

Official Democratic Statement

By Douglas County Democratic Central Committee.

JAMES M. COX



By Will Irvin. How the League is Organized and Operated.

Q. How is the league of nations organized?

A. Its direction consists of two bodies: (1) The council. (2) The assembly. Of these, the smaller, more active, and therefore more important will be the council. It will have—if we ratify the covenant—nine members, representing Great Britain, France, the United States, and four smaller nations. The five great powers, unless the covenant is amended, will be represented permanently. The identity of the four smaller nations will be changed from time to time. At present these are Belgium, Greece, Spain, and Brazil. The larger, less active, and less important branches will be the assembly, comprising not more than three representatives of each nation having membership in the league.

There will also be a permanent secretariat, composed of experts, attached to the council and assembly.

Q. What are the relative functions of the council and the assembly?

A. In theory, their functions are the same. In practice the council will do the most work. It will meet frequently, while the assembly will meet at longer intervals (7). In case of a sudden crisis threatening war, it would be more difficult to convene a prompt meeting of the assembly than of the council.

Q. If you think of the council as a board of directors and of the assembly as a meeting of stockholders, will you have a helpful comparison?

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Q. How will the league operate in a sudden crisis?

A. The covenant compels arbitration or investigation, with the consequent delay and publicity before resort to arms.

Q. If any serious dispute arises between members of the league which they recognize as suitable (7) for arbitration the members agree to submit the matter to arbitration.

Q. How would this provision have operated in 1914?

A. The crisis leading to the war became acute about July 1, 1914. War was begun on August 1. Under the conditions imposed by the league it could not have begun until March 1, 1915. As March is the season of slack food supply, and the central powers would probably have waited for their harvest before attacking, they would doubtless have delayed action until July or August, 1915—a period of one year from the beginning of the crisis.

Q. What is the use of the delay before commencing hostilities?

A. In the light of nineteenth century history, it is of the greatest service to peace. At the beginning of any dispute which seems likely to result in war the nations secretly or openly mobilize their great military and naval establishments. In modern war, as the Japanese proved in 1904 and the Germans in 1914, early success lies with the party which strikes first. Even if one nation intends to act purely on the defensive, it dare not risk the advantage which the other may gain by that first attack. The accidental discharge of a gun may, in this state of national nervousness, precipitate hostilities. The delay of three to nine months would prevent this state of affairs and would also give the national blood, always heated under such circumstances, time to cool. In many, if not in most cases, during this truce the diplomats of the belligerents would probably adjust the matter between themselves.

Q. What other benefit would accrue from such delay?

A. It would facilitate the reduction of armaments. The main excuse for great standing armies is that nations, considering the value of early attack, must be always ready to put their maximum forces into the field. Under this rule, they would have at least from three to nine months in which to prepare; they could not afford therefore to keep part of their permanent military establishment in skeleton form.

Q. Tomorrow's A B C of the League of Nations will make plain the league's power of boycott on an outlaw nation.

A. The members of the league agree not to resort to war over such dispute until three months after the decision by the arbitrators or after the report of the council. As the month has six months in which to make its report and as the arbitrators would probably take as long, the world delay war at least nine months.

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(To Be Continued.)

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