

THE ROAD TO PEACE

BY JOSEPH CAILLAUX

[When arrested during the war for an alleged attempt to negotiate a separate peace with Germany, ex-Premier Caillaux exclaimed: 'They cannot forgive me for having avoided war in 1911.' Then, as Prime Minister, he compromised with Germany on the question of Morocco. Though temporarily deprived of his political rights and banished from Paris, M. Caillaux is still regarded by many as the real leader of the Radical opposition to Premier Poincaré. This interview was originally granted to the Socialist People.]

From *L'Ère Nouvelle*, January 21
(PARIS RADICAL DAILY)

YOU ask if I believe in peace. Like some of those you have already consulted, I reply that I desire peace with all my strength. I might add, recalling the events of 1911, that when one desires peace with all one's strength one can make sure of its being kept. In fact, I believe I am not exaggerating when I repeat what others have already said — namely, that at the time of the Agadir crisis I got the better of the war hydra. But I also know what difficulties such an effort implies, and at this very moment I am weighing the consequences involved.

What clouds my desire for peace is partly the psychological and moral state of the world and partly — I was going to say especially — its economic state.

The first condition for obtaining prospects of peace is a change in the general state of mind. Many eminent men understand this. Writers and thinkers are planning or visioning great intellectual organizations which would undertake to dissipate the miasma, to reconstruct for humanity the spiritual laws of life. This is, to be sure, an arduous task, but it is nevertheless necessary, even indispensable. However, at the risk of appearing both too pessimistic and too practical, I expect de-

cisive results only in case this intellectual spring-tide is accompanied by an economic reconstruction.

You know that I am not a Socialist, unless, according to Proudhon, every man interested in social movements is called a Socialist; but because of the very great interest I have taken in social problems I have meditated the works and the thoughts of the great theorists of Socialism. I am and have always been a close student of the theory of the economic interpretation of history, so boldly advanced by Karl Marx.

Though it is necessary to revise a formula which, taken literally, would attribute all the facts of history to economic evolution alone, which would underestimate the considerable rôle which the idealistic factor plays in human affairs, it is nevertheless true that always and everywhere great events have as substratum an economic condition. You agree with me, don't you? Then please take the trouble to follow my reasoning.

One of the principal causes of the war of 1914 was the need felt by big capitalism for industrial expansion, a need which it did not always know how to control. It was possible, however, to observe in the Europe of 1913, as I have

already written, the vague outlines of a new order, which would tend to harmonize the different national economic structures, — partly through agreements between great industrial organizations, and partly through the leadership sought by high finance, — and which Jaurès, according to an odd speech of 1911, agreeing with the German Socialist Hilferding, was not far from desiring.

The war naturally upset this fragile structure, or rather its preliminary foundations, which had barely risen above ground. Has the attempt been made — is the attempt being made — to gather together the scattered stones for a reconstruction of the great edifice which appeared indispensable before the war? Just the opposite. Never have the national systems of production been further separated. At best, hit or miss efforts have been made to reunite them. Everywhere there is war, aggravated by difficulties over the exchange — a war that can only get worse and worse. How can you expect peace to reign in a world where there is a perpetual economic conflict.

Relatively speaking, the remedies are simple. I believe I explained them in the book to which you have been kind enough to refer: the organization in each country of a national system of production; the creation of an economic State alongside the political State; agreements between these new bodies; international parliaments to solve the great problems of raw materials, markets, and so forth. There you have practical schemes. To be sure, they could not be carried out in a day. It would be childish to dream of such thorough-going changes taking place instantly, but at least we could make a start in this direction.

Now all backs are turned. Selfishness is unchained, profit-hunger given free rein. Everywhere there is battle.

Who can believe that an economic situation of that sort does not generate armed conflicts?

You see my point of view. First of all, a great work of spiritual regeneration must be undertaken. But since, alas! man usually acts under the impulse of his private interests, the great enterprise which absorbs so many high and noble minds has no chance of success unless it is associated with an economic renaissance.

I am very well aware that certain positive minds, more imbued than I with the theory of the economic interpretation of history, assert that nothing can be done until private property, the source of all evils, has been abolished. As far as I am concerned, I have no prejudice, either metaphysical or dogmatic, as regards private property. With Jules Ferry I regard private property as a political institution. This amounts to saying that I do not believe that human life will be forever bound up with the economic institutions of the present day; but I also refuse to admit that I am blind, and it is sufficient to open one's eyes to see that nowhere, not even in Russia, has an upheaval in present-day methods of distributing wealth been practicable.

Whether we like it or not, we live in the age of capitalism. There are no indications of a change in the repartition of wealth, which would also be conducive to progress. What is certain, however, is that capitalism is committing excesses which no one fifty years ago would have believed possible. What is also certain is that if it does not reform itself, if it does not learn to submit to discipline and to organize itself internationally, if it only ends in enthroning war, it cannot long endure. In that event, humanity will pass through a long period during which the collapse of a great economic system, which was a formidable agent of prog-

ress, but which gradually succumbed under the weight of its own faults, without having provided a successor, will cause the most terrible sufferings.

Allow me to summarize all these scattered remarks, and to return at the same time to the question you have asked. To achieve peace all men inspired by good-will must set aside all prejudices, all theories, all preconceived notions; must devote themselves to the task of a reformation that will be both moral and economic. If they succeed, it will not be necessary to seek means to prevent war. Such means will arise automatically, out of the resulting community of thought and community of interests.

Should an international gendarmerie be instituted under the auspices of the League of Nations? Should the nation that attempts to renew the crime of war be put under a political and economic blockade — which, in my opinion, would be infinitely more efficacious and fruitful? These things are details.

On the other hand, be assured that if new lines of thought are not taken and suitable economic reforms are not made, it will be vain to write any number of

projects, to pile up treaties, agreements, or protocols. They will be only so many castles of sand, similar to those constructed by the children on the beach, which a single wave suffices to sweep away.

Sometimes I ask myself whether Europe in search of unity can be spared the birth-pains which ancient Italy suffered, for you must understand that safety lies in only one direction — a United States of Europe. Let us hope that the twentieth century is reasonable enough, or has been sufficiently impressed by the terrible atrocities which new conflicts would bring, to start toward new horizons of light, while avoiding bad shepherds, so that it will not have to repeat, beating its breast, the words of Shakespeare in *King Lear*: 'T is the time's plague, when madmen lead the blind.'

May humanity be wise enough to achieve natural democracy, without getting lost in the morass of social disruption through which it must pass. What a grand rôle it would be for the working class, if it should take the leadership of the movement toward new thought and economic reorganization, dragging behind it a lingering middle class!

AN ALLIED ECONOMIC FRONT

BY ÉDOUARD HERRIOT

[While personally on friendly terms with Premier Poincaré, M. Herriot, who last fall visited the United States, is the floor leader and spokesman of the Radical Party in the Chamber of Deputies. His four-hour address on January 11 has been considered as his party's platform on foreign policy in the coming elections. The Temps version omits his reference to the League of Nations as 'the first draft of an international statute of peace,' as well as his characterization of German democracy as 'our best guaranty against an economic dictatorship.' On account of space limitations several passages in the Temps report have been left out here.]

From *Le Temps*, January 12
(PARIS SEMIOFFICIAL OPPORTUNIST DAILY)

THE Chamber yesterday resumed the discussion of interpellations on the foreign policy of the Government. A single orator occupied the tribune — M. Herriot, Deputy of the Rhone and Mayor of Lyon, who interpellated the President of the Council 'on the state of the conversations between the United States and France on the subject of Reparations and debts.'

M. Édouard Herriot, leader of the Radical and Radical-Socialist Party, is a man of letters, a graduate of the École Normale Supérieure, as well as a political man. His speech showed it. In addition to remarks of a purely political nature he expressed other views, inspired by the noblest ideas and fecund in the most broad-minded schemes.

A brilliant talker, a perfect lecturer, M. Édouard Herriot has the gift of holding the attention of his auditors. He speaks easily, with a certain good-fellowship and simplicity, walking back and forth on the tribune while making familiar gestures.

Yesterday he gained a substantial oratorical triumph. His personal friends as well as members of the Government joined in the applause which greeted the peroration of his speech, the last phrase of which was taken from the Gospels. The first part of M. Herriot's

address constituted the critical part, the second the positive; and here the speaker made suggestions of which many might be carried out if the Reich were willing.

In opening, the speaker said that the anniversary of the occupation of the Ruhr and the eve of the Conference of Experts furnished a good opportunity for a survey of the situation. If this Conference succeeds, it may mean definite peace; if it fails, France may be definitely isolated.

Laying aside all other matters, M. Herriot declared that he intended to treat only the serious Reparations question, adding that he was of the opinion that, in this respect, the occupation of the Ruhr had yielded insufficient results. The Düsseldorf agreements were only temporary, and the speaker attempted to prove that the occupation of the Ruhr was not enough, necessary though it may have been.

M. HERRIOT: 'The expenses of the occupation of the Ruhr and of the left bank of the Rhine amount to about 392,000,000 gold marks. Then we must deduct the Belgian priority, and also take account of the 178,000,000 required for the years 1923 and 1924 to pay the occupation expenses of the American army. What becomes, then,