

AMERICAN WORLD POLICIES

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American World Policies by David Jayne Hill

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AUTHOR OF "A HISTORY OF DIPLOMACY IN THE INTERNATIONAL
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PREFACE

AMERICAN participation in an attempt to reorganize the international relations of the entire world with the expectation of permanent peace by means of a punitive treaty requiring military force to execute it presents the most serious problem that has ever arisen in connection with the foreign affairs of our country.

That there should be a more real and effective association of nations for maintaining the peace of the world than has ever hitherto existed is a proposition that receives almost universal assent. The general idea of a "League of Nations" has, therefore, been widely accepted and urgently advocated. It has, however, escaped the attention of many persons that the Covenant of the League of Nations prepared at Paris as the first Part of the Peace of Versailles is not a "general association of nations" of a pacific character to secure international justice, but a limited defensive alliance for the protection of existing possessions, regardless of the manner in which they were acquired by their rulers, wholly indifferent to the wishes of the populations thus held in subjection, and controlled by a small group of Great Powers whose supremacy is based solely upon their magnitude and military strength.

It hardly needs to be stated that a league of this character does not embody the American conception of what such an association should be. Obviously, it not only repudiates the ideas underlying our traditional foreign

policy as a nation but presents a contradiction of the fundamental principles upon which our Government is based.

The chapters contained in this volume are designed to show by a careful examination of the Covenant of the League of Nations in what respects it falls short of or contradicts the ideals of government and of international comity cherished by the American people, to explain the manner in which this proposed League has been brought into existence, and to give an account of the efforts made in the United States to promote a better international association without involving the American people in the abandonment of their most cherished conceptions regarding the nature of their own Government and its normal and beneficent relations to the other governments of the civilized world.

The victory of the Allied and Associated Powers in the Great War presented an opportunity for the improvement of international relations which had never before existed, but it was an error to believe that the victors were the only nations concerned in the future peace of the world and that its conditions should be imposed by them as a consequence of their victory. The punitive peace and the permanent organization of peace were not only different but widely divergent undertakings. The former was necessarily based on superior military force, but to reorganize the world on the basis of superior military force rather than on the basis of the inherent rights of nations was to contradict the purpose for which the war was alleged to have been fought by the Allied and Associated Powers, and to substitute for the military imperialism they had overthrown the preponderant military authority of a small group of Great Powers.

If the world is to be internationally reconstructed, it will have to be on different lines. For the enforcement of peace on the basis of the *status quo* without revision there must be substituted the enforcement of peace by conformity to International Law as a body of just and equal rules for the conduct of nations in their relations with one another.

It is, of course, claimed that this substitution was intended. However that may be, the assertion is not sustained by evidence, and the substitution has been neither accomplished, declared, nor promised.

Still, there is ground for hope in the fact that even the possibility of such a substitution is asserted by the friends of the League. This opens the door for a revision of the Covenant and for a change of its center of gravity. It is on this ground, and on this ground only, that the advocates of Americanizing the Covenant can found a sufficient reason for accepting the League, and not rejecting it outright.

Should it be the good fortune of this volume to fall into the hands of those who are friendly to the League of Nations, especially of those belonging to the Allied Powers in Europe, it is hoped that they may find in it a satisfactory statement of the reluctance felt in the United States by those who are deeply interested in the peace of the world to accept without change the Covenant of the League as it was prepared at Paris under the pressure of more immediate interests.

It is of the highest importance to future good understanding that the attitude of those who have dissented from the terms of the League should be rightly comprehended. The objections raised do not spring from indifference regarding the future of other, even the most