

**A LEAGUE OF NATIONS:  
WHAT ARE WE FIGHTING  
FOR? DEMOCRACY VS.  
AUTOCRACY**

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**JOHN RAYMOND CUMMINGS**

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## PREFACE

*Cummings, J. R.*  
"A League of Nations," as set forth in the following pages, is a simple working plan whereby the peoples of the world can realize what is now almost universally recognized as the only real guaranty of permanent peace between nations. This, of course, is in that province of statecraft which we may call internationalism. But if the war settlement results only in establishing permanent peace *between* nations we may find that there is little improvement, or none at all, in the condition of the mass of humanity. To improve *international* relations without improving *intranational* conditions might prove a step backward by giving oppressive governments a sense of security against interference. Had a cohesive League of Nations been formed ten or fifteen years ago it is probable the Hohenzollern autocracy would have been guaranteed permanence for centuries to come. "What Are We Fighting For?" deals with this *intranational* diplomacy, which must be complementary to "A League of Nations" unless we are content to look forward to conditions in other nations such as have prevailed in Russia the past year; unless the victory (now seemingly near at hand) is to prove a sore disappointment to the millions of heroic men and women who have made it possible. "Democracy vs. Autocracy" deals with the fundamentals of these opposing principles, and shows how autocracy works its sinister designs in the disguise of political democratic forms.

Except "A League of Nations," this booklet is an abbreviated epitome of a comprehensive system of economic philosophy now almost complete. The system is partially set forth in my book, "Natural Money, The Peaceful Solution" (Bankers Publishing Co., New York).

JOHN RAYMOND CUMMINGS.

# A League of Nations

## Perpetual Peace and Victory for All

**UNLESS** this world crisis develops something fundamental, bad as it is, it is but the prelude to a more terrible one not far distant in the future. If it does develop the right fundamental, terrible as it is, it will be the cheapest and best war ever waged—a war by which the world achieved righteousness.

I believe it is almost universally recognized that, whatever the immediate inciting cause, the underlying cause of the war was economic. It is notably a war for world markets, for economic freedom to the extent that it is genuinely democratic, and for economic control to the extent that it is autocratic.

Even before the war began, the necessity of a League of Nations to conserve peace had gained wide acceptance in the thought of statesmen, sociologists and the people at large. Internationalism among Socialists and the attempt at concert of action among the wage workers of many nations were expressions of this movement. In its violent forms of syndicalism and sabotage, with which we have had to deal to some extent, it is ominous of an economic debacle that would wreck civilization if such methods should prevail. Socialists thought they could prevent war

by refusing to participate, but nationalism proved stronger than internationalism, so the Socialists were in the trenches on their respective sides of the national battle lines at the very beginning; yet, though nationalism prevailed over internationalism, and though the mass of the people are resolutely patriotic, even now there is well grounded fear lest the aftermath of the war should be a drastic reorganization, if not a collapse, of some of our social institutions which have long been deemed the cornerstones of material welfare, if not of civilization itself. Lord Northcliffe's leading paper, the London Times, has strongly intimated the necessity of such industrial changes as would have been deemed revolutionary before the war, and similar expressions are heard on every hand. Not long since, Earl Lansdowne was thought to be paving the way for a compromise peace, with the object of avoiding the internal changes likely to follow in the wake of a long-protracted war; and there are doubtless many beneficiaries of unjust economic conditions whose real attitude is, "after us the deluge," whatever position public opinion may force them to assume for the time being.

The League to Enforce Peace is doing a noble work, but as yet I have seen no statement in specific and definite details of what the world-embracing League of Nations shall be. It is easy to make the general declaration that we are fighting for democracy as against autocracy. This is true, but the boys at the front want to know something more, and the boys behind the boys at the front; that is, the boys at home who are working loyally to sustain the boys at the

front, and the fathers, and mothers, and sisters, and sweethearts who are giving their utmost energies to support the war—want to know something more than is conveyed in general statements. Many of them have walked the streets or tramped the highways in vain search for employment in this democracy of which we are justly so proud—when we compare it with autocracy. Some of those now in the trenches did this in 1907, and some were doubtless in the breadlines of New York, Chicago and Philadelphia. Are they fighting in part to assure their places in future breadlines in a democracy, where opportunity is said to be open to all? Some of them may have read Bismarck's words, spoken in the Reichstag in 1884, "The man who is able and willing to work has a right to say to the Government, 'give me work.' I stand for that as long as I stand in this place." In that declaration he "stole the thunder" of the Socialists, and by adopting the wise policy and craftily or ignorantly applying it in such way as to subserve the ends of autocracy, he rapidly built up the Leviathan Frankenstein that is now seeking to wreck civilization. This policy alone accounts not only for the vast amount of energy devoted to war preparations in Germany, but also for the marvelous economic advance, which has been the wonder of the world. I shall deal in the next chapter with the democratic method of applying the principle Bismarck applied in part only and for the support of autocracy, and shall show a simple method of accomplishing for democracy far more than Germany has accomplished for autocracy, by recognizing the right



of men to work, but even before outlining my plan for making A League of Nations a reality, I desire to emphasize the necessity of immediate action by specific declarations instead of general statements.

## A Diplomatic Offensive

As a result of Russia's collapse, we yielded the military offensive to the enemy, and though we have regained that, we are now in imminent danger of permitting him to retain the diplomatic offensive until the words "too late" be again written in our record of the war's conduct. We have scoffed at the Kaiser's peace drives, but we cannot reasonably assume that his own people see their hollowness and mockery, nor that the danger is ended. Dr. Frank H. Bohn recently said:

"Within three months Germany will develop a peace propaganda which will require every force of thought and will which our national intellect and character can bring against it."

We should not wait for more peace drives, but should forestall all such action by a single counter-drive expressed in terms so plain, so definite and so just that even the German people, deluded and spiritually abused as they have been by false teachers, cannot fail to recognize them as just. Such a statement of what we are fighting for will be a double drive. It will inspire our own soldiers and people to years of effort and self-denial, if need be, and such statement will find its way across No Man's Land and sap the power of autocracy more rapidly than

the most violent offensive of arms. Let us therefore at once assure our boys in the trenches, our people at home, and the peoples of all the world—even of the Central Powers—that we are fighting for a regenerated and rejuvenated world, from which the snobbery and shams shall be eliminated and in which Mr. Schwab's aristocracy of merit shall be permanently established; assure our boys that they are not coming back to be mere hewers of wood and drawers of water in the land they have saved, but are coming back to a land where no man shall ever pine in enforced idleness, and where the people who perform useful service shall get all the useful things produced, each in proportion to his contribution of service. This, as I shall set it forth, should at once go to the boys at the front and the boys at home, as the solemn pledge of a nation in its hour of danger, that they may be inspired with the vision of a world from which economic injustice, with its poverty and suffering, have been eliminated. The boys will then have received satisfactory answer to the question, "what are we fighting for?" and the Kaiser, and Ludendorff, and Hindenburg, and the junkers, will have been dealt a fatal blow.

## The Allies' Peace Drive

The world is in travail. Internationalism is struggling to be born, and humanity is looking to America that this greatest birth of time be not aborted.

The failure of all efforts thus far to establish internationalism on a firm basis is due to lack of

a world-wide binding interest of sufficient strength to prevent one or more nations from breaking away. Lack of this cohesive element would be a fatal weakness to A League of Nations, and internationalism must be a failure until the unbreakable bond is discovered and applied. And as the bottom cause of the war is economic, it is obvious that the bond to bind the nations must be economic. Is there such a bond, and is the world ready for its application to the nations? There is such a bond, and the world is ready. Not only is the world ready—it is impatient—and there is no time to lose. In one of the morning editorials, under the heading, "America the Hope of Russia," I read:

"A Russian expert has demanded in the London Times that a group of representatives of the Entente Allies gather at some convenient point and agree on what is to be done to prevent Germany from controlling Russia after the war. There is no agreement now"; and in H. G. Wells' new book, "In the Fourth Year: Anticipations of a World Peace," I read: "One can trace week by week, and almost day by day, the Americanization of the British conception of the allied war aims."

Yes, it is to America the world is looking, and we must not disappoint the world's expectations. It is Fate's delight to crush that man or nation that trembles at events and fails to ride them to great purposes. We *must* not fail. Failure would be a cosmic tragedy. But neither must we be misled by the universal chorus of democracy into believing that the "autocrat" and "general staff" of "The Unseen Empire" have sud-