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The Attitude of the United States Senate Toward the Versailles Treaty

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THE ATTITUDE OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE TOWARD THE VERSAILLES TREATY

by

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CHAPTER I

In order to understand the dramatic controversy in the American Senate over the provision in the Versailles Treaty for a League of Nations, it is necessary to be conscious of the state of mind of the United States at the opening of World War I, to be acquainted with the ideals and aims of the President, Woodrow Wilson, to be aware of the advocacy of the League to enforce peace by the Republican ex-president William H. Taft, and finally, to know the reasons for the opposition in the Senate, in contrast to, the vibrant support afforded President Wilson during his first term.

The traditional dogma of political isolation dominated American thought, but in reality, the nation was becoming more and more involved in world affairs on every side. Since the Spanish American War, the United States had assumed a place among the world powers.\(^1\) It was committed halfway around the world in the Philippine Islands; it occupied the strategic center of the Pacific at Hawaii; it had built the Panama Canal and was gradually extending its control over the Caribbean Sea. American interest in Latin America, theoretically established a century before by the Monroe Doctrine had become intensely practical in Mexico.

American trade had become, almost by magic, world wide. Manufacturers of steel, cotton and machinery were invading all the countries of the earth and facing bitter competition with the British, the Germans, the French

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and last with the Japanese. More American money was being invested in Russia, China and Latin American than ever before. To say that America had no interest in world affairs or was isolated and aloof in 1914 was absurd.

While the American people were walking with their heads "in a cloud of traditional and sentimental isolation", their feet were taking them into every kind of bewildering international complications. This doublemindedness of American opinion expressed itself vividly during the first two years of the World War. President Wilson's program from first to last was one of peace. Any study of his messages, speeches, and letters will show that, above everything else in the turmoil, President Wilson was thinking and working for a single goal — trying to use the mighty power and prestige of America to bring the blessings of peace to the world.

During the Mexican crisis when certain interests were moving heaven and earth to drive us into hostilities, Wilson declared with solemn earnestness:

We cannot meet this European situation, and use our power to bring world peace if we have one hand tied behind us in a war with Mexico. 3

Not satisfied to serve as a passive custodian of our great traditions, Wilson desired to expand the sphere of their influence and to put them at the greater service of mankind. This he proposed to do with a League

2 Ibid., 7-8.
3 Ibid., 9.
of Nations which was a partial plan for internationalizing the world. This plan aimed at a world federation of nations similar to the federal government established by the North American states in 1789.

Wilson's plan for a League of Nations was not new for it had a life of three centuries behind it. Saints and philosophers had been its notaries, but it was not until the twentieth century that it entered the realm of practical politics as a result of the horrors of the Russian-Japanese War.

Theodore Roosevelt's participation in the arbitration settling the Russian-Japanese War qualified him to introduce a scheme for world peace. In his speech before the Nobel Prize Committee in Christiania, Norway in 1910, he urged the further development of arbitration in settling disputes. This famous address included both his criticism of the prevailing Hague Tribunal and suggestions for a means of assuring safety. In Roosevelt's opinion, "The supreme difficulty in connection with the developing of peace at the Hague arose from the lack of an executive power or of any police power to enforce the decrees of the court." Roosevelt believed it would be a "master stroke if those great powers honestly bent on peace would form a League of Peace, not only to keep peace among themselves, but to prevent, by force if necessary, its being broken by others."

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To insure safety Roosevelt suggested that, "Each nation must keep well prepared to defend itself until the establishment of some form of international police power, competent and willing to prevent violence ... between ... nations to command peace throughout the world could best be assured by some combinations between those great nations which sincerely desired peace and have not themselves thought of committing aggression." The future anti-League leader was certain at this time that the "ruler or statesman who would bring about such a combination would have earned his place in history for all time and his title to the gratitude of all mankind." 8

The horrors of the great cataclysm had been so terrible that Roosevelt was certain that the combatants would be willing to consider a world court supported by force. 9 In a statement after statement Roosevelt showed that he was ready to throw the whole force of a league against any nation which transgressed at the expense of another nation any of the rights which had been guaranteed to all. He also realized the many objections that would be brought against his plan, but he was confident that it would put the "collective strength of civilized mankind behind the collective purposes of mankind to secure the peace of righteousness, the peace of justice among the nations of the earth." 10

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8 Ibid., LXVIII, May, 1910, 1027-29.
10 Ibid., 82-3.
Roosevelt was not alone in his belief that the day had passed when nations could ignore the need of organization to maintain peace, but at the same time, the urgency of applying this principle to all the nations had become apparent to ex-President William H. Taft, who voiced his opinion to a group at the Century Club, New York, in October, 1914: "The time has come when the peace loving nations of the world should organize themselves into some sort of society in which they should agree to settle their own disputes by amicable methods, and say to any nation that started to go to war: 'You have got to keep the peace or have all the rest of us against you!'" So many other Americans thought along the same lines that on June 17, 1915, in Independence Hall, Philadelphia, a League to Enforce Peace was formed with almost one thousand Americans cooperating.

This League desired the United States to join a league binding the signatories; to submit all justiciable questions to an international court of justice; to submit all other questions to a council of conciliation for hearing, consideration and recommendation; to use their economic and military forces against any members committing acts of hostility against another before submitting to arbitration or conciliation; and to hold periodic conferences to formulate and codify international law.

The President had been slow to identify himself with the League to


Enforce Peace or even to accept the invitation tendered by Mr. Taft to deliver an address on May 27, 1916, at the New Willard Hotel, Washington, D. C. At this meeting one of the principal speakers was no less a personage than Senator Cabot Lodge with Mr. Taft presiding. 14

For many months the President had been revolving this idea in his mind and for a long time he was reluctant to accept any invitation that would seem to give approval to the idea. He patiently waited to make a complete survey of the world situation, and to be convinced that the permanent participation of the United States in world affairs was a necessity if peace were to be secure. 15

It was not easy to draw the President away from the traditional policy of aloofness and isolation which characterized the attitude of the United States in all international affairs, but the invitation to discuss universal peace, urged upon the President by the Republican ex-President William H. Taft was finally accepted. 16

In that address President Wilson said:

We are participants, whether we would or not, in the life of the world, and the interests of the nations are our own; henceforth, there must be a common agreement for a common object, and at the heart of that common object must be the inviolable rights of peoples and of mankind. We believe these fundamental things:

14 Current History, May, 1930, 298.
16 Ibid.
First, that every people has a right to choose the sovereignty under which they shall live. Second, that the small states of the world have a right to enjoy the same respect for their sovereignty and for their territorial integrity that great and powerful nations expect and insist upon; and third, that the world has a right to be free from every disturbance of its peace that has its origin in agression and disregard of the rights of peoples and nations. 17

These statements were uttered in the presence of Senator Lodge and applauded by Mr. Taft and his Republican associates gathered at the banquet. 18

The President continued that he was convinced that there should be a "universal association of nations to maintain the inviolable security of the highway of the seas for the common use of the nations of the world, and to prevent any war either contrary to treaty agreements or without warning and full submission of the causes to the opinion of the world -- a virtual guarantee of territorial integrity and political independence." He ventured to assert, in the presence of Senator Lodge, who afterward became the leader of the opposition to these very ideas, "that the United States is willing to become a partner in any feasible association of nations formed in order to realize these objects and make them secure against violation." 19

Woodrow Wilson believed that the League of Nations was the first modern attempt to prevent war by discussion in the open and not behind closed doors or "within the cloistered retreats of European diplomacy." To him the

17 Tourtellot, Woodrow Wilson, 12h.
18 Tumulty, Woodrow Wilson As I Knew Him, 427.
19 Tourtellot, Woodrow Wilson Selections for Today, 126.
League of Nations was the essence of Christianity. Yet, when the League of Nations' advocacy was taken up by Wilson, Senator Lodge, the spokesman of the Republican Party at the dinner of the League to Enforce Peace, became the leader in bitter opposition to it.

Senator Lodge at this very dinner on May 27, 1916, delivered the following address:

I know, and no one, I think, can know better than one who has served long in the Senate, which is charged with an important share of the ratification and confirmation of all treaties; no one can, I think, feel more deeply than I do the difficulties which confront us in the work which this league — that is, the great association extending throughout the country, known as the League to enforce Peace — undertakes, but the difficulties cannot be overcome unless we try to overcome them. I believe, much can be done. Probably it will be impossible to stop all wars, but it certainly will be possible to stop some wars, and thus diminish their number. The way in which the problem must be worked out must be left to the league and to those who are giving this great subject the study it deserves. I know the obstacles. I know how quickly we shall be met with the statement that this is a dangerous question which you are putting into your argument, that no nation can submit to the judgment of other nations, and we must be careful at the beginning not to attempt too much. I know the difficulties which arise when we speak of anything which seems to involve alliance, but I do not believe that when Washington warned us against entangling alliances he meant for one moment that we should not join with the other civilized nations of the world if a method could be found to diminish war and encourage peace.

It was a year ago in delivering the Chancellor's address at Union College I made an argument on this theory, that if we were to promote international law as it must be restored, we must find some way in which the united forces of the nation could be put behind the cause of peace and law. I said then that my hearers might think that I was just picturing a Utopia, but it is in the search of Utopias that great discoveries are made. Not failure, but low

20 Tumulty, Woodrow Wilson As I Knew Him, 427.
aim, is crime. This league is certainly aiming high for the benefits of humanity, and because the pathway is sown with difficulties is no reason that we should turn from it. 22

Three days later, Mr. Wilson declared:

I believe that the peoples of the United States are ripe for entrance into an international league whose main object shall be to guarantee international justice and right in the whole world. George Washington warned us against mixing ourselves up in other peoples' conflicts or alliances. I shall never myself consent to any alliance that would mix us up in conflicts between other nations, but I shall be glad to join an alliance which will unite the peoples for keeping the peace of the world on the basis of universal justice. Therein is liberation not limitation. 23

In his campaign for reelection Wilson continued to voice this same belief. 24 Up to this time there was virtually no dissent in the thinking parts of the United States from the idea of an organized peace to replace the old drifting policy which always had and forever must lead us to war. The active leaders of both parties had committed themselves wholeheartedly to a league for peace which would protect the rights of all, certainly, at the very least, territorial integrity and independence. 25

The campaign of 1916 does not seem to have produced any cleavage on the question. It did however, bring about an issue between Woodrow Wilson and Henry Cabot Lodge which removed any basis of cooperation which might have existed between them later.

23 Lars P. Nelson, President Wilson, the World's Peace-maker, Stockholm, 1919, 205-6.
24 Ibid., 205.
Wilson had approved the cabinet's "strict accountability" note to Germany on the sinking of the Lusitania, but Bryan, his Secretary of State, fearing the accusation that our policy was strict with Germany, but lenient with Britain, (whose action was far from flawless) persuaded the President to permit him to draft an instruction to Ambassador Gerard of the German government announcing that the United States would be willing to submit the question at issue to a commission of investigation on the principle of the Bryan treaties. The State Department at once saw the consistency of the instruction with the President's note and Wilson was soon besieged with requests to reconsider. He did so and on hearing the counter arguments ordered the instruction suppressed. 27

Senator Lodge considered this a dramatic play of forces within the administration and attempted to prove that Wilson was indifferent to the protection of American rights and that Germany knew he would not defend our rights because she was receiving hints that his strong words were for home consumption. Instead he asserted that the President's whole policy shifted with the currents of public opinion to avoid doing anything. 28

Lodge's accusation brought from Mr. Wilson on October 30, 1916 a statement published in the New Republic, in which he denied the truth of the charge. From Wilson's point of view his motives in the crisis had been throughout to do what was best and his best judgment had prevailed, but Senator Lodge felt that his opinion of the President's conduct was correct and main-

27 Ibid., 116.
maintained his stand. Shortly after, on January 13, 1917, Wilson refused to speak from the same platform and there is no evidence that any cordiality was ever resumed between them.

In an address to Congress on January 22, 1917, the President disclosed his thoughts forming in his mind in regard to the duty of our government if it were called upon for cooperation in laying the foundation of peace among nations. He believed that the mission of the American democracy "was nothing less than" to add their authority and power to the authority and power of other nations to guarantee peace and justice throughout the world. He desired to have our government ready to present the conditions upon which it would feel justified in asking our people to approve its formal and solemn adherence to a League for Peace when the proper time arrived.

Some of the conditions he considered necessary for a permanent peace were: (1) a peace without victory, (2) the right of self-determination, (3) freedom of the seas, (4) disarmament, (5) a League of Nations to administer the peace. The question upon which the whole future peace and policy of the war depended was this: "Is this present war a struggle for a just and secure peace, or only for a few nations to form a new balance of power?" A balance of power could not guarantee a "stable Europe." Only a community of power would bring organized common peace. "There was no entangling alliance in a concert of power." This concert would provide a force, greater than the force of any nation, that no aggressive nation could stand against. If the peace to be made were to endure, it would have to be a peace made secure by

29 Ibid., 146.
the organized force of mankind.\(^{30}\)

In reply to the President's address, Lodge pointed out to the Senate on February 1, 1917, the dangerous implications of the principles laid down by the President and definitely parted company with the idea of a league of nations.\(^{31}\) To Lodge the idea of asking the belligerents to stack their arms and make peace before either side was conquered was a strange proposal. Too, he predicted, many difficulties in applying the principles of self-determination would arise. What would be done about Korea, Hindustan, Alsace Lorraine, Trentino, the Slav Provinces of Austria or the Danish Duchies? Who would decide whether the principle is recognized under the different governments of the world with whom we are to form the League for Peace?\(^{32}\)

The enforcement of the doctrine of the freedom of the seas, Lodge thought would involve us in every war which might occur between maritime nations. Besides, the idea of enforcing peace had lost its attraction to him. The refusal of a member to abide by a decision might mean war. In that event every member would be obliged to send a quota of troops which would be inspected by the league's officers and ordered about by them.

After serious consideration his thoughts altered in regard to the precepts of Washington. Washington's policy had been set forth under conditions not unlike those which now existed and its wisdom supplemented by that

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of J. Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, and J. Q. Adams, and had been demonstrated for more than a century and should not be departed from "without most powerful reasons and without knowing exactly where the departure would lead." The league, Lodge continued, would necessitate stern realities. True, a league for peace sounded encouraging, but it was a grave matter. It meant putting force behind peace and making war on any nation which did not obey its decisions. Lodge presented two examples of problems such as members of the league might be forced to face:

1. Assume that such a league has been formed ... and that ... China and Japan demand for their people the right of free emigration to Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Suppose the league grants the permission, but Canada, Australia and New Zealand backed by England refuse to accept the decision. Would we be willing to make war on Canada in such a cause as this?

2. Suppose the Asiatic powers demand the free admission of their labor to the United States and we resist, but the decision of the league goes against us, are we going to accept it?

Before giving our support to a league for peace, Lodge was convinced that all these contingencies should be considered. Lodge was not unwilling to use the power and influence of the United States toward a permanent peace. He merely wanted to save us from a worse condition than existed. His counter program contained four practicab		
t measures. They were: (1) adequate national preparedness, (2) the rehabilitation of international law at the close of the war, (3) with necessary and

33 Ibid., 2365.
34 Ibid., 2369.
atural limits, to extend the use of voluntary arbitration, so far as possible and mobilize public opinion behind it, (4) to urge a general reduction of armaments by all nations.

In conclusion, he heartily supported the resolution offered by Senator Borah committing us without reserve to the policy of Washington and Monroe in regard to foreign nations. Lodge now saw nothing but peril in abandoning our long established policy.35

In the excitement attendant upon the German submarine campaign, then approaching its climax, Mr. Lodge's speech attracted little attention.36 The President advised our own declaration of war within a month and informed the Senate that his thoughts expressed on the preceding January twenty-second had not changed. Wilson made it clear that America was opposing the German autocracy rather than the German people and closed his message with the peroration which gained wider currency than any part of his message:

It is a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful nation into war...But the right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for ...democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself free.37

Through the subsequent months the President was aided by leaders of public opinion everywhere in driving home to the peoples of the allied and enemy countries alike that we were engaged in a crusade to end autocracy and

35 Ibid., 2370.

36 Fleming, United States and the League of Nations, 18.

37 Tourtellot, Woodrow Wilson Selections for Today, 137-47.
The war was lifted to the highest plane. Many men went overseas, confident that this service or sacrifice would help to establish a new and better order of affairs. 38

On January 8, 1918, the next official statement came from the President in a message to Congress in which he repeated our demand "that the world be made fit and safe to live in." The message included the fourteen points upon which he thought the peace should be based, the last of which read: "A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantee of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike. 39

Again on February 11, 1918, in an address to Congress analyzing German and Austrian peace utterances, the President declared again: "We believe that our own desire for a new international order under which reason and justice and the common interests of mankind shall prevail is the desire of enlightened man everywhere....Having set our hand to the task of achieving it, we shall not turn back." 40

On July 4, 1918, near the close of the war, the President summed up the allied war objectives in one sentence. "What we seek is the reign of law based upon the consent of the governed and sustained by the organized opinion of mankind." 41 The whole program that he was later to fight for on

38 Lawrence, The True Story of Woodrow Wilson, 220.
40 Ibid., 168-69.
41 Ibid., 54.
both sides of the ocean is in that short statement.

In late September when the surrender of Bulgaria forecast the end of the war, the President went to New York, to state as carefully as he could the kind of peace that should come after the conflict ceased. He spoke in the Metropolitan Opera House on September 27, from a written manuscript, a thing he rarely did.

The depth of Wilson's conviction that the peace must not be one of old-fashioned bargaining if it were to last was shown in his declaration that "if...the governments associated against Germany...intend...to achieve...a secure and lasting peace that they must come to the peace table prepared to pay the price that will procure it. They must likewise be ready to create in some virile fashion the only instrumentality by which...the agreements of the peace will be honored and fulfilled." The price was to be "impartial justice" in every item of settlement, "no matter whose interest is crossed, and not only impartial justice, but also the satisfaction of the several peoples whose fortunes are dealt with. That indispensable instrumentality is a League of Nations formed under covenants that will be efficacious."

The time when the League of Nations was to be formed was clear in the President's mind. He said, "And as I see it, the constitution of that League of Nations and the clear definition of its object must be a part, in a sense the most essential part of the peace settlement itself." Wilson, continued, giving some details which later came to be called his five points representing this Government's interpretation of its own duty with regard to peace. They were, briefly: (1) No discrimination between those to whom we
wish to be just and those to whom we do not wish to be just. (2) No settlements to the special interest of some nations that were not consistent with the common interest of all. (3) No alliances within the League. (4) No selfish economic combinations and no economic boycotts except at the direction of the League as a means of discipline and control. (5) Complete publicity of all international treaties and agreements.

It was a new day that Wilson looked forward to with confidence. He did not desire a complete break from the past, but only an advance from it. "We still read Washington's immortal warning against entangling alliances with full comprehension and an answering purpose. But only special and limited alliances entangle; and we recognize and accept the duty of a new day in which we are permitted to hope for a general alliance which will avoid entanglements and clear the air of the world for common understandings and the maintenance of common rights." \(^2\)

All during this period there was little dissent, aside from the speech of Senator Lodge quoted above, from the often reiterated purpose to organize a League for peace definitely at the conclusion of the war. No disagreement with the fourteen points was voiced in Congress. \(^3\)

This was probably due to the absorption of the leaders of the opposition in an effort to create a war cabinet which would take the conduct of the war largely from the hands of the President. In July, 1917 an attempt was made to create a joint committee of both houses of Congress to assist the President. This movement was succeeded by a campaign led by Colonel Roosevelt.


\(^3\) David Lawrence, *The True Story of Woodrow Wilson*, 235.
to head a war cabinet to conduct the war. First he attacked the President in magazines declaring that "we did not go to war to make the world safe for democracy." In Chicago, Detroit, New York and other great cities he continued his attack denouncing the idea of a "soft peace" that the President might favor. 44

Mr. Roosevelt's great personal following stimulated him until many members of Congress concluded that only a coalition cabinet with Roosevelt in charge as munitions head would meet the situation. The Democratic Chairman of Senate Military Affairs Committee, Senator Chamberlain, joined the movement, which culminated in a great luncheon in New York City on January 19, 1918, held in honor of Senator Chamberlain and Representative Kahn of California and attended by nineteen hundred people, where Mr. Chamberlain declared that the military establishment had fallen down because of wholesale inefficiency. 45

The leaders of the movement went to Washington where Mr. Chamberlain introduced bills creating a Munitions Department and a War Cabinet of three men. Mr. Roosevelt personally led the fight for their enactment. The President weathered the contest, even asking for himself greater powers than it was proposed to give to others. Wilson won one of his most striking successes, in spite of the opposition of a number of embittered Senators in his

This contest made certain a tremendous attempt of the older social forces in the North to regain control of Congress in the following November. These classes representing the great industrial wealth of the country had grown to look upon control as their prerogative. Mr. Wilson, as the representative of the equally old social classes of the agrarian South and of the newer life of the West, seemed to them an interloper. The President's amazing program of action had transformed the scheme of things they were accustomed to; the new tariff, the new banking system, and most of all the revolution in Federal taxation coming in with the income tax had affected their interests deeply. And now he was in a fair way to prove that the " provincials" he had gathered around him could manage the greatest national and business effort in our history without official Republican aid.

In addition, he talked of a new international order and said repeatedly that our power would never be used again to aggrandize any selfish interest of our own on this continent or elsewhere.

People dread changes and he promised to make as many in the international field as he had in domestic affairs. Most disturbing of all, his fourteen points seemed to point to a new world order in which there would be tendencies toward free trade. And finally, if political control was to be regained it must be done soon. Wilson and the social classes he represented had won four straight elections. It would have been equivalent to political suicide for the opposition to approve Wilson; and great party groups do not commit suicide, however seriously individual leaders may take the current of
events. There was nothing else but a party struggle for the autumn of 1918.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 262-26
CHAPTER II

THE PROGRAM CHALLENGED IN THE SENATE

Dissent from the high aims of the war had been almost negligible up to this time, but as the Congressional campaign of 1918 approached its close Mr. Roosevelt telegraphed to Senator Lodge and others, on October 25, that the President's Fourteen Points were "thoroughly mischievous" and urged the Senate to declare against them "in their entirety." The President replied the next day with his famous appeal which he had long considered advisable. A few days later the Republicans carried the senatorial election in five states by narrow majorities and won a majority of two in the Senate, including the votes of Senator La Follette, who was practically outlawed from the party, and Senator Newberry whose seat was challenged from the first and later made untenable.

It is futile to argue what would have happened if Wilson had not made an appeal to the voters. He might have conceivably lost even more support if he had not taken this action. There is normally a swing against the Administration in the mid-term Congressional elections, and this was to be expected in 1918, particularly since the end of the war was in sight. It is well worth noting that numbers of Democratic Representatives were delighted with the assistance that the President's appeal would presumably give them.

1 Lawrence, The True Story of Woodrow Wilson, 236.

2 David Houston, Eight Years with Wilson's Cabinet, New York, 1926, 359-360.
Perhaps Wilson's greatest mistake was wording the statement so bluntly and so narrowly. He might better have followed the advice of several of his Cabinet members and asked for a Congress, both Democratic and Republican, which would support him.\(^3\)

On November 18, 1918, two weeks after the election, Wilson startled the nation with the announcement that he was going to Paris as the head of the American Peace Delegation. A cry of protest went up from the President's critics, chiefly partisan Republicans. Colonel Roosevelt announced that the President had no right to speak for the American people at this time. "His leadership had been repudiated by them... at the last Congressional election... He is President... He is a part of the treaty making power; but he is only a part."\(^4\) Roosevelt and his followers alleged that the President could use his enormous influence to much better advantage by acting through instructed representatives. In America, Wilson would be able to make decisions calmly and unhurriedly, removed from personal pressure, and in touch with American opinion. Regardless of criticism and so-called advice Wilson decided to go.

The country -- at least the Republicans -- received another shock on November 29, 1918, when the personnel of the American Peace Commission was announced. The delegates were to be Wilson, Secretary of State Lansing, Colonel House, General Tasker Bliss, and Henry White, an outstanding career diplomat.

\(^3\) Baker, Woodrow Wilson, VIII, 513-514.

\(^4\) Houston, Eight Years, 359-360.
Two of the four selections were a surprise. The choice of Secretary Lansing was natural because he had been a faithful and efficient assistant. Colonel House had long been the President's most trusted adviser. He had been in Europe during the war and was at the moment in close confidential touch with allied leaders. House could be depended upon to support every effort to prevent the reconstruction of Europe on the old basis of rival alliances. Though most reasonable, the remaining two appointments were not so expected. General Bliss, who was also in Europe with a wide knowledge of conditions and leaders, military and otherwise, was an able soldier who was in no sense a militarist. He could be counted on to lend his full weight to a supreme effort to give the world effective legal and pacific means of settling its disputes.

In many ways the selection of Henry White was the most ideal of all. He had had service and knew the maze of clashing national interests and desires which we call European politics as perhaps no man in the country did. He would be invaluable in Paris. Furthermore, White had the recommendation of close friendship with both Roosevelt and Lodge. Lodge was pleased by his appointment to the Peace Commission. Roosevelt was delighted.  

The appointment of White, however, was much condemned. Taft and Root, prominent and active Republicans would have labored as loyally as Wilson for the kind of peace he wanted and for the organization to preserve it. Each had a strong and sincere desire to advance the cause of world peace.

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The Senators were offended for two reasons. First, Wilson had not consulted them in advance; and second, unlike McKinley, he had not selected a single member from their ranks. It was fortunate in no sense of the word for Wilson and his program that he did not find it desirable or possible to defer to the Senate.6

Yet it seems reasonably clear, with politics reconvened, that whatever Wilson did would have been subjected to strong criticism from the Republicans. He was the only Democrat since Andrew Jackson to serve two consecutive terms, and he had pushed through Congress an extensive program of domestic reform. This had proved exceedingly distasteful to the big business interests, which were chiefly Republicans, and they were determined to bring about a return of the good old days of laissez faire. If the President were triumphantly to dictate a liberal peace to the world his prestige would be so great that he might accept a third term. The opposition believed that Wilson must be defeated at all costs.7

Wilson sailed from New York on December 4, 1918, and on the 11th received a tumultuous reception in Paris.8 Delirious throngs turned out to cheer this American Savior who had helped to defeat the Germans, and who seemed to promise a period of happiness. He would draw up a just peace, which of course meant grinding Germany to the very dust. Clemenceau said:

6 Ibid., 347-348.
7 Dodd, Woodrow Wilson and His Work, 268-269.
I knew Paris in the glitter of the Second Empire. I thought I knew my Paris now, but I did not believe she could show such enthusiasm as this. I don't believe there was ever anything like it in the history of the world.9

While waiting for the conference to convene, the President journeyed to England, where he was warmly hailed, and to Italy, where the demonstrations of blind devotion to "Voodro Veelson" were indescribable. One workingman declared:

They say he thinks of us the poor people; that he wants us all to have a fair chance; that he is going to do something when he gets here that will make it impossible for our government to send us to war again. If he only had come sooner! I have already lost my two sons. Do you believe he is strong enough to stop all wars?10

The first formal meeting of the Conference was held on January 12, 1919. On this very day the President suffered a loss of prestige that hurt him seriously. The first of his Fourteen Points had declared for "open covenants openly arrived at." It had been phrased in opposition to secret treaties, secret alliances, to the whole system of secret diplomacy that seemed to have brought on the war. It seemed fundamental to the President to drag international business into the light of day. That was, therefore, his first proposal.

American newspapers alone had sent about one hundred and fifty of their most able correspondents to report in great detail how the peace was made. The door was barred against these eager reporters; and at the end of

9 London Daily Mail, as quoted in Fleming, United States and League of Nations, 67.
the first day a secretary slipped out and read to them a dry five line summary. The tremendous outcry of the correspondents was heard throughout the world. 11 The American newspapermen sent a vigorous protest to the President which he put before the Conference and supported, but with little result. 12

The Peace Conference had not been at work very long when it was discovered that the hundreds of delegates of the twenty-seven Allied and Associated Powers gathered in plenary session made too unwieldy a group for effective work. The Supreme Council or the Council of Ten was therefore designated to do the most important work. It was composed of the two ranking delegates from each of the five great powers; Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan, and the United States. Its decisions were reported from time to time to the plenary conference for final action.

The Council of Ten itself proved to be too cumbersome and too leaky a body, and in March, 1919, it gave way to the Council of Four, of the "Big Four". This consisted of President Wilson, David Lloyd George, Prime Minister of Great Britain; Georges Clemenceau, President of the Council of France; and Vittorio Orlando, Premier of Italy. Some of the time it was the Council of Three, for Orlando was frequently absent. The three leaders held the destiny of the world in their hands.

Whatever the course adopted, it was evidently the part of wisdom to grapple with the most urgent problems first. In the early days of the conference the victors proposed dividing the booty, Germany's colonies, perhaps,
the least pressing major problem. Australia, New Zealand and the Union of South Africa were insistent for they had not only played an important part in conquering them, but were anxious to remove future German naval and military bases. After a bitter fight, Wilson successfully resisted a division along old imperialistic lines. Instead he was able to secure acceptance of the principle upon which the mandate system of the League of Nations was ultimately based.13

In Wilson's eyes the drawing up of the Covenant of the League of Nations to insure a just and lasting peace, was the most important work of the Conference. But the Allied spokesman as well as the Republicans at home, insisted that the more pressing the problem of the peace settlement be disposed of first and that the League of Nations be organized afterwards. It was nothing less than a triumph for him when the Conference voted, on January 25, 1919, that the League of Nations be an integral part of the treaty.

Wilson, himself, was appointed chairman of the Commission to draft the Covenant of the League of Nations. He held night sessions beginning February 3, until he saw a draft of a league covenant accepted by the Conference ten days later. The result was hardly the artistic product which some of the proposed conferences contemplating a year's deliberation might have produced, but on February 14, 1919, Wilson appeared before the Conference in plenary session and triumphantly read the completed League Covenant.14

14 David Hunter Miller, The Drafting of the Covenant, II, New York, 1928, 563.
In the meantime, the President's opponents, filled with a real fear that Wilson would succeed in creating and that they would have to kill the peace treaty in order to destroy it, had decided that a determined drive to prevent its creation was in order. They believed it would be best to do this through a plea for postponement. A conference was held between Lodge and Roosevelt's groups at Roosevelt's bedside in Roosevelt Hospital when the two warriors decided to attack whatever League proposal the President might bring home with so many amendments and reservations that participation by the United States on the terms agreed upon by the President and the other powers might be effectively checked. The political consequence of permitting the President to have the credit for leading us into the League of Nations might be disastrous. All that had been won in the election of 1918 might be lost in 1920.15

Lodge and his party believed that, if in submitting the charter to the Senate Wilson would be presented with a set of terms that he could not accept without great loss of prestige he would be too stubborn to submit the crowning achievement of his career to summary treatment at their hands. Lodge had cooled to the idea of a league and Roosevelt had agreed with him that the thing would be a war breeder rather than a peace maker.

The main point of the plan of opposition was to amend the single purpose mentioned in all the President's addresses --- that all the members

of the league should have their territories and political independence guaranteed against aggression. This was the cornerstone of the plan. All the work of the League to Enforce Peace, and all the President’s thinking, pointed to the common guarantee of the safety of each. Before Article X was written, the opposition set its face against the basic idea on which the structure was to be reared and never swerved from its purpose to nullify it.

Could the American people be aroused to support the defeat of the idea of a league of peace? Yes, the thing to do was to call it an entangling alliance, stand on Washington’s Farewell Address and show by countless hypothetical cases that American troops might, in this contingency or that, have to be sent to the ends of the earth. The idea of having the boys at home was very popular. It could further be shown, moreover, that we would be in continual danger of being outvoted in the league by the small states if equal representation was given or by colored races if population were to be the basis. The outcry against the votes of the British Dominion in the Assembly was a later refinement of the original idea.

At the same time an equal number of fears of interference in American affairs could be aroused. It would be easy to show that the Monroe Doctrine was endangered and millions who only dimly understood what that sacred Doctrine was would rise to defend it. Other large groups could be aroused by the old danger of the possibility of immigration being forced upon us, and the new one of the danger of tariffs being affected. In short, if enough questions could be raised, the people could be convinced that instead of being a league for peace, the thing was really a dangerous breeder of dis-
cord or war. 16

On December 19, Senator Lodge announced in the Senate that on the 21st he would address the Senate "on the question of peace and the proposed league of nations." 17 His speech of the 21st was a long one. It began by asserting the right of the Senate to advise as well as consent and quoted many instances where the President had asked the advice of the Senate. He declared that now it was the solemn and imperative duty of the Senate to give the advice that had not been invited by the negotiators.

We cannot compel information but we are abundantly able to make our opinions known not only to the President, but to the Allies, who have a very acute and clear idea of the power of the Senate in regard to treaties. They must know that the Senate can and often has rejected treaties. Others, the Senate has refused to ratify and held without action. The Allies should not be held in the dark as to the views of the Senate. 18

The groundwork for the future campaign was being laid. The Senate was not to respond to requests for advice made by the President; it was to influence the negotiations contrary to his desire as fully as speeches in the open Senate could do so. The drive for postponement of the league was to be pressed, and in case it and other attempts to control the course of the negotiations failed, the country and the Allies should understand that the treaty would be drastically handled in the Senate.

The Senator proceeded to outline in detail the territorial settlements that should be made and to demand heavy indemnities, not only for vessels sunk, but for a part at least of our war expenditure. Some methods,

16 Fleming, United States and the League, 72-76.
18 Ibid., 724.
not named, must be taken to safeguard the new nations.

Concerning the Fourteenth Point, we were all lovers of peace.

But we ought to be extremely careful that in our efforts to reach the millennium of universal and eternal peace, we do not create a system which will breed dissensions and wars. It is difficult to discuss it at this time because no definite plan of any kind has yet been put forward by an responsible person...It is easy to talk about a league of nations, but the hard, practical demand is, 'Are you ready to put your soldiers and your sailors at the disposition of other nations?...Are we ready to abandon the Monroe Doctrine and to leave it to other nations to say how American questions should be settled and what steps we shall be permitted to take in order to guard our own safety or to protect the Panama Canal? Are we ready to have other nations tell us by a majority vote what attitude we must assume in regard to immigration or in regard to our tariffs? These are lesser points, but they must be met and answered before we commit ourselves to permitting an association of nations to control in any degree the forces of the United States. 19

The Senator's cry was repeated by the Washington Post in an editorial, "No Sovereign Wanted" on December 23rd. The same day found Colonel Harvey making a speech in New York, "No League of Nations to Enforce War." Quoting Washington's Farewell Address extensively and lauding the Monroe Doctrine, he demanded that the Allies should deal with Germany after the United States collected our indemnities from her. Our object in entering the war thus accomplished, the peace conference might before adjourning turn the league of nations question over to international commissions, for investigation and report to the powers for "such treaty and action as they might desire." 20

19 Ibid.

20 Fleming, The United States and the League of Nations, 80.
A dispatch published in the Kansas City Star on December 22, reported that Senator Knox's speech of December 18 had been published in the Paris papers and was being widely discussed. The American delegation feared it would encourage European opponents of the League to active opposition to the whole idea. On Christmas day Paul Scott Maurer wrote that, particularly before the President's arrival in Paris, the speeches of such men as Colonel Roosevelt, Senator Lodge and Senator Knox were widely reproduced to prove that Mr. Wilson had lost the people's support. On the other hand, he continued, "President Wilson's reception in Paris proved to be a signal for a great awakening throughout Europe as to the tremendous issues of peace...It became apparent that Mr. Wilson was not only accepted by the liberals throughout Europe as their natural leader, but that he was looked to by the inarticulate masses as their spokesman and guide in the struggle to end wars forever." 21 By January 1, 1919, Taft had concluded that it was not too much to say that he (Wilson) is stronger with the peoples of Great Britain, France and Italy than are the respective premiers of those countries. 22

Mr. Wilson may have been strong with the people of Europe, but he was destined for a struggle on both sides of the ocean. Before leaving Paris for home, Wilson sent a cabled invitation to the House and Senate Committees concerned with foreign affairs, asking them to dine with him at the White House and discuss the League of Nations. He also requested that Congress re-

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid., 81.
frain from debating the subject until his arrival. But while Wilson was on the high seas the Senate swung into action. The President's request fell on unsympathetic ears, particularly when he proposed to land at Boston and make a speech or two on the subject before reporting to them.

Senator Poindexter of Washington opened the attack on February 19, comparing the proposed League to the dreaded Soviet Government of Russia and labeling it as the most entangling and permanent alliance conceivable. It would compel the United States to participate in the wars and controversies of every other nation and assume any burdensome mandate over distant territory that might be assigned to it. It did not accept any subjects from arbitration and it even surrendered to other nations the power to regulate commerce with foreign nations.23

Senator Borah hailed it as the greatest triumph for English diplomacy in three centuries and Senator Reed, Democrat of Missouri, expatiated on the entire British domination of the earth which was set up. He excoriated the whole of the Covenant, finding unbelievable things in almost every article. We would be told, for example, that "you shall have an army of a certain size" ... "vessels of a certain number" ... and we could not exceed such numbers without going to Europe and asking the gracious permission of eight gentlemen, six of whom probably cannot speak our language, and who have likely never set foot upon our shores! Then an "international smelling committee" would be around to inspect our industries adaptable to warlike purposes. We

23 Congressional Record, 65th Congress, 3rd Session, 1919, p120.
could not even aid an Irish or Canadian rebellion and we should have to fight anybody who did.  

Senator Lewis of Illinois, replied on February 23, that if the Council could so dictate our defenses it could destroy British Naval Supremacy and its members would have plenty of incentive to do so. The votes of the British Dominion, instead of being a danger to us would be in support on any questions of immigration which the league did not have power to regulate anyway. As for its main purpose the very existence of the mutual guarantee in Article 10 would prevent most wars.

When the President reached Boston on the same day he found two groups of his friends awaiting him, one to counsel a simple explanation of the League and the other to urge a fighting speech accepting the challenge of his opponents. Each group was satisfied with one half of his speech. He explained the Covenant simply in the first half and declared in the latter half that his fighting blood was stirred. He had no doubt where the American people stood on this issue.

The historic gathering of the Senate and House Committees took place at the White House on the evening of February 26, 1919. The Conference brought into prominence another of the small group of men who had determined to block Wilson in his greatest endeavor at all costs. A strong, intense man, later a suicide, Senator Frank M. Brandigee of Connecticut, subjected the President to keen cross examination upon the terms of the Covenant which in

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24 Congressional Record, 65th Congress, 3rd Session, 1919, p.120.
his opinion left Wilson in a very bad light indeed. Speaking to the New York Sun the next day, he said, "I feel as if I had been wandering with Alice in Wonderland and had tea with the Mad Hatter." Lodge testified also that "The President seemed actually befuddled about many important points" and Knox who had posed his share of the lawyer questions to the President, agreed in equally strong language.26

The correspondent from the Sun could obtain little information immediately after the conference, but after the Senators had an opportunity to compose notes some of the results were amazing. The President had stated "with finality": "That the United States must surrender vital points of sovereignty, Chinese and Japanese exclusion goes out of American control into the hands of the league control. Ireland is to be left to the mercies of England. The Sun insisted that Knox, Lodge, Brandegee, McCumber and Hitchcock all "agreed that the President actually made these statements." Hitchcock immediately denied the truth of any of the much vouched for statement from the floor of the Senate, and McCumber made it emphatically clear, that he had no connection with the effort to thus ridicule and falsify the President's effort to satisfy the Senators. Lodge, Knox and Brandegee kept silent as to their complicity.

The response to the President's explanation of the Covenant indi-

26 Congressional Record, 65 Cong., 3 Sess., 1919, 4528-29.
27 Ibid., 4529-30.
icated that no scruple would stand in the way of the effort to discredit him and convince the country that he had betrayed it. Nothing could be more fair, however, than the records left by some of the Republicans who attended the Conference. Representative John Jacob Rogers, of Massachusetts, ranking Republican in the House Foreign Relations Committee, wrote to Henry White, May 3, 1919, as follows:

The White House dinner a week ago tonight was a most interesting one, and in most respects a memorable... He submitted himself to quite rigorous cross examination for two hours, answering every question easy or difficult, as fully as possible and with apparent candor... There was no suggestion of militant arrogance about him... He showed a good general familiarity with the document itself---of which, by the way he did not have a copy at any time before him during the two hours--- but I think scarcely had a better perfect knowledge of some of the minor details. I do not say this in criticism, for my impression was that he was as thoroughly versed as he need have been, or indeed could reasonably have been expected to be. But some of the Senators there that night thought, however, that he was not at all adequately informed. As I said, my own impression was quite the opposite. 28

The President's conference with the Foreign Relations Committee, on February 26, did not change the minds of many of the Republican members. Probably its most important incident was the President's statement that he did not think the Covenant could be much amended owing to the difficulty of securing the concurrence of the other nations.

Two days later Senator Lodge questioned the Covenant thoroughly and minutely. At the close of the speech he concluded that this machinery would not promote the peace of the world, but would have a directly opposite

28 Ibid., 1520-28.
effect. His main effort, however, was to counsel that every item should be investigated with utmost thoroughness and weighed with the greatest care. All he asked was consideration, time and thought.29

On the same day Senator Lenroot, of Wisconsin, made a straightforward plea for amendment. He approved the general plan as proposed and hoped to be able to vote for it.30

Senator Knox's attack, on March 1, was massive and complete. Defining and assuming the League to be a super-state he presented it as striking down the precepts of our Constitution, destroying our sovereignty and threatening national independence. "Why, then, this plan to strangle and crush us? What was the hurry? War was farther away than it had been for centuries."31

Some minutes later the league was presented by Senator Sherman of Illinois, as a "Pandora's box of evil to empty upon the American people the aggregated calamities of the world." It was an oligarchy that would "embargo our commerce, close our exchanges, destroy our credits, leave our merchandise rotting on our piers, shut the Isthmian Canal, order Congress to declare war, levy taxes, appropriate money, raise and support armies and navies"...It was the "death knell of the American Republic...a fantastic idealism, a polyglot philanthropy as vain as the realms of world philosophy and morals as it is

29 Ibid., 4529.
30 Congressional Record, 65 Cong., 3 Sess., 1919, 4569-72.
31 Ibid., 1687-95.
impossible in peaceable execution."32

At the conclusion of this speech, Senator McCumber took the floor lest the impression go out that the Republican Party as a whole was opposed to the league of nations. The critics of the league ignored its purposes even in assailing it. Article 10 he regarded as the very foundation stone of the structure. He challenged any Senator to give a clearer and more concise declaration of an agreement to preserve peace. Altogether one must be led far afield indeed by his prejudices to conclude that we were compelled to submit our domestic affairs to every nation in the world which questioned any of our internal policies. The Covenant could not be condemned on scattered phrases. Honesty was needed in the discussion.33

Senator McCumber's protest, however, did not prevent the following declaration from being read into the Record by Senator Lodge on the last day of the session, March 4, 1919. It was signed by thirty-seven Republican Senators and Senators-elect, more than one third plus one necessary to defeat the treaty. The most striking passage of the ultimatum read:

Resolved...That is the sense of the Senate that while it is their resolve and sincere desire that the nations of the world should unite to promote world peace and general disarmament, the constitution of the league of nations in the form now proposed to the peace conference should not be accepted by the United States and be it

Resolved further, that it is the sense of the Senate that the negotiations on the part of the United States should be immediately directed to the utmost expedition of the urgent business of nego-

32 Ibid., 4865-4867.
33 Ibid., 4872-4887.
tiating peace terms with Germany satisfactory to the United States, and the nations with whom the United States is associated in the war against the German Government, and that the proposal for a league of nations to insure the peace of the world should be then taken up for careful and serious consideration. 34

The New York Sun reported:

As the Massachusetts Senator started to speak, realization of the gravity of the step he was taking and that others were taking under his guidance and leadership came to him. His voice was steady, but his hand, in which he held the resolution he read from was shaking perceptibly. As he finished reading the list of names, Mr. Lodge paused a moment, then quietly left the hall of the Senate. There was not a sign of approval or of disapproval from the Senators on the floor or from hundreds jammed in the galleries. 35

On the evening of the same day the Round Robin was published, the President accepted the challenge in a speech in New York City as he departed for Europe again, saying that when the treaty came back, gentlemen on this side would find the Covenant "not only in it, but so many threads of the treaty tied to the covenant that you cannot dissect the covenant from the treaty without destroying the whole vital structure." 36 Wilson apparently did not think that the Senate would dare incur the odium of rejecting the entire treaty.

Mr. Taft supported the President by declaring it to be his duty to insert the Covenant in the treaty as indispensable to the peace sought. Taft's strong support must have convinced the Republican leaders that the President would prevail. Such conviction was needed, for during the President's absence

34 Ibid., 4887.
36 Ibid., 305-309.
the League had fallen into the background. The British Conservatives had rebelled almost as violently as their American contemporaries and many of the Continental nations were quite willing to make the peace by old familiar methods, as the American Senate Republicans demanded. Even despite the warning of the President's New York address, the League was generally considered dead when Mr. Wilson landed in France again on March 14. 37

It was something of a shock therefore, to read his statement of the 15th that "the decision made at the Peace Conference at its plenary session, January 25, 1919, to the effect that the establishment of a League of Nations should be an integral part of the Treaty of Peace, is of final force and that there is no basis whatever for the reports that a change in the decision was contemplated."

This again was plain speaking, and it produced wrathful eruptions in conservative quarters on both sides of the ocean, but there did not seem to be any immediate way of upsetting the decision, especially since the Allies had not been able to find any formula aside from the League which would solve many of the knotty problems.

So the Conference returned to the League and the President took up the task, among many others, of amending the Covenant to satisfy its American critics. He was under no illusions as to the possibility of satisfying a section of the opponents in the Senate. "No matter what I do," he had said during the return voyage, "they will continue the attack." But the ur-

gent requests of the Taft wing of the Republican party for revision continued by cable, and the advice of his own party leaders left him no choice but to attempt to meet enough of the objections to secure ratification in the Senate. He was sure to alarm the French and their allies at each suggestion of weakening the Covenant, and his position in the Conference would be considerably weakened by the necessity of asking for concessions, but he must attempt to secure the changes most generally demanded regardless.\textsuperscript{38}

The original draft of the League Covenant had been so hastily thrown together that it bristled with defects. Critics in America, many of them sincere and constructive, pointed to the desirability of amendment. They stressed, particularly, the necessity of safeguarding the Monroe Doctrine, of exemption of domestic issues, and of providing for a method of withdrawing from the League. Wilson finally succeeded in forcing the more reasonable of the American demands into the Covenant, but in so doing he weakened his hand with the other Powers, which insisted upon equivalent concessions.\textsuperscript{39}

The chief battle was with France. Clemenceau's first demand was reparation for damages caused by the Germans. His second demand was for security against a repetition of the horror of 1914. The French desired either to occupy Germany to the Rhine, or to create a buffer state. But the placing of millions of Germans under the French flag would be a gross violation of the principle of self-determination. Against such an arrangement, Wilson fought


\textsuperscript{39} Baker, \textit{Wilson and World Settlement}, II, 43.
Clemenceau with all his soul, while the French press showered the American idealist with abuse. A compromise was finally reached. France was to occupy the Rhineland for a maximum of fifteen years, and the Saar Valley for a like period. In return, Britain and the United States were to sign a treaty with France promising her armed assistance in the event of an "unprovoked" attack by Germany. Although both Clemenceau and Wilson must have feared that the United States would spurn such an entangling alliance—as it did—this proposal was too attractive for Clemenceau to refuse.  

The next crisis was when Italy demanded Fiume, the only desirable ocean corridor of the newly created state of Yugoslavia—a claim difficult to support on a self-determination basis. Wilson appealed to the Italian people for support causing the delegates to leave the Conference in anger. The delegates received immediately enthusiastic backing from the populace and Wilson anathematized where he had shortly been idolized. But he did win a hollow victory for self-determination.  

The Japanese now took advantage of the Italian crisis to press their demands for German economic rights in China's province of Shantung. Britain had agreed to support Japanese claims in Shantung and to the German Pacific islands north of the equator, in return for Japanese support of British claims to the German islands south of the equator. Wilson feared a violation of self-determination if Japan were given so strong a foothold. If,

40 Lodge, Wilson and World Settlement, II, 43.

41 Ibid., 157.
however, the Japanese as well as the Italians were to withdraw from the con-
ference, it might collapse and the precious league might be lost. So
then
Wilson reluctantly consented to a compromise by which the Japanese were to re-
tain the economic holdings of Germany and ultimately return the peninsula to
China. Japan also received, under a mandate, the German Pacific islands north
of the equator. This whole arrangement was expediency rather than justice—
a disastrous blow to Wilson's prestige as the champion of self-determination.

The revised Covenant was published on April 28; the Treaty of
Versailles was presented to the Germans on May 7, 1919. The Germans were
given an opportunity to study the bulky document. They made bitter but futile
protests. In particular, they resented having been disarmed by a promise of
the Fourteen Points and then having this peace of imperialism rammed down
their throats. At the Hall of Mirrors, Versailles, the German delegates re-
luctantly signed the treaty, June 28, 1919.

CHAPTER III

THE FIGHT FOR THE TREATY IN AMERICA 1919-1920

The League was defeated in the United States, not because it was a League of Nations, but because it was a Woodrow Wilson League, and because the great leader had fallen and there was no one who could wield his mighty sword.¹

Whatever degree of success President Wilson may have achieved it was great enough to cause gloom in the band of men who had determined to deny him the creation of a League of Nations. The League had not only been created but its Covenant had been amended to meet the principle American objections raised against it. The entire Treaty of Peace was also completed and the President would soon be returning with the finished document containing the League of Nations so woven into its texture that it would indeed be impossible to separate the two.²

The Covenant had been so favorably received in the United States that it seemed out of the question to defeat it directly. A considerable body of opposition had been aroused and many doubts raised but the leaders of public opinion still stood overwhelmingly for the League.

Lodge realized that the leaders of public opinion, bankers and capitalists were unanimously advocating the League as it had been written and amended. There was only one recourse, that was to arouse the masses by the

¹ T. W. Gregory (Wilson's Attorney General), 1925, as quoted in Bailey, Diplomatic History, 667.

² Fleming, United States and The League, 205.
persistent repetition of the cries already raised and any others that seemed likely to stir the emotions of the people. The nation, moreover, might be wearied eventually of the whole league business if action on it could be delayed long enough.3

There was the time essence of the thing. Lodge contacted Borah and obtained his support on the discussion of the treaty by way of amendment and reservation. Lodge's plan was to "progress along the lines of protecting the interests and safety of the United States...by amendments and reservations...so...that a large majority of the Republicans could vote for it." Borah promised cooperation but warned him that in the end he would vote against the treaty.4 This was a good bargain for both leaders. If it could be executed, Lodge had the certainty that at the worst the Republican trademark would be stamped on the League.5

Two requisites for success were: control of the senate machinery and funds necessary to expand the campaign to arouse popular sentiment against the league. The first requisite Lodge seemed certain of, but the second, was a worry until Senator Knox made an appeal to his Pennsylvania friends, H. C. Frich and Andrew W. Mellon.6

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3 George Harvey, Henry Clay Frich the Man, New York, 1928, 325.
5 Ibid., 11:8.
6 Harvey, Henry Clay Frich the Man, 325-26.
The money reservoir of the "Cabal" became both deep and full. The second requisite of success was at hand. Rejoicing pervaded the camp of the irreconcilables because now "organized effort" to arouse distrust of the League would go forward on a nationwide scale backed by practically unlimited funds.7

On May 19, Congress met in a special session to enact the appropriation bills, a result of the Republican filibuster of March 3 and 4, designed to compel a special session. On May 20, Senator Johnson, offered an unprecedented resolution calling upon the Secretary of State to transmit the unfinished business of the treaty to the Senate.8 The Senators were anxious to begin work on it, though not in secret session as usual. Mr. Lodge served notice on the 32rd that the document would be treated with "pitiless publicity." The Covenant had been made "much worse than before."9

Article 21, reserving the Monroe Doctrine, said that:

Nothing in the covenant shall be deemed to affect the validity of international engagements, such as treaties of arbitration or regional understandings, like the Monroe Doctrine, for securing the maintenance of international peace.10

But not cried Senator Lodge on June 7, it was never an international understanding! It is ours! "It is all ours; and now it is carried into

7 Ibid., 329-31.
8 Congressional Record, 66 Cong., 1 Sess., 1919, 63.
9 Ibid., 161.
10 Ibid., 791-2.
This league of nations. It is already interpreted by England, although it is wholly our affair, and it is to be determined in the future by the League of Nations."

The Senate having been organized by the Republicans and the initial broadsides loosed against the Covenant, the leaders proceeded to the all important matter of reorganizing the Committee on Foreign Relations, as Senator Hitchcock charged, "the Republican leaders, filled the Committee on Foreign Relations with Senators practically pledged to oppose the League of Nations."

This charge was not replied to, other than by an effort of Senator Fall, of New Mexico, to find out what determined the appointment of Democratic members to the Committee, although Senator Williams asked Senator Lodge to correct him "right now while I am on my feet" if he did not intend to make the League a party issue. Mr. Lodge sat silent.11

The protest aroused against the league among businessmen and partisan Republicans stimulated by the opponents of the league created anxiety in Taft, which he expressed before the New York Convention of the League to Enforce Peace, saying:

"This is not a partisan question...We should be for or against the League, without regard to whether we think it will bring credit to our party or credit to any man."

Mr. Taft's warnings indicated that the campaign of the Senate leaders was bearing fruit. The perfectly natural doubt that many Americans would have about the advisability of a new departure in foreign affairs was

11 Congressional Record, 66 Cong., 1 Sess., 1919, 791-2.
was being stirred into something much more active.12

A poll of the press, published by the Literary Digest on April 5, had shown that while the majority favored the League as it stood, there was a very large body of opinion that would support conditional ratification. To the question, do you favor the proposed League of Nations? 718 newspapers had answered "Yes", 181 "No" and 478 had given conditional replies. The likelihood was that the great lead indicated for the league could not be easily overcome, if at all. Hence the slowness with which the Foreign Relations Committee moved after it received the treaty. The strength of the feeling against the League, and for it, on occasions of the President's connection with it, stood out clearly, as did the feeling stirred up by the Senate attacks.13

Meanwhile the debate continued in the Senate as to whether the proposed Treaty of Peace should be published or not. President Wilson cabled in reply that he was unwilling to break his agreement with Allied leaders that the treaty be not published until signed.14 Senator Borah countered, on June 9, by presenting a copy of the unsigned treaty, procured for him by the Chicago Tribune, and forcing its publication.

A few days later the Senate investigating committee established that the copy of the treaty seen by Mr. Lodge had passed from the hands of Mr. Thomas W. Lamont, financial adviser at Paris, to Mr. H. P. Davidson of

12 Ibid., 899.
of J. P. Morgan and Company, as head of the League of Red Cross Societies, who in turn had passed it on to Mr. Elihu Root who had shown it to Mr. Lodge. 15

On June 10, Senator Knox introduced one more resolution giving notice to the Peace Conference that the treaty should be divorced from the League. 16 The new resolution pushed the assumption of the Senate's right to "advise" as far as Senator Lodge himself afterward advanced it. The second paragraph of the resolution warned against an assumed attempt to amend our constitution by passing the treaty, and the third explained with great care just how the Peace Conference could give the Senate a chance to vote on the Covenant separately.

Here was a concession which many people would say was going far enough. The obligation was wholly general and thus was absolutely nothing to determine when it should come into operation, but an obligation was undertaken and a stake in the world's peace recognized. It was going too far for the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations however, which reported the resolution without the last paragraph containing this proposal. Even that indefinite commitment was too much for Borah. Lodge and Borah understood one another. 17

Taft realized fully the trend of these maneuvers and at once protested against them as strongly as he could. He maintained that the whole


16 Congressional Record, 66th Congress, 1 Session, 1919, 894.

17 Congressional Record, 66th Congress, 1 Session, 1919, 1130.
attitude of the Senators was contrary to Republicans traditions.

Senator Knox disclosed, however, on June 13, that he would fight for his resolution to the end. He did not know which the Peace Conference would tend toward, his ideas or his opponents, but at least the Senate body would be cleared of blame for delay. A close look at Senator's notes and Senator Knox's speech of June 17, in particular, would reveal the real objectives to be time to arouse the country against the League and justification for taking it. Time to consider was time to plea.

So consuming was the Cabal's determination to thwart the President that no warnings would reach them. Thus Senator McCumber appealed to them quite vainly on June 18, to take a long view, saying:

Senators, you may defeat the treaty...But as surely as this is defeated and the world suffers another calamity, deeper than the hatred of the enemy will be the hatred toward the statesmen of the world who have failed in their great opportunity to league together to shield the poor, innocent beings from such calamities as have been visited upon them because there is no law to check a great, powerful nation from criminal aggression.

Neither did the pleas of influential members of their party move them. The talk of a new round robin brought out the fact that a group of twenty-eight prominent Republicans, lawyers, bankers and others of New York City had protested to the Senate "that political partisanship should have no place in the consideration on the merits of the Constitution of the proposed League of Nations" and urged "that the treaty and covenant be promptly rati-

19 Congressional Record, 66th Cong., 1 Sess., 1919, 1266.
fied by the Senate without attempting to embarrass it by amendment." The only effect it produced was a vehement attack from Senator Borah threatening that if the Republican Party did not make a party issue of the League of Nations a new party would be created to do so, while other Senators ridiculed the statement as coming from "the Taft Crowd."20

The anti-leaguers had first pictured the League as dominated by the kings; then it had been the British; a little later Senator Reed had proved that we were likely to fall under the sway of the Negroes and other colored peoples; now Senator Sherman pointed to the Pope as likely to control the League. Were not twenty-four of the forty Christian nations in the League "spiritually dominated by the Vatican?" No broad field of prejudice was left uncultivated; nor were any smaller areas of rival antipathy overlooked.21

By June 21, it became evident that the Knox resolution could not be passed. On the same day former Secretary Elihu Root appeared in the Senate wing of the Capitol. The result of a conference with his senatorial friends was a change of tactics. In a letter to Lodge he advised dealing with the defects of the Covenant in a qualifying resolution of ratification. After commending the Covenant at length as containing "a great deal of high value that the world ought not to lose" he advised (1) that consent to Article 10 be refused, (2) that no qualification on the right to withdraw be accepted and (3) that nothing in the Covenant "shall be construed as to imply a relin-

21 Congressional Record, 66th Cong., 1 Sess., 1919, 1b37.
quishment by the United States of America of its traditional attitude toward purely American questions, or to require the submission of its policy regarding questions which it deems to be purely American questions to the decision or recommendation of other powers)—to cover the Monroe Doctrine and domestic questions more acceptably. 22

The proposed resolution of ratification was to go into effect unless some of the other signatories of the treaty expressly objected. On June 25, it was reported that the Knox-Lodge group had agreed with Borah-Johnson faction to require the express acceptance of the reservations by all the Allied signatories. 23 On June 28, the Germans signed the treaty and the President was reported by the Associated Press as opposed to amendments to the Treaty. 24 He had spent himself to the limit to secure changes in the Covenant to satisfy the demands of his opponents and had sacrificed much to get them. As Senator Lenroot said, it was "the natural request for the President to make." Yet it seems to have unified completely the Republicans in the Senate behind the program of amendment by reservation. None could be found who doubted that there must be reservations. 25 So, on June 29, the day after the signing of the treaty, the President sailed home to meet a more bitter and implacable oppo-

22 David Hunter Miller, The Drafting of the Covenant, I, New York, 1928, 381.


24 Ibid.

25 Ibid., June 29, 1919, pt. 1, p. 4.
osition than he had encountered in Paris. As he embarked, a meeting in Carnegie Hall addressed by a Democrat and a Republican, Senators Reed and Johnson, hissed his name and applauded a man who shouted that Wilson was a traitor. 26

"No human being, it seems," says David Lawrence, who observed the President through the Peace Conference, "could have survived the mental strain which rested upon Woodrow Wilson during the Peace Conference." 27 Now he had to face the bitter opposition organized against him at home.

The President's reception was as hearty as he could have wished. He was treated to all the pomp the Navy and officialdom could offer, but "the greetings that seemed to mean most to him were the shouts and cheers of thousands of countrymen who lined the streets through which his automobile passed on the way to Carnegie Hall." The greatest demonstration in strength and volume came when he stood on the platform of Carnegie Hall and earnestly declared that the peace was "a just peace which, if it can be preserved, will safeguard the world from unnecessary bloodshed." 28

The sincerity of the President's belief that the American people and all peoples everywhere wanted a better ordered world in which there would be some safeguard against war has been little questioned, but he has been accused of not representing the Irish. The President had not forced the in-

26 Ibid., June 29, 1919, pt. 1, p. 6.
27 Lawrence, The True Story of Wilson, 267.
dependence of Ireland and her admission to the League. Irish nationalism might have been denied in Dublin and Paris, but it was to have its day in New York and Washington. Mr. De Valera was acclaimed as ruler in New York two evenings after the President's return by a crowd of twenty-five thousand. At this gathering there were hisses and boos at each mention of the name of the President of the United States, the League of Nations, England and Sir Douglas Haig.

On July 10, the day following his return the President laid the treaty before the Senate. The address which accompanied its presentation was an attempt to explain the nature and necessity of the basic settlements, and of the League in particular. The President's address, however, did not give the Republican Senators any light. They had joined heartily in applauding the President as he entered, but at the conclusion of the message the Tribune's correspondent observed that three Republican Senators, McNary, McCumber and Kenyon clapped mildly. In statements afterwards, Senator Brandegee said, "Soap bubbles of oratory and souffle of phrases." Most of the Republican Senators united in deploring the the President did not answer any of the specific objections they had agreed to press against the League. They felt that their specific attacks should have been recognized by reply; Wilson was determined not to dignify the thing he wanted to avoid.

After the President's address to the Senate, Republican leaders

29 Ibid.
conferred in the cloak room. "Those attending included Senators Lodge, Borah, Brandegee, Fall and McCormick. Further conferences were held in rapid succession during the next few days. Carter Field's dispatch of July 12 announced that "Republican members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee discussed plans for their fight on the peace treaty and the league of nations."

The next day he reported that the "Republican lines were consolidated in a dozen scattered conferences...at the houses of various Senate leaders." Senator Gore, Democrat of Oklahoma, had visited Senator Lodge and announced his adhesion to the reservation program so that the reservationists now had a majority in the Senate.

What would under natural and normal circumstances have been the opening speech in the entire debate on the Treaty was made by Senator Swanson, of Virginia, on July 14; in a speech filling ten pages of the Record he attempted to analyze the essential features of the Covenant and the objections raised against it. The guarantee by Article 10 of territorial integrity and independence against external aggression would act as a preventive of war as it intended, not as a cause of wars as critics maintained. What had occurred under the Monroe Doctrine furnished convincing proof of this contention.

30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
Swanson stressed the deterrent power of Article 10, and its defensive value to us, but maintained that its authority was moral, not legal.

The next day the Shantung settlement was brought to the fore as the iniquitous surrender of the great Chinese province to Japan, the Democrats replying that only property rights had been given and that Japan would keep her promise to hand political control to China.

Senator Colt, Republican, of Rhode Island, spoke for the League on July 17, and said he could see no super state in the Covenant; it was rather an association of free nations. It asked no surrender of true nationalism when it substituted a reign of law for the reign of force. Senator Pomerene of Ohio, then defended the constitutionality of the league and replied at length on the objections against it. Senator McNary of Oregon, continued the defense on July 22, holding that Article 10 was a moral bond, but the pillar section of the Covenant. The demand for amendments and reservations, he thought, came without proper regard for the results that would follow. Senator Johnson of South Dakota, also could not see anything in Article 10 that was dangerous. Senator Moses of New Hampshire could see little that was good in the entire treaty.

Senator McKellar questioned Lodge’s attitude. Lodge had been all

34 Congressional Record, 66 Cong., 1 Sess., July 17, 1919, 2721-2.
36 Ibid., 2985-88.
37 Ibid., 2989-95.
for allied harmony. Now that the Allies had agreed upon the treaty and the utmost harmony prevailed the only discordant note came from Senator Lodge and his associates.\(^{38}\) The speaker then adopted the tactics of the opposition and viewed for the Covenant which had ever been offered. He characterized the resolution as an agreement "that Europe could stir up all the wars she wanted to and we would be the police-men to stop them." With no machinery to keep the peace provided, "it would take 5,000,000 American soldiers on guard in Europe all the time to keep order and the greatest navy in the world." Mr. McKellar aimed to outdo the alarmists.\(^{39}\)

After a speech in defense of the Shantung settlement by Senator Robinson of Arkansas on July 24,\(^{40}\) Senator Lenroot, of Wisconsin, spoke for reservations. He argued that since the Fourteen Points had not been fully complied with we were under no obligation to accept the Treaty as signed by the President. There was disagreement about the interpretations of Article 10 and two or three others, therefore reservations would have to be adopted to remove the doubts.\(^{41}\) Each reservation, held Senator Pittman, of Nevada, on the same day, would have to be accepted by the treaty ratifying power in every state signatory to the treaty. Moreover, our exceptions would not stand alone; other disappointed powers would press for the things they had not ob-

\(^{38}\) Ibid., 2997.
\(^{39}\) Ibid., 3022-32.
\(^{40}\) Ibid., 3092-96.
\(^{41}\) Ibid., 3094-90.
tained and the Senate would have to accept their counter-reservations, distasteful though some of them would be, if it got its own. It was better to reject the Treaty than to reopen contention.

Senator Borah agreed at once allowing that all reservations to be agreed to by all signatories and granted that legally Congress would retain, without any reservations, its right to declare war. He was "not interested in any form of interpretations or amendments or reservations." It was "either fundamentally right to enter this enterprise or fundamentally wrong." He thought it was wrong because it entangled us in European affairs and lessened our independence, but if it was fundamentally right he would not waste his time with reference to the details concerning it.42

Mr. Borah spoke immediately after Senator Smith of Arizona, who had attacked the critics profession to be for a league, but not this one.

Why all the hypercritical interpretation of the terms of the covenant he asked? The Monroe Doctrine was just as much a promise to make war as Article 10 was. It would be a silly threat if it was not; it was just that no one had attacked it as unconstitutional or complained that Congress was deprived of its freedom of action under it. Moreover, our treaty with Panama bound us legally to maintain the independence of a foreign state. Yet the great mass of busy Americans was being disturbed by the oft repeated charge that the covenant must be defeated or qualified because it violated the

42 Ibid., 3141-45.
palladium of their liberties. The impression was being created that all bur-
dens fell on us alone, whereas every member of the league was mutually re-
sponsible.43

Senator Walsh, of Montana, on July 28, emphasized the persistent
ignoring of the phrase "as against external aggression" in Article 10. He
denied the assumption that the right of revolution was infringed and challenge-
ed anyone to show where armed force for the freeing of Ireland or Shantung was
to come from. History afforded so few examples of states unselfishly inter-
vening in behalf of rebels fighting for freedom that our intervention in Cuba
had been proclaimed as absolutely unique in that respect, and yet we came out
of the war with Porto Rico and the Philippines.

"It is worthy of remark that those who most stoutly assail this
feature of the Covenant avow with equal vehemence and insistence that we must
keep out of the quarrels of Europe." It is plain that the Irish could expect
no armies from the United States, even if the opponents of the Covenant won.
Neither could they expect them from impotent Germany or England's ally France
or illiberal and weak Spain. France and Spain had tried repeatedly in gen-
eral wars to free the Irish but had never succeeded. Ireland's freedom did
not lay in the armed force of other nations.

But the League did offer hope of Irish independence by enabling
through Article 11 any friendly power to bring Ireland's cause before the
League for discussion and through Article 10 by removing the supposed military

43 Ibid., 3135.
menace in a free Ireland which England always professed to fear.

The case of Shantung offered a similar situation. Article 10 had also been condemned as perpetuating the Shantung settlement. This settlement was condemned as part of a campaign to defeat the League because, it was maintained, the President agreed to it to save the League.

That was what hurt. "Wilson saved the League by giving Shantung to the Japs" expressed equally, malice toward the builder and his creation. Yet, again, how was China to be helped by defeating Article 10? What nation was going to send armies and navies to take Shantung away from Japan? Yet Article 10 offered China a guarantee against further aggression which she had sadly needed for a century and certainly needed still.

Article 10 was the "soul and spirit of the Covenant" said Mr. Walsh. That was why those who wished to defeat the whole plan desired to emasculate it. They said American boys would have to fight in this or that hypothetical war, forgetting to say that if this war took place some boys from every other quarter of the globe would have to go too. Senators lost sight of the deterrent effect of the Article even while extolling the Monroe Doctrine. How had the Doctrine preserved peace except by the promise to punish aggression? There were only two ways to maintain peace—either by agreements such as this or by actually establishing an international police force equal to the job.\footnote{\textit{Congressional Record}, 66 Cong., 1 Sess., 1919, 3222-28.}
Senator Williams then applied the doctrine of the free and untrammelled choice to the units within a state. Suppose each citizen or each state in the union said, "I am my own sovereign, responsible to nobody but God, and at the right time I will do the right thing, and I want to be free to say when I shall do it and where I shall do it and how I shall do it." Could you get civilization within the nation this way?

The assumption that it was human nature to fight and you could not change human nature, was a stupid, barbarous utterance, said Mr. Williams, as if human nature had not changed from the day our ancestors drank mead out of skulls of their enemies. Human beings were fallible—but why gaze so intently at the specks on the rising sun of the Covenant that you failed to see the sun itself? 45

Another Democratic Senator, Mr. Thomas, of Colorado, delivered a long considered speech the next day in which he held that morality was static and human nature unchanging. Internationalism would be a menace if racial instincts didn't make it unattainable.

He was followed by the venerable Senator Nelson, Republican of Minnesota, who thought the entangling alliance agreement came entirely too late. The Senator favored some reservations because doubt and controversy had arisen but he had not "groped around to find objections to defeat the treaty" for he was imbued with the faith that fundamentally the general pur-

pose of the League was sound and fully warranted. 46

Senator Ransdall, of Louisiana, then reviewed the progressively rising costs and destructiveness of war and Senator Owen linked the Monroe Doctrine and the Covenant together as common in purpose and as mutually strengthening each other. 47

But all the arguments made in the Senate did not advance ratification. Republican Senators had been generally pledged to a policy of reservations or rejections, with an understanding that reservations would be thus assured, and the President was not ready to accept reservations, though Mr. Taft was by this time convinced that the Treaty could not be ratified without them. 48

The beginning of August brought evidence of strength in both the irreconcilable and mild reservationists camps. A group of seven Republican Senators agreed to support a draft of reservations covering withdrawal, Article 10, domestic questions and the Monroe Doctrine. The Senators who sponsored these mild reservations were: McNary, Oregon; McCumber, North Dakota; Colt, Rhode Island; Spenser, Missouri; Cummins, Iowa; Kellogg, Minnesota; and Lenroot, Wisconsin—all Westerners except one. They did not present their reservations to Mr. Lodge for approval, but were in negotiation with Administration leaders. Their purpose was to hold a balance of power.

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46 Ibid., 3320-23.
47 Ibid., 3397-3404.
48 Ibid., 3230-35.
that would compel one or both of the other groups to modify its position. Which group would accept modification would be interesting to see. 49

The chance of agreement with the ratification group seemed but for relatively few, the best, for the irreconcilables were increasing steadily the scope of their attacks. Senator Borah, was satisfied with the results of shooting at Article 10 and was now bringing Article 11 under fire. The irreconcilables, however, were in a perfect position for future offensive, due to their control of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. 50

By the end of July the Senate Foreign Relations Committee had finished formally reading the Treaty line by line. The Committee then proceeded to hold a series of hearings at which all the available Americans of importance who had been attached to the American Peace Commission were examined. These gentlemen, together with written replies from the President, convinced the Committee that they were not to have access to any detailed records of the Peace Conference that indicated how many disputed points had been settled there. They got an opinion from Mr. Lansing that the President need not have yielded on Shantung, but the early hearings were not very productive. 51 So, after they had examined everybody who might have enlightened them, except Colonel House who was still in Paris, they decided to question the President publicly if he would consent. He agreed, and, on August 19, the session was

50 Ibid., Tuesday, August 5, 1919, pt. 1, p. 1.
held in the White House while a group of stenographers relayed the proceedings to a large gathering of newspapermen in the basement.

The conference lasted three and a half hours with the discussion covering a wide range of subjects but turning generally around the obligations in Article 10. The President maintained throughout that the guarantee was moral not legal. A legal obligation specifically bound you to do a particular thing under penalty. Such an obligation could not exist between sovereign states. A moral obligation was indeed superior to a legal obligation and even more binding, but it always involved the right to exercise judgment and decide whether under the circumstances the obligation applied and called for action. This discretion remained in Congress and could not be taken away.

The results were much as usual. "A careful canvass of the committee on the return of the Senators to their offices showed an absolutely unchanged alignment. The President did not convince any Senators who are opposed to the league or treaty, or any of those who want reservations." But, it seemed that he inspired those who favored ratification without change with more enthusiasm.52

A few days later the Committee voted, 9-8, to amend the Treaty directly to put Japan out of Shantung. On the same day, August 23, it adopted fifty amendments designed to remove the American members from nearly all of the commissions set up to enforce the treaty.

Then in answer to the President’s plea for a report on the treaty

52 New York Times, Wednesday, August 20, 1919, pt. 1, p. 3.
it opened "the American Conference" and proceeded to hear the grievances of every group of people disappointed at the Peace Conference who cared to appear before it. The Egyptians led off, followed by the Irish, Lithuanians, Latvians, Esthonians, Negro Americans, Hungarians, Albanians, Jugo Slavs and Italians. Many of the delegations were self-appointed, but the Committee listened gravely and sympathetically to their troubles, as if it could do something for them. Most of them were American citizens and voters. No suspicion of hyphenation was lodged against them.\footnote{53}

As this program got well under way the President made his final decision, at the close of August, to appeal in person to the people of the West who had elected him.

In the meantime, the speech making had continued in the Senate. Senator Fall, of New Mexico, reminded the Senate that this idea of a millennium was rather old and protested that if we joined the League we would not only destroy the government of our fathers, but, commit a "crime against the nations of the earth, against civilization itself...." Senator Sterling, on the 4th, suggested that the clause requiring the fulfillment of obligations before withdrawal would make departures from the League impossible. Senator Watson, of Indiana, attacked Japan's record at length. Senator Kellogg, defended the constitutionality of League membership, at the same time pleading for reservation.

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On August 12, Senator Lodge delivered his first prepared attack
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\footnote{53}{U. S. Congress, Senate, \textit{Congressional Record}, 66th Cong., 1st Session, Tuesday, August 12, 1919, Vol. 58, Pt. 4, Washington, 1919, 3778-3781.}
\end{footnotes}
after the submission of the treaty. He began with the preamble of the Covenant. "Brave words, indeed!" Then he discovered that Article 3 actually gave the league the right to interfere in the internal conflict of its members to "deal with" any matter affecting the peace of the world. He could see no distinction whatever between legal and moral obligations in connection with Article 10. We might well have to whip China in Shantung. And if King Hussien of Hedjaz, then attacked by the Bedouins, appealed to us for aid we would be bound to send American troops to Arabia. There would be no escape except by breach of faith. And there was no doubt whatever in his mind that other nations might order American ships and troops to any part of the world. This must not be. It must be made perfectly clear that not even a corporal's guard could ever be ordered anywhere except by the constitutional authority of the United States.54

Senator Nugent, Democrat of Idaho, speaking on August 25, knew of no reason why a distinction should be drawn between the "sovereign right" of a nation to plunder its weaker neighbors and the "right of an individual to do so." Moreover, whatever sovereign rights we lost would be lost by other members also, so we would be in the same relative position. The "sovereign right" to declare war exactly when it pleased us had been given up already in the twenty-eight Bryan peace treaties ratified by the Senate.55

54 Ibid., 3781-84.

Senator Knox closed the August debates by declaring himself opposed to the whole treaty. He had held a conference of irreconcilable senators on August 21, a week before the President finally announced his decision to go before the country, at which plans were made for a speaking tour of Senators in the West designed to bring about the complete defeat of the League.56

Wilson then decided to appeal to the people to support him. He was convinced that the masses would rally once more, and an organized and overwhelming public opinion would force the Senate to act promptly and favorably.

Wilson undertook the arduous journey against the advice of physicians and friends. His health had never been robust, and he was now weak and trembling. Six years as Chief Executive, with the inferno of a World War and the madhouse of a Peace Conference thrown in, had taken its toll. The Republican opposition at home, to say nothing of oppressing domestic problems and the heat of Washington had sapped his strength.57 The President knew he was taking a grave chance; however, he said he would be glad to give his life for the cause.58

The President set out from Washington on September 3. After speaking in Ohio and Indiana, he passed on to the trans-Mississippi Middle West. His reception here, though enthusiastic, were not all that his friends might

56 Congressional Record, 66th Cong., 1 Sess., 1919, ll.93-4501.
57 Edith Bolling Wilson, Memoir, Indianapolis, 1939, 274.
58 Tumulty, Wilson As I Knew Him, 435.
have desired. Already exhausted he did not have time to prepare his speeches properly. He made some palpable errors of fact, and he so far lost his customary dignity as to challenge his adversaries to "put up or shut up." He was also under the handicap of placing the best possible interpretation on what he knew was an imperfect treaty. But when Wilson reached Montana and Idaho he was welcomed with demonstrations that were well-nigh unbelievable. Washington, Oregon and California warmed to the President.\(^{59}\) The climax of the President's sojourn in Los Angeles came when Lyman J. Gage, Secretary of the Treasury in President McKinley's cabinet, said to him, "I think I express the sentiment of the great mass of the people when I say 'God bless President Wilson. Go on with the work.'\(^{60}\)

Disturbed by the reception that Wilson was receiving, several of the "irreconcilable" Senators, notably Borah of Idaho and Johnson of California, carried through plans to "trail" the President, speaking in some of the same cities a little later on the other side of the subject. As orators they were much better than the President in speaking to immense audiences and better able to play on the emotions of the masses. Johnson was so grateful because of the response he received that he begged for more delay, saying, "If we could just get sixty days before the final date the American people would make their desires known in such unmistakable terms that nothing would be left of this treaty.\(^{61}\)

\(^{59}\) New York Times, Sept. 18, 1919.

\(^{60}\) Ibid., Sept. 19, 1919.

\(^{61}\) Ibid.
CHAPTER IV

RESERVATIONS TO THE TREATY

After the President's trip was well started the Senate Foreign Relations Committee brought in its report, on September 10. The report of a Republican majority—a bitterly partisan document—proposed forty-five amendments and four reservations. After prolonged debate, the amendments were rejected on the ground that the entire Peace Conference would have to be reconvened to make them valid. Instead, the Senate by an almost solid Republican vote added fourteen so-called Lodge reservations. These were ostensibly designed to release the United States from certain entanglements, and to safeguard American institutions and historic policies including the Monroe Doctrine.1

Wilson had expressed a willingness to accept mild reservations but he balked at those of Senator Lodge, particularly the one that struck at Article 10, "the heart of the Covenant." The President felt, not without reason, that if he should consent to the Senate reservations, the opposition would add others that he could not accept. He also believed that the Senate would eventually be forced into line because "the alternative of going back to Germany to negotiate a new treaty," would be "too absurd." At this crucial moment Wilson wrote a letter to his loyal Democratic following:

1 Bailey, Diplomatic History of the United States, 674.
... In my opinion ... the Lodge resolution does not provide for ratification but rather, for the nullification of the treaty. I sincerely hope that the friends and supporters of the treaty will vote against the Lodge resolution of ratification.

I understand that the door will probably then be open for a genuine resolution of ratification.

I trust that all true friends of the treaty will refuse to support the Lodge resolution.²

The crucial vote was taken on the next day, November 19, 1919. The treaty with the fourteen reservations, was defeated by a vote of 39 yeas to 55 nays. The yeas consisted of thirty-five "reservationists" Republicans and four Democrats; the nays consisted of thirteen "irreconcilable" Republicans, together with the overwhelming majority of the Democrats, forty-two altogether who loyally followed their fallen leader's request. Since these Democratic votes defeated the treaty with reservations, it might be said that Wilson himself kept the United States out of the League of Nations.

The Republicans rejoiced, but the treaty was not dead. Under the lash of a strong public reaction the Senate voted to reconsider its decision, and on February 16, 1920, the debate was resumed. The treaty came to a vote on March 19, 1920. There were often discussions which became heated. There were fifteen reservations this time—one had been added in favor of Irish independence.³ As before, Wilson wrote a letter to the rudderless Democrats in the Senate expressing his desire that the treaty with reservations be rejected. He insisted:

² Congressional Record, 66th Cong., 1st Sess., 1919, 8768.
Either we should enter the league fearlessly, accepting the responsibility and not fearing the role of leadership which we now enjoy, contributing our efforts towards establishing a just and permanent peace, or we should retire as gracefully as possible from the great concert of powers by which the world was saved.  

The Democrats in complying with the President's request apparently believed that after a complete deadlock had been established by the two votes upon ratification a set of compromise reservations acceptable to both sides would be worked out. The hope proved vain at the close of the session, but the demands for a compromise were so strong in the country that an unofficial conciliation committee was constituted after the holidays consisting of two Republicans regulars, Senators Lodge and New, two middle grounders, Kellogg and Lanroot and five Democrats. The irreconcilables were not directly represented, but at the crucial moments, when the group seemed about to agree on a reservation to Article 10, Senators Lodge and New went into conference with them and progress ceased.  

The President, in this, remained opposed to altering the Treaty and was so convinced that the country thought likewise that he wrote the Jackson Day Diners on January 8, urging a great and solemn referendum on the subject of the coming election.  

We cannot rewrite this treaty. We must take it without change which alter its meaning, or leave it, and then, after the rest of the world has signed it, we must face the unthinkable task of making another and separate kind of treaty with Germany.  

1 Congressional Record, 66 Cong., 2 Sess., 1920, 4025.  
6 Shaw, Messages and Papers of Woodrow Wilson, II, 1163.
This prospect did not appeal to the people in general, but it did not appeal the Republican leaders, nor did the idea of an appeal to the people arouse enthusiasm among the Democratic chiefs. They had already had too much evidence of the hostility of the Irish, German and Italian voters to the League and toward its maker. Other great leaders, too urged submission to the Lodge program. Mr. Bryan counselled acceptance strongly, and Lord Gray, after a period as British Ambassador, advised likewise. 7

The reservations over which there was such a complete failure to gain agreement are still likely to seem necessary or superfluous according to the political or temperamental viewpoint of the reader. That they became politically necessary to the ratification of the treaty cannot be questioned.

The first reservation dealt with withdrawal. This reservation made it certain that in case the United States became uncomfortable in the League no technical objections should impede her exit. The fear of such a predicament was peculiar to the American objectors to the League and, in spite of their long emphasis upon the necessity of a clear path to the rear, no other country, European or American, acquired their apprehensions.

The President's objections to this reservation were that it gave to Congress the right to take us out of the League by a concurrent resolution, that is, by a bare majority vote and without his consent. 8

The second and most bitterly contested reservation disavowed any obligation to be bound by Article 10, and other parts of the Covenant, unless

8 Congressional Record, 66 Congress, 2 Session, 1920, 3211.
a future Congress should assume the obligation at the time. According to one faction this reservation was vitally necessary to preserve our liberty and fully safeguard it. The reservation read:

The United States assumes no obligation to preserve the territorial integrity or political independence of any other country or to interfere in controversies between nations—whether members of the League or not—under the provisions of Article 10, or to employ the military or naval forces of the United States under any article of the treaty for any purpose, unless in any particular case the Congress, which, under the Constitution, has the sole power to declare war or authorize the employment of the military or naval forces of the United States, shall by act or joint resolution so provide.9

The third reservation provided that no mandate over any of the conquered territories should be accepted by the United States without action of Congress, a statement which was, again, needless or urgently required according to the attitude held toward the Presidency and especially toward the President of the time. It would only be a rash President indeed who would attempt to assume on his own authority such a responsibility for the country, one that he could hardly maintain long without action of Congress. The final vote on the clause, on February 26, was 68 to 4.10

Number four warned the League away from interference with our domestic affairs or with any concerns that were even partly domestic. Among the fifty-seven states who joined the League no single one became alarmed about interference with its domestic affairs. They were just as jealous of their domestic integrity too, as we could be—and many of them a hundred

9 Fleming, United States and the League, 118.
10 Congressional Record, 66 Cong., 2 Sess., 1920, 3514.
times less able to protect it in case of infringement. Yet when the possibility was held high in the Senate it seemed unreasonable not to forestall it, particularly when it would always come down to the plausible insistence, "If the League does not mean to do these things, it surely won't do any harm to say so." Therefore the Senate voted 56 to 25 on March 2, in favor of the above mentioned reservation.11

Miller has pointed out in his penetrating analysis of the reservations that, Reservation No. 1 is logically indefensible. If a question relates "in part" to internal affairs, must it not relate also to foreign affairs to some extent? The question is conclusively answered by the fact that the United States has already ratified treaties regulating all seven of the subjects "reserved" in the reservation.12

The Hitchcock reservation on domestic questions attempted to cover the subject in a more general set of terms, and in less offensive language as follows:

That no member nation is required to submit to the League, its Council, or its Assembly, for decision, report, or recommendation, any matter which it considers to be in international law a domestic question, such as immigration, labor, tariffs, or other matter relating to its internal or coastwise affairs.13

The Senate's reassertion of the inviolability—and ambiguity—of the Monroe Doctrine might also have been allowed to pass at that time.

11 Ibid., 3741.
13 Congressional Record, 66 Cong., 1 Sess., 1919, 8800.
It would have not been an occasion for surprise however, if some Latin Country had felt it a good opportunity to disavow our hegemony over this hemisphere and to maintain that since the assertion of the Doctrine's validity in the amended Covenant does not appear to be sufficient it was time to have some definition of the Doctrine and some limitations of our pretension under it.

The fifth reservation informed the members of the League that:

The United States will not submit to arbitration or to inquiry by the Assembly or by the Council of the League of Nations, provided for in said treaty of peace, any questions which in the judgment of the United States depend upon or relate to long established policy, commonly known as the Monroe Doctrine; said doctrine is to be interpreted by the United States alone and is hereby declared to be wholly outside the jurisdiction of said League of Nations and entirely unaffected by any provision contained in the said treaty of peace with Germany.

The long attack upon the Shantung settlement and upon Japan's motives came to an end with the adoption of the comparatively mild statement that "The United States withholds its assent to Articles 156, 157, and 158, and receives full liberty of action with respect to any controversy which may arise under said articles." 11

Whether the Japanese government of the day would have been tolerant and strong enough to have assented to our entry into the League under this condition can never be known. The pride of the Japanese people had been deeply hurt by the rejection of their racial equality declaration by the Peace Conference and this feeling had not been allayed by the sustained effort of the American Senators to hold up their succession to the German property in

11 Congressional Record, 66 Cong., 1 Sess., 1919, 8794.
China as an example of the gross immoralities perpetrated in the treaty. Political necessity, if nothing more, may well have led the Japanese Government to refuse to assent this reservation.15

The seventh reservation was designed to prevent any American from serving either officially or unofficially upon any body set up by the Treaty or League unless authorized by Congress to do so. The eighth claimed for that body a right to overrule the Reparation Commission on certain contingencies. The ninth informed the League that Congress would have to pass upon any of its expenses attributed to us. Two of these declarations may have been easily overlooked by the powers, but the principal Allies would have had cause to hesitate before giving our Congress a veto over one of the most important powers of the Reparation Commission.16

The tenth provision sought to make sure that the ancient right of self defense was not abolished and that Congress might approve any arms reduction, while the eleventh quieted the professed fears of Senators that the economic boycott applied to a covenant breaking state might be extended to its citizens living in other countries. No possibility, however remote, of future tyranny by the League was being overlooked by the reservationists and no opportunity to stoutly defend the rights of the Americans was passed by. Thus the twelfth reservation dealing with two articles of the treaty which provided for the liquidation of debts between citizens of the signatory states forbade the

15 Miller, My Diary at the Conference of Paris, 583.
16 Fleming, United States and the League, 426-428.
construction of these articles into anything "otherwise illegal or in contravention of the rights of citizens of the United States."

The thirteenth clause of the proposed resolution of ratification looked with suspicion on the International Labor Organization and proclaimed once more the right of Congress to regulate our coming and going in the League. It said:

The United States withholds its assent to Part XIII, Articles 387-427, inclusive, unless Congress by act or joint resolution shall hereafter make provision for representation in the organization established by said Part XIII, and in such event the participation of the United States will be governed and conditioned by the provisions of such act or joint resolution.17

The sustained campaign to convince sections of the American people that the League would be controlled by Great Britain ended in the declaration that:

Until Part I, being the Covenant of the League of Nations, shall be so amended as to provide that the United States shall be entitled to cast a number of votes equal to that which any member of the League and its self-governing dominions, colonies, or parts of empires, in the aggregate shall be entitled to cast, the United States assumes no obligation to be bound by any election, decision, report or finding of the Council or Assembly in which any member of the League and its self-governing dominions, colonies or parts of empire in the aggregate have cast more than one vote......

The United States assumes no obligation to be bound by any decision, report or finding of the Council or Assembly arising out of any dispute between the United States and any member of the League if such member, or any self-governing dominion, colony, empire or part of empire united with it politically has voted.18

The result was that we put it up to the countries who are most like

17 Ibid., 4399.

18 Congressional Record, 66 Cong., 2 Sess., 1920, 4061.
us in language and customs, in blood and in religion, and whose international problems are most akin to ours, either to have any action of the League in which they participated open to question or disavowal on our part or to give us a representation which would upset the principle of the equality of state—the only basis upon which there was a chance of building the League. It might be true enough that every member of the League would in practice wield influence in proportion to its power and resources, but the smallest states prized their formal equality in the family of nations. The action of the American Senate might be due solely to internal politics; nevertheless, the developing nationalities within the British Empire could hardly be expected to sink back to a lower status at our request nor the powerful Allies to allow multiple votes without increasing our own.

The chaos due to follow such a scramble for power and place was of no consequence to the Senators. Nor were they concerned over the probable rejection of this condition to our entry into the League. People as proud as ours were expected to acquiesce. The advent of the British Dominion to nationhood, which their membership in the Peace Conference and in the League had announced had been cordially accepted by the other nations and contested by none, no matter how alien to them in culture and institutions the new states thus recognized might be. It remained for the leaders of the country most akin to them to preach as supposed domination that aroused nobody else.

Shortly before the final vote in March, 1920, a combination of Democrats and Republicans spoiled the symmetry of the Fourteen Reservations by adding a fifteenth, on the subject of Ireland. Introduced by Senator
Gerry, Democrat of Rhode Island, it was frowned on by the Lodge Republicans as an effort to hold the Irish vote of 38 to 36, with the bitterenders enthusiastically voting yea. The Republicans divided 18 for and 20 against; The Democrats split 20 for and 16 against.

The last of the reservations set forth that:

In consenting to the ratification of the treaty with Germany the United States adheres to the principle of self-determination and to the resolution of sympathy with the aspirations of the Irish people for a government of their own choice adopted by the Senate June 6, 1919, and declares that when such a government is attained to Ireland, a consummation it is hoped is at hand, it should promptly be admitted as a member of the League of Nations.19

The Senate in one reservation dared anybody even to consider anything that we might label a domestic question, and in another encouraged a separate movement in the territory of a friendly ally. In one reservation it inveighed against the six British votes in the Assembly, and in another prayed for the creation of a seventh. Strangely enough, too, this last wish of the Senate is the only one that was granted. The Irish Free State has been a proud and active member of the League of Nations since 1923.20

The second, which was the most disputed reservation read --- in November:

The United States assumes no obligation to preserve the territorial or political independence of any other country or to interfere in controversies between nations—whether members of the League or not—under the provision of Article 10, or to employ the military or naval forces of the United States under any article of the treaty for any purpose, unless in any particular case the Congress, which under

19 Ibid., 4499.
20 Fleming, United States and the League, 433.
the Constitution, has sole power to declare war or authorize the employment of military or naval forces of the United States shall by act of joint resolution so provide.21

On March 12, Lodge, offered a substitute by adding "its resources or any form of economic discrimination." This invalidated the claim of the mild reservationists that the reservations left the economic boycott in full force.

This sharpening of the reservationists caused the irreconcilables to set up a wail that the new draft was really a surrender by Lodge. They considered it weaker than the original. So the phrase "including all controversies relating to territorial integrity or political independence," was inserted to make sure that the article really negatived. The form of the final reservation was therefore:

The United States assumes no obligation to preserve the territorial integrity or political independence of any other country by the employment of its military or naval forces, its resources, or any form of economic discrimination, or to interfere in any way in controversies between nations, including all territories relating to territorial integrity or political independence, whether members of the League or not, under the provision of Article 10, or to employ the military or naval force of the United States, under any article of the treaty for any purpose, unless in any particular case of the Congress, which under the Constitution has the sole power to declare war or authorize the employment of the military or naval forces of the United States, shall in the exercise of full liberty of action by act or joint resolution so provide.22

The treaty came to a vote on March 19, 1920 and failed to receive the necessary two-thirds majority by a vote of 49 yeas to 35 nays. The nays consisted of 12 "irreconcilable" Republicans, plus twenty-three Democrats

21 Congressional Record, 66 Cong., 2 Sess., 4211.
22 Ibid., 4324.
who remained loyal to Wilson.

Since it was obvious that the treaty would not be ratified without reservations, twenty-one Democrats forsook their leader and voted for approval. This may not have happened had the President been silent. He asked for complete victory and received none.

The failure of the President's plan may be attributed to many causes. Among the important factors were ignorance of the treaty, confusion of thought, jealousy of Senatorial prerogative, personal hatred of Wilson, and a strong traditional policy of isolation. Reservations killed the treaty. The Lodge reservations were added by an almost solid Republican vote and opposed by an almost solid Democratic vote. This evidence suggests that partisan politics pure and simple contributed more than anything else to the defeat of Wilson in the Senate. Had he been a Republican the decision might have been reversed.

Wilson's physical collapse was a vital factor in the outcome. He might have seen the wisdom of accepting a compromise if he had been well, and had been more closely in touch with the drift of public opinion. But he was probably not fully cognizant of the true state of affairs. Subborn and of a single-track mind, he was permitted to see only a few people, and these were loath to shock the sick man with disagreeable realities. Whether properly informed or not, Wilson rejected the Lodge reservations outright, apparently hoping that in 1920 the voters would rise up and demand an unemasculated League.
CHAPTER V

ELECTION OF 1920

The Senate having failed twice to approve the treaty, it was returned to the President and the majority leaders moved a joint resolution, April 1, 1920, which attempted to end the legal state of war with Germany by the same method which inaugurated it. This resolution passed in both houses by substantial majorities, was vetoed by President Wilson May 27th, and failed of passage over his veto by a vote of 220 for repassage to 152 against. Mr. Wilson vetoed the message hoping somehow that the people would demand the treaty in the approaching presidential election.¹

The Republican National Convention found it difficult to frame an acceptable plank on the League, because within the party there were "irreconcilables," reservationists, and advocates of the League. It was apparently a platform that was a masterpiece of ambiguity and was worded as to enable all shades of Republicans to support the party in the confident belief that their views would be sustained. The first paragraph read was to those who wanted the League. It promised at the very least a consultative part with the nations whereby "instant and general conference" should be had whenever the peace was threatened. The second paragraph denounced the Covenant in words grave enough to suit any bitter opponent of the League as "certain" to produce "the injustice, hostility, and controversy among nations which it pro-

¹ Congressional Record, 66 Cong., 2 Sess., 1920, 5129.
posed to prevent"— The Reservationists were satisfied by a suggestion that perhaps the coming administration would form a new and better "association" of nations which would doubtless be both Republican and American. "Such agreement with the other nations of the world as shall meet the full duty of America to civilization and to humanity"— with reservations, of course.2

Deadlocked over a nominee, the Republican Convention turned, as a compromise choice, to the handsome and affable Senator Warren G. Harding of Ohio.3 He was easily manageable, and a regular Republican. He had been a somewhat mechanical opponent of the League during the fight, and had commended himself to the attention of the party bosses months before the convention met. The prospects, which were his, improved when he declared that "America's present need is not heroics but healing; not nostrums but normalcy; not revolution but restoration. . . ." Harding, the antithesis of Wilson, was the man for the times. Unlike the unapproachable President, he was hail-fellow-well-met. To be sure he was not an intellectual heavyweight. Wilson spoke of his "bungalow mind." But as one Republican Senator said, the times did not demand "first raters."4

The Democratic Convention convened in San Francisco, and faced similar difficulties in taking its stand and choosing its candidate. The completed platform, commending the President for his courage and good faith and

2 William F. Johnson, George Harvey, Boston, 1929, 287-89.
3 Ibid., 278.
4 Ibid., 280.
charging that the Republican Senate refused to ratify the treaty "merely be-
cause it was the product of Democratic statesmanship," declared for the
League of Nations "as the surest, if not the only practicable means of main-
taining the permanent peace and terminating the insufferable burden of great
military and naval establishments."

The attitude of the Democrats toward reservations was defined as
follows:

We endorse the President's view of our international obligations
and his firm stand against reservations designed to cut to pieces
the vital provision of the Versailles Treaty and we commend the
Democrats in Congress for voting against resolutions for separate
peace which would disgrace the nation. We advocate the immediate
ratification of the treaty without reservations which would impair
its essential integrity, but do not oppose the acceptance of reserva-
tions making clearer or more specific the obligations of the United
States to the League Associates.

The Democrats selected as their nominee, Governor Cox of Ohio.
The resulting campaign was a listless affair, in spite of Wilson's request
that it be a great and solemn referendum. There can be no doubt that by this
time the electorate was thoroughly weary of the treaty issue now nearly two
years old. The somewhat confused Harding took, so claimed his opponent, four-
teen different stands on the League question. Perhaps his most consistent
note was that after the election he would consult with the "best minds" to the
end "that we shall have an association of nations for the promotion of inter-
national peace." 5 In short, not a Democratic "League" but a Republication
"Association." Mr. Chester Rowell, a well-informed Republican journalist
wrote:

One half of the speeches were for the League of Nations if you read them hastily, but if you read them with care every word of them could have been read critically as against the League of Nations. The other half were violent speeches against the League if you read them carelessly, but if you read them critically everyone of them could be interpreted as in favor of the League of Nations.6

But all this did not disturb the electorate very much. Back to Normalcy, was the winning slogan.

The result was a foregone conclusion. On the eve of the election odds were ten to one against Cox. Hundreds of thousands of eligible voters stayed away from the polls. Wearied of Wilsonism, the rest rose up and cast a tremendous vote for Harding. As Joseph Tumulty, Wilson's secretary said, "It was not a landslide, it was an earthquake."7

Was the Republican triumph a repudiation of the League, as Lodge gloatingly asserted? There were so many issues, ranging from prohibition of alcoholic beverages to self-determination for Ireland, that it would be difficult to say whether the results were made a mandate on any one of them. The Republican platform was so ambiguous and the candidate so platitudinous that "irreconcilables" like Senators Borah and Johnson supported Harding as the surest way of keeping the country out of the League, while thirty-one prominent Republicans, including Root, Hughes and Hoover, signed a manifesto announcing that they were voting for Harding as the surest way of getting the country into the League. Perhaps the Democratic New York World was not far from the mark when it observed: "The American people wanted a change and they

6 Quoted in Fleming, United States and the League, 460.
7 Blum, Joseph Tumulty and the Wilson Era, 259.
have voted for a change. They do not know what kind of change they wanted, and they do not know today what kind of change they have voted for.” If the results were a mandate on anything they were a mandate from the people to relax—to get away from Wilsonism and to return to "normalcy."
Wilson was masterful, unresponsive to advice, avowedly partisan and uncompromising in demanding acceptance of his plan. He had never enjoyed service in Congress and repeatedly misinterpreted the temper of the Senate and of the House, and engaged in useless controversies. Because of his ignorance of the ways and rules of the Senate, Wilson lost his greatest battle.

Just before he began the task of perfecting his peace plan and laying it before the nations at Paris, Wilson made this mistake. He appealed to the people to elect Democrats to Congress, on the plea that he could not otherwise be the "unembarrassed spokesman" of the United States. Congress at that time was controlled by Democrats, but partisanship was in abeyance. It flamed into white heat instantly and in the election that followed a few days after Wilson's plea, the people transferred control of Congress to the Republican Party.

The intensely bitter feeling of Republicans and independent voters against Wilson's injection of partisanship in the midst of war was carried into the Senate and became a factor in the defeat of Wilson's peace plan. But it was not a prime factor. Later events revealed that the basic reason that caused the United States to avoid membership in the League of Nations was the conflict between the Monroe Doctrine and the Covenant. The United States Senate could not maintain the integrity of the Monroe Doctrine and at the same time consent to intervention by the League in the political affairs of the Western Hemisphere.

Wilson invited partisan opposition again when he excluded the
Republicans from consultation in the development of his peace plan and from participation in peace negotiations at Paris.

Wilson knew that one third and more of the Senate opposed his plan to intertwine the League of Nations with the Treaty of Versailles. What he failed to consider was that the Senate could adopt amendments and reservations to treaties by majority vote. He believed that a two-thirds vote was necessary to change a treaty in the Senate. Therefore he insisted that the treaty should be approved without change, fully believing that public sentiment would support him and on all sides it was admitted that the people favored the Wilson plan at the time he admitted it to the Senate.

When the Senate proceeded to make changes in the treaty by majority vote, Wilson sought to win popular support for unconditional approval by making his western trip.

Republicans furnished most of the votes for reservations, but Democrats furnished some votes in each case. Partisanship was not the motive of Senators in voting upon some reservations, especially after public opposition developed against unconditional ratification. The reservations gained approval even among Democrats in the Senate.

There were forty-seven Democrats in the Senate, but upon the motion to approve the treaty unconditionally only thirty-seven Democrats votes were ayes and the motion was defeated by a vote of fifty-three nayes to thirty-eight yeas. Seven Democrats refused to accept the treaty without modification. Since all the reservations were adopted by bipartisan votes it is evident that something more than partisanship was at work in the Senate in re-
jecting the Treaty of Versailles. Objections were registered against both the Covenant and other parts of the Treaty. Among the reasons for popular disapproval of the Treaty of Versailles, after debate in the Senate had illuminated the subject were these:

The people were not willing to guarantee the territorial integrity or political independence of other countries; they wanted the Monroe Doctrine to be excepted entirely from the jurisdiction of the League; they objected to the transfer of Shantung from China to Japan; they insisted upon exclusive American jurisdiction over purely domestic questions like immigration; and they objected to giving other nations more votes than the United States in the League Assembly.

Again and again the question arises, "Should the United States have ratified the treaty and joined the League?" We had very little to lose and everything to gain, possibly a preventing of so-called World War II. No nation was ever trapped in the League as our isolationists warned; Japan got out, Germany got out, Russia was thrown out. Where the possible losses were so negligible and the probable gains so tremendous the United States as Wilson repeatedly pointed out, was more than justified in taking the chance.
CRITICAL ESSAY ON AUTHORITIES

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PERIODICALS


The thesis submitted by Sister Michael Agnes Roche, O.P. has been read and approved by three members of the Department of History.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

January 15, 1957

Date

Paul Finiary

Signature of Adviser