

THE LIVING AGE

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A WEEK OF THE WORLD

EVIDENCE accumulates that we must speedily find some solution for social unrest that will restore the will to work. The evil described so forcibly by Mr. Narquet in the first article we publish this week is not limited, as he suggests, to Europe. Americans realize that it exists in this country, but they may not be aware that it presents a threat even to the cheap labor industries of the overcrowded Orient.

Behind this new sentiment of indifference or hostility to useful work, lies the growing feeling that what is produced by that work is unfairly distributed. But that belief is an old one. It was preached in America with as much vehemence, and perhaps with as broad a hearing, in the days of political labor agitation that accompanied and followed the administration of Andrew Jackson, as it is to-day. What then has brought about the present crisis if it is not a reaction from the overstrain of war?

Doubtless, there are many causes, but there is one of such general application that it commands first attention. Currency inflation is a common war phenomenon, not only in Europe, but in America and Japan. Two striking passages from Mr. Keynes's book, *The Economic Conse-*

quences of the Peace, are quotable in this connection:

Lenin is said to have declared that the best way to destroy the Capitalist System was to débauch the currency. By a continuing process of inflation, governments can confiscate, secretly and unobserved, an important part of the wealth of their citizens. By this method they not only confiscate, but they confiscate *arbitrarily*; and, while the process impoverishes many, it actually enriches some. The sight of this arbitrary rearrangement of riches strikes not only at security, but at confidence in the equity of the existing distribution of wealth. . . .

Lenin was certainly right. There is no subtler, no surer means of overturning the existing basis of society than to debauch the currency. The process engages all the hidden forces of economic law on the side of destruction, and does it in a manner which not one man in a million is able to diagnose. . . .

By directing hatred against this class (those enriched by the war), therefore, the European governments are carrying a step further the fatal process which the subtle mind of Lenin had consciously conceived. The profiteers are a consequence and not a cause of rising prices. By combining a popular hatred of the class of *entrepreneurs* with the blow already given to social security by the violent and arbitrary disturbance of contract and of the established equilibrium of wealth which is the inevitable result of inflation, these governments are fast rendering impossible a continuance of the social and economic order of the nineteenth century.

The campaign of education which Mr. Narquet advises as a remedy, should not be confined to wage earners.

Economic fallacies originate in another class of society.

COMPILATIONS of Bolshevik decrees, ordinances, and official reports, and of newspaper descriptions of economic conditions in Russia quoted from Bolshevik sources, have recently been published in both Germany and France. The latest of these has just appeared in Paris. It is entitled, *Les Bolcheviks jugés par eux-mêmes*, by Boris Sokoff.

All the testimony which the present rulers of Russia present to their own people concerning economic conditions in their country confirms the opinion that the decline in production extends to agriculture as well as to manufacturing, and that up to the present this decline has not been checked, but probably continues at a constantly accelerated rate.

ITALY and Egypt are connected by close commercial ties; but these ties have no political significance. The former country's attitude toward Egyptian nationalism is not affected by those shadows of regret that still hover in the public mind of France, where a tradition of priority in that country, beginning with Napoleon and continued by DeLesseps, was terminated by the growing influence and ultimate control of England. Indeed, the Italian Government is deeply interested in a continuance of settled conditions throughout Northern Africa, because it needs the support of its European allies in its Tripoli adventure. At the same time, the officials and the press of that country have recently shown great anxiety to ingratiate themselves with the native population of Egypt and the Levant, as if to compensate by a conquest of sentiment for their possible failure to obtain the political concessions they de-

sire. Italy's commercial and political rivals in the Eastern Mediterranean are the Greeks, to whom France is just now showing considerable favor. As a consequence, Italy is somewhat isolated in the Near East.

British friendship is a cherished tradition in Italy, and even were nearer neighbors more considerate, no policy would be popular that might affect that sentiment. Nevertheless, a large commercial colony, such as Italy has at Alexandria and Cairo, under an alien protectorate in a foreign land, is tempted to sympathize with the native population and occasionally to entertain vague thoughts of advantage from a political change. Added to these considerations in determining Italy's attitude toward Egypt, is the hope of universal democracy which, though rapidly waning, still moves the hearts of the common people of Europe.

Liberal Italy, whose leading press organ is the *Corriere della Sera*, is sympathetic with democracy wherever it asserts its claims. The article of its correspondent affords an interesting comparison with Mr. Roosevelt's opinion of the Egyptian situation, written nearly nine years ago and published with other correspondence dating from the time of his African trip in the February *Scribner's*.

The country had obviously prospered astoundingly, both from the material and the moral standpoints, as compared with conditions as I had seen them over thirty years before; but the very prosperity had made Jeshuren wax fat and kick. In Cairo and Alexandria many of the noisy leaders of the Nationalist movement were merely Levantine Moslems in European clothes, with red fezes; they were of the ordinary Levantine type, noisy, emotional, rather decadent, quite hopeless as material on which to build, but also not really dangerous as foes, although given to loud talk in the cafés and to emotional street parades. These Levantines were profoundly affected by the success of the Young Turk movement in Turkey, and were prattling about a constitution and responsible government in language

not materially different from that used by Mediterranean Christians when they are engaged either in a just and proper movement for reform or in a foolish revolutionary agitation.

The real strength of the Nationalist movement in Egypt, however, lay not with these Levantines of the cafés, but with the mass of practically unchanged bigoted Moslems to whom the movement meant driving out the foreigner, plundering and slaying the local Christian, and a return to all the violence and corruption which festered under the old-style Moslem rule, whether Asiatic or African. The American missionaries whom I met, and who I found had accomplished a really extraordinary quantity of work, were a unit in feeling that the overthrow of the English rule would be an inconceivable disaster; and this although they were quite frank in criticizing some features of English rule, and notably some actions of individual Englishmen in high places. The native Christians, the Copts, and also the Syrians and Greeks (although often themselves difficult to satisfy and fond of making absurd claims), took exactly the same view of the essentials, and dreaded keenly the murderous outbreak of Moslem brutality which was certain to follow the restoration of native rule in Egypt; but they were cowed by the seeming lack of decision of the English authorities, and the increasing insolence and turbulence of the Moslems. Moreover, I found traces, although not strong traces, of a feeling on their part that some of the English officials occasionally treated them with a galling contempt which made it hard for them always to appreciate as fully as it deserved the justice which they also received.

BULGARIA'S fluctuating national fortunes have twice within a decade brought her defeat and disaster close upon the heels of victory. Each of its recent wars has ended, after initial successes, with territorial loss. It will be left for history to decide whether this fickleness of fortune is due to national traits or to the misguided policies of the country's rulers.

At the opening of the first Balkan War the people of Russia sympathized strongly with that country. A resident in Russia heard constant encomiums of the patriotism, the national discipline, the sobriety of judgment, and the democratic instincts of the Bulgarian peasantry. Suddenly this senti-

ment was converted into equally passionate criticism of their national character.

As in other Balkan lands domestic politics have been dominated in the past by foreign policies. Political parties were divided into groups favoring, respectively, Russia and Germany. The pro-Russian party was weakened by the attitude of the Tsar's Government toward Bulgaria's claims in the last Balkan War, and therefore failed to prevent the alliance with Germany. Bulgaria's defeat has restored the prestige of this party, which has been consistently pro-Entente.

Popular sympathies, however, were not the sole power behind the foreign policy of Bulgaria. Palace intrigues had a powerful, and as the outcome shows, a baneful influence upon the country's fortunes. Although Tsar Ferdinand was a German nobleman, during the recent war the royal party bargained with equal insincerity with all contestants. Even after Bulgaria joined the Central Powers, Ferdinand's agents were reported in the German press to be communicating with Entente representatives in Sweden and Switzerland, seeking to reinsure their country against an unfavorable outcome of the war, of which the government already had a foreboding. Our Consul, who remained in Sofia,—since we never broke off relations with Bulgaria,—was a thorn in the side of the Germans, which they were never able to remove. These facts added plausibility to the cry of treason which resounded through Germany when the Bulgarian army finally collapsed.

The view of present conditions in the peasant kingdom, which we print this week, is by a German correspondent in Sofia, whose sympathies throughout the war were with its democratic leaders—some of whom are now agitating in favor of a republic.

He knows thoroughly local political currents and economic conditions. The significant point in his article is one often overlooked by Western Europe and America, that a real Bulgarian settlement must await the re-appearance of Russia in the international councils of Europe. Nothing done in Russia's absence will be final.

AMERICANS who have had little immediate occasion to interest themselves in revolutions are generally unaware that the process of overthrowing governments and social classes is rapidly being reduced to a science. For instance, the tactics of the insurgents in India betray the guidance of European revolutionary strategists as clearly as the grand manœuvres of a military power illustrate recognized principles of army strategy.

These tactics, however, are a two-edged sword, that may be directed against a revolutionary government as effectively as against a government representing conservatism and vested interests.

Majority Socialists are discovering this in Germany, and they have been compelled to meet these tactics by the same methods of defense that were used by their reactionary predecessors.

The recent disorders in Berlin illustrate this. They appear to have been instigated not by the Communists, but by the Independent Socialists, who are rated the less radical of the two groups. The crowd that assembled before the Reichstag building to protest against the proposed provisions of the Workers' Council Law, is said to have numbered thirty thousand. Processions from all parts of the city continued to arrive even after the early comers had departed. The great number of salaried workers present caused surprise. The large attendance of women, and

of workmen of the class that has hitherto supported the more conservative faction of the Socialists, was another striking feature of the occasion. During the attack on the Reichstag building, extreme disorder prevailed in the National Assembly where the radical minority tried to intimidate the majority by tactics that verged upon riot. One local account says that the members of the government completely lost their heads. Independent and Majority Socialists reviled each other and seemed about to come to blows. Cabinet ministers rushed around in confusion, 'like frightened chickens,' to quote the expression of one observer, disclaiming responsibility for the very acts that were preserving the government. Indeed, only the police and the army—if we are to believe the first accounts received—stood firm in the confusion.

Edward Bernstein was one of the most conservative German Socialist leaders before the war. During the conflict he repudiated his former colleagues on account of the support they gave the government's war policy, and associated himself with the Independents. However, he returned to the Majority fold as soon as the problem of reconstructing German economy along Socialist lines presented itself for practical solution. His admonition to the working people is a lesson in legislative revolutionary tactics, which are quite distinct from the tactics of violence which more radical groups are fast developing into a science.

We print with Bernstein's article from *Vorwärts* another from the *Arbeiter Zeitung* of Vienna, because both seem to represent the apologetic or defensive attitude which the responsible leaders of the Socialist movement find themselves forced to assume on account of the failure of their programme to alleviate the distress of the masses. It is

not Socialism triumphant nor Socialism defeated, but Socialism checked, self-critical, and apologetic, that we see in Europe to-day.

GERMAN property holders in Alsace-Lorraine are being treated much as French property holders were dealt with by the German Government during the war. In 1918 a Society of German Textile Manufacturers was formed to take over the French factories and mills in Mulhouse and vicinity. A serious controversy arose in Germany about the same time over the formation of a large company, said to be controlled by 'East Elbe' financial interests, for the purpose of purchasing the expropriated French estates in Alsace-Lorraine, and settling upon them North German peasants. This project aroused the bitter opposition of the Clericals and especially of the *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, the principal Centrist newspaper in the Rhine Valley. The people of the two provinces, who were resisting these German encroachments two years ago, appear now to be resisting similar encroachments by big business interests in France. For fifty years they have not enjoyed complete economic self-direction.

Control of the navigation and water power of the Rhine promises to afford a new subject of contention for Western Europe. Eventually, a general method for regulating important rivers serving more than one political division of the Continent must be devised. Although the peace treaties aim to do this, the example of the Danube shows that the small states which these treaties create may have as much difficulty in adjusting their respective national water rights, as cattle men and irrigation farmers have experienced in our own West. Just now, Alsace-Lorraine is taking advantage

of the recent victory to enlarge its claims to the Rhine.

THE French view of Germany's emigration policy which we publish is somewhat overdrawn, though it has a substantial basis of fact. Germany's colonizing ambitions in the eastern provinces of Russia are well known. Shortly before his final defeat, Hindenburg announced an ambitious programme for the compulsory subdivision of the large estates in Courland, and granting them in small allotments to ex-soldiers and other German settlers. Insistence upon compliance with old promises to grant them land partly explains the recent refusal of the German volunteers to evacuate the Baltic Provinces. A similar policy had been followed in Prussian Poland, and doubtless would have been extended to Russian Poland and Lithuania had German arms been victorious.

It is hardly accurate to say that Germany's interest in South America as a future home for its emigrants is on the wane. German newspapers are devoting considerable attention to Spanish-America and some of them have correspondents there. We purpose printing occasional letters from this source, not so much because they reveal deep laid plans of commercial conquest or political propaganda, as because they give a view of social and business conditions in our neighbor republics somewhat different from that which we are likely to receive through other channels.

Immigration from Germany to South America began as soon as direct steamship communication between North German ports and Buenos Aires was resumed. A National Educational Commissioner has recently been in Paraguay, where he inspected the German schools, and arranged with the German *Volksbund* in that

country for the establishment of a central German School Bureau at the capital. This office is to have general supervision over all the German Language Schools in the republic.

VORWÄRTS publishes an interesting account of the results of the recent election in Italy. The composition of the present Parliament is compared with that of the Parliament elected the year before the war, as follows:

Party	1913	1919
Socialists	55	156
Reformists	23	14
Clericals	33	101
Republicans	17	7
Liberals	380	230

The Liberals, using the word in the usual sense of anti-Clerical, have lost at the expense of the Clericals and Socialists, though they still remain the strongest single group. However, the Socialists and Clericals, both still in opposition, together constitute a majority. It is rumored that Gioletti is manœuvring to secure a coalition of these apparently antagonistic parties.

Rather strangely, both Clericals and the Socialists come mainly from Northern and Central Italy. Southern Italy and the Island electorates are anti-Clerical and Liberal. The Socialists hold 85 of the 187 districts in Northern Italy, and 60 of the 120 districts in Central Italy. Only 11 members of that party were returned from the southern part of the kingdom.

South Italy sent relatively more soldiers to the war than any other part of the kingdom, while Central and Northern Italy kept relatively more of their man power in the factories to turn the wheels of industry. The same contrast of political sentiment between the peasants and the artisans exists in Italy as in France. But in France, during the last campaign, all the ele-

ments opposed to Radicalism joined forces, while in Italy, the Liberal and Conservative parties wasted their strength in bitter local contests, inspired in many instances by personal animosities of rival candidates. It was against these divided forces that the Socialists won so conspicuous a victory.

THE unpopularity of the Versailles Treaty is restoring the prestige of public men who have been under eclipse because they opposed the war and preached skepticism as to the value of its results even for the winners. Former Premier Gioletti, whose partisans gained a marked predominance in the Italian Parliament at the elections of 1913, was opposed to Italy's joining the Allies, and throughout that conflict was regarded by the Germans as a friend of their country. He and several of his followers have been reelected, and it is freely prophesied that he may be returned to power when the present coalition cabinet breaks up.

We often hear in America reference to a 'French sentiment,' a 'German sentiment,' or an 'Italian sentiment' toward the treaty. There is no such thing. The only attitudes in Europe are party attitudes—not national attitudes.

THE recent death of Professor Heinrich Lammash of Vienna removes from European public and academic life one of the most prominent and consistent pacifists of the war period. Professor Lammash enjoyed the personal friendship of Emperor Charles, and is supposed to have exerted great influence over the young monarch in behalf of peace. He was as conspicuous an exponent of such views in Austria, as was Professor F. W. Foerster in Germany.

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THE GROWING DISLIKE OF WORK

BY LOUIS NARQUET

IF it is true, as economists and sociologists assure us, 'that 'a wave of laziness' is sweeping over those European countries that have participated in the war, that may be a phenomenon explained by the law of reaction. We might even assume beforehand the probability of such a result. Nations, like individuals, after over-exerting themselves morally and physically, feel the need of rest before rallying for a new effort. The human organism is a machine of limited capacity. It cannot expend excess effort without a period of recuperation.

This phenomenon may be inevitable, but it does not for that reason constitute a less serious danger for the nations whose wealth and labor power have been most seriously diminished. Industrial production and agricultural production alike have been absorbed entirely in creating the means of warfare. Their permanent capital has been disastrously depreciated. They no longer possess reserves, and it is only by intensified production that they can supply objects of necessary consumption for the people and compensate for the loss of their best workers on the field of battle. Unless these nations are able to restore their productive capacity to the normal level, they will be condemned to privation and high prices for an indefinite period. They will be handicapped, moreover, in the international market, because they will have no excess of products to employ in reducing their inflated currency and their enormous

public debts abroad, and to meet the increased taxes which must inevitably be levied. Their immediate embarrassment is increased by the fact that during the first steps of political and economic recovery they will have great difficulty in obtaining the food and raw materials indispensable for their sustenance and their industry.

So we have verified anew — let me say in passing — the law that nations are interdependent — a law doubly impressed upon us during the late hostilities. But let us ask the question whether this growing disinclination to work is not something more than a transient wave of idleness caused by the exhaustion of the war. May it not be due to a transformation in the mental attitude to labor which we have hitherto overlooked, and which the stress of our present situation has suddenly brought into evidence — just as we may be unconscious for years of some latent physical weakness until a shock or a chill or an accident suddenly produces serious symptoms? Is this not, in other words, an evidence of moral and economic disease that presents to our sociologists and economists a problem rendered more complex and delicate by the fact that it manifests itself simultaneously with the imperious demands of labor for shorter hours and higher wages? Undoubtedly, the excessive rise in prices due to the war has precipitated the demand of the working proletariat for higher wages. Parliament, in the meantime, has hastily adopted, under