the world, and partially met the pressing demand.