1930.

MEMOS FOR LINCOLN LECTURE

Detroit.

The idea underlying this course of Morning Lectures is, if I understand it, helping you who follow it to form broader and sounder judgment of what is going on in the present world. As citizens we cannot get away from a sense of responsibility about the doings of the world. But, if we are intelligent citizens we know well enough that the exercise of our responsibility will be useful, will forward and not deter progress largely in proportion to the soundness of our ideas and the fullness of our knowledge. Hence we read, we talk, we listen to others talk, as you are listening to me this morning. There is always, I take it, at any period of history certain movements of practically worldwide, a movement which nothing can stop, which are bound in time to affect the life of the whole world. We, of course, have such movements going on today. We probably would disagree about the relative importance of them. There is that obvious revolt againt Parlimentary Government. Even in this Country you will hear men of distinguished ability saying, not always out loud, but still saying that our system of putting the Government into the hands of an elected representative, that is, our form of Parliment is less and less effective, but Congress has become interested formostly in advancing and solidifying a party, not wholeheartedly and unitedly in looking after the progress of the country. This criticism could be taken, I think, with a good many grains of salt, but that there is something in it I am convinced. That is, if we cannot correct the partisan tendencies of our representative forms

Marquette

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

of Government. If they are allowed to go on until they become the fundamental interest of the Representative rather than the fundamental interest being the good of the country, we shall come to a point where revolution of some kind is inevitable. The two most prominent revolts against any kind of representative parlimentary system that the world has before it today are the fascists of Italy and the soviets of Russia. These Governments represent the extremes of revolt against the Democratic system. They both are dictatorships, one dictatorship of a single personage, the second a dictatorship of a class. Many people feel that the most fundamentally important things in the present movement that are sweeping the world are fascism and the soviets. But there is another movement to my mind of ghastly more importance to the world which has been going on now for some ten years in a international form. It is the recognized movement for a union of Christendom in the interests of Perpetual Peace

A-2

3-A

Digital Image, 2011. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

A. 2

Christendom emerging — the spread — logic of his vision —

A VISION VINDICATED

In their comments upon the scene at the opening of the Naval Conference some of the veterans among the correspondents looked back to 1919 and remarked that things were different. They missed, except in certain phrases of Mr. MacDonald's, that note of exalted idealism upon which Woodrow Wilson pitched his appeal for an organized peace. They suggested that the statesmen at London were wiser and sadder men, less ready to see visions, more firmly planted upon the ground.

Their feet are no doubt more firmly planted on the ground. But on what ground are their feet planted? On the very ground, we venture in all literalness to suggest, which the despised visionaries of 1919 viewed from the top of Pisgah but could not themselves enter. At London on Tuesday morning the five great maritime powers of the world gathered for the purpose of regulating, of limiting, of reducing, of justifying to each other, of obtaining each the others' consent and approval to, the size and character of their armaments. Is that an abandonment of the idealism of 1919? On the contrary, it is a stupendous vindication of it. What the weary and disillusioned veterans miss is the rhetoric of 1919; what they overlook is the astounding fact that what in 1919 was aspiration, hope and words is to-day institution, fact and practice. The vision of 1919 is not lost. It is realized. In place of a world of separate national states each accountable only to itself, there is in actual being a world in which no government any longer dares to deny its responsibility to the community of states.

In any long view of events this is the deepest revolution in political affairs since the rise of national states broke up the unity of Christendom in Europe. New eras in human affairs begin slowly and they are often imperceptible to those who participate in them, but the recognition by the powers of the world that the measure of force which they may possess is a matter of common concern marks, as definitely as anything could mark it, the end of one era and the beginning of another.

For the right to arm is the most intimate prerogative of national sovereignty. Nothing goes so far down into the roots of nationalism as the right to arm as and when and how the sovereign chooses. And yet here are the great powers, ten years after the débâcle of idealism at Versailles, at a conference opened by the King of England in the House of Lords pledging themselves to submit their armaments to the common judgment. There, ten years after the visionaries have been laughed out of court, American conservatives, British Socialists, a British King, Italian Fascists, French Nationalists and envoys of the Emperor of Japan declare unanimously that their armaments are an international problem. Mankind has had many dreams which came to nothing. But the dream of 1919, of an organized and co-operative world of national states, though it is coming into being more slowly and in many ways differently than the dreamers imagined, is nevertheless coming into being.

Digital Image, 2011. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.