

# THE LIVING AGE

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## A WEEK OF THE WORLD

OUR latest issues of European newspapers discuss at some length the proposed extradition and trial of the former Kaiser. European neutrals have been drawn together by the war and its aftermath and endorse Holland's refusal to surrender its unwelcome guest. The *Journal de Genève*, which was perhaps the ablest neutral paper of outspoken pro-Ally sympathies during the war, says that the Kaiser is now 'nothing more than an odious and miserable puppet. All that is left him is his vanity, and the worst punishment that could be inflicted upon him would be to abandon him to the universal contempt which is already his lot. No physical punishment is adequate. To intern him would be to associate his name undeservedly with that of Napoleon — who remained to the last a great figure in history.'

Remarkably little appears in the Conservative German press upon this subject, except an occasional note of satisfaction over Holland's refusal to comply with the demand for the Kaiser's surrender.

CLEMENCEAU'S removal from public life is interpreted by Europe as a triumph of parliamentary over personal government in France; and,

therefore it is welcomed by many democratic papers without regard to nationality. Even Germany exhibits less hostility to Clemenceau personally in his period of humiliation than might be expected — though the sketch of him which we republish from the *Frankfurter Zeitung* is the most liberal review of his career that we have found in the press of that country.

Naturally, the passing of their great war leader has given French journalists an occasion to review critically his administration. Only the Radical Socialist press is bitter in its comments upon the late Premier. His other opponents, even though they may witness his departure from public life with satisfaction, testify cordially to his pre-eminent services, and assign him a place in history secure from purely partisan attacks.

THE history of public opinion during any great event such as the recent war and the present epoch of revolution, is mainly a record of one punctured illusion after another. Among such illusions still cherished in America is that ratifying and signing treaties are the acts that restore peace — that is, peace in the larger sense, including those normal economic

and political conditions which we uncritically associate with that word. The fact is, that purely diplomatic acts will probably have less to do with the recovery of stable conditions in Europe than processes which receive less attention — such, for instance, as good or bad crops the coming summer. Our first thoughts about peace were, naturally, political; but if politics is anything more than the stupid and irrational play of human passion — whether in diplomats or nations — it is something so nearly approaching economics that the two are hard to distinguish from each other. Europe is awakening to this truth rather tardily, but with a sudden arousing of attention that promises to change radically its attitude toward peace problems. Such articles as the one we republish from the *British Review of Reviews* assist this popular awakening at the same time that they are its symbols.

Sisley Huddleston was called by Arnold Bennett, who was himself second in rank at the British Intelligence Office during the war, 'easily the best' newspaper critic present at the peace negotiations. His recent book, *Peace Making at Paris*, promises to hold a high and permanent place among contemporary accounts of the Conference.

ACCORDING to the *London Daily Telegraph*, the crop situation in Roumania is very bad. Only 53,000 hectares, instead of the usual 1,250,000 hectares, have been sown with wheat. The corn harvest will amount to one tenth of the normal on account of poor sowing and cultivation. As soon as the peasants acquired title to the land they ceased to plant more than they needed for their own use, asserting that they did not care to labor for other classes of society.

A recent law in Roumania limits the amount of agricultural land a single proprietor may own to about twelve hundred acres, and prescribes that the surplus of the large estates shall be sold in small tracts of about twelve acres to peasant cultivators. This law has failed to satisfy the peasants, and is said to be responsible for the decline of crop production just mentioned. The great estates were concentrated in certain parts of the country, and the peasants of other districts were forced to remove for considerable distances in order to procure allotments. But the latter are averse to leaving their native villages. When they did procure allotments, they settled down to the easiest kind of life they knew. Their wants are very simple. They have little ambition. They know nothing of modern methods of cultivation. Except under constant direction, they let weeds overrun their fields. To be sure, the law provides that the government may withdraw the allotments from holders who fail to cultivate them properly, but such laws are seldom well enforced, especially since the peasants have acquired the right to vote.

The new law requires the peasants to pay for the land they purchase in forty years, and many of the new proprietors are said to hold their titles very lightly for this reason. Their ignorance and suspicion make them reluctant to put in crops which they fancy they may not be allowed to enjoy when harvested. They had considerable experience with crop confiscation while the Germans and Austrians occupied their country. In a word, Roumania is finding the transition from the old system of agriculture, where labor was employed under more or less duress, to a system where production is stimulated solely by the enlightened self-interest of the cultivator, very difficult; because the men

with the hoe in that country have never had a chance to acquire enlightenment or to respond to intelligent self-interest.

A curious side light upon the distrust with which Americans are regarded in certain parts of Europe, is furnished by a report in *Le Correspondant*, that our agents at Bucharest last summer sent the following telegram to Washington: 'Unfortunately, the harvest in Roumania this year is excellent.' This regret is ascribed to our desire to get high prices for our farm products in Europe, and to acquire economic control of Roumania and Hungary — two objects which might be rendered difficult of attainment if those countries speedily recover their prosperity.

THE *Kölnische Zeitung* publishes a Petrograd dispatch, dated January 22, upon the decision of the Supreme Council to lift the blockade against Russia so as to permit the Coöperative Societies to import goods from abroad. This dispatch says that about 1000 societies had been organized up to 1900. The number had increased to 10,000 at the outbreak of the war, and to 20,000 by the time the Bolsheviki gained control of the country. Since the latter date they have continued to multiply, since they encounter no opposition from private business, which has been destroyed, and they are more effective industrial and distributing agencies than the Bolshevik government can create. According to reports of the Soviet officials, 74 per cent of the inhabitants of the 30 departments under their sovereignty a year ago belonged to these associations. And yet, the most vigorous of these societies have always been in Southern Russia and Eastern Siberia, then outside the Bolshevik area, where the most progressive and enterprising peas-

ants are found. The Siberian Coöperative Creameries sold 15,000,000 kilogrammes of butter in 1917. The Flax Raisers' Society produced 20,000 tons of dressed flax the same year; the following year it controlled 75 per cent of all the flax raised in Russia. All these societies have a central financial institution, the People's Bank, with its headquarters at Moscow. Its capital was 170,000,000 rubles in 1917, but has increased rapidly since. This institution has a London branch and also a representative in Stockholm.

These societies present a marked contrast with the industries directly conducted by the Soviet Government, if we are to judge by the latter's official organ, *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn*. This paper states that the number of tram cars in condition to use in Moscow declined from about 1000 in August, 1917, to 150 in October, 1919; during the same period the number of horses in that city declined from 120,000 to about 8000. Salt was so scarce that people chopped up old herring kegs and boiled the wood with their food. In order to obtain fuel, whole streets of houses were condemned and several scows were broken up. In 1915 the cotton mills of Russia contained 10,300,000 spindles and 249,920 looms. On September 1, 1919, only 300,000 spindles and 18,188 looms were still in operation.

During the first eight months of 1919 the output of textile fabrics declined 85 per cent as compared with a similar period the year before; and paper output declined 60 per cent. While 192 locomotives had been completed in the first eight months of 1918 — contrasted with about 500 before the war — only 32 were completed during the same period of 1919.

A MONARCHIST movement appears to be developing in Bavaria,

supported by Clerical reaction against the Socialist government at Berlin, and by dissatisfaction with the centralizing policy of the new National ministry. When Count Arco, the assassin of the Socialist Premier of Bavaria, Kurt Eisner, was brought into court recently, he received an ovation from Royalist and Conservative sympathizers. A mass meeting of students, held about the same time, ejected one of their members who attempted to speak in favor of the Socialists, and refused to permit Professor Weber, who had condemned Count Arco's crime, to continue his lecture. A somewhat similar incident occurred at Berlin, where the students have demonstrated against Professor Nicolai who, although at one time a court physician, attained great prominence during the war by his anti-war writings.

The Munich correspondent of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* says in a recent letter, that the disposition to consider the revolution as responsible for military defeat, instead of military defeat responsible for the revolution, is growing. At the same time, a strong anti-Semite movement is manifesting itself. One hears everywhere on the streets: 'The Jews made the war in order to make money. Afterwards they brought about the revolution to keep Germany from winning.' By this and similar appeals to popular prejudice, the monarchists are slowly winning back the popularity they lost. Hand in hand with this sentiment is the revival of a desire for revenge on Germany's conquerors. The great Industrialists are charged with having resumed their old policy of influencing the press by indirect financial favors, especially by the distribution of profitable advertising.

This correspondent mentions another line of political speculation that has suddenly become popular in Southern Germany. This is a plan for a re-

grouping of the European Powers according to religious confessions. There is much talk of a new combination of the Protestant governments — North Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway — under England's leadership, and of the Catholic governments, including Southern Germany and former Austria, Italy, and Belgium, under the leadership of France. This writer does not suggest that the propaganda for this new balance of power comes from across the Rhine.

IT might startle a person unfamiliar with the paradoxes now common in Europe, to see the following headline on the front page of *Vorwärts*, the orthodox organ of German labor: *Six-Hour Shifts Spell Universal Misery*. This refers to the decline of coal production during September, October, and November, 1919, in the three principal colliery districts of Germany, after shortening the shifts one hour — though this did not reduce the working day in any of these districts to the six hours demanded. Production immediately fell from ten and a half million tons a month to a little over nine million tons. The result is that many factories have had to shut down for lack of coal — only about one fourth their former supply being available — and that thousands of workingmen in other industries have been thrown out of employment in order that the working hours of their brothers in the coal field might be shortened.

ALL is not smooth sailing in Belgian politics, in spite of the recent vote of confidence in Premier Delacroix, elicited by recognition of his eminent financial services. The Coalition Cabinet is very loosely held together. Socialist members of the government insist upon important modifications in the penal code, and the Flemish group

in Parliament insists that the courses at Ghent University be given in the Flemish language. Germany sedulously fostered during its occupation the Flemish movement and the ancient discord between the Flemish-speaking and the French-speaking people of Belgium. It is argued by the French party that to enforce a wholesale and artificial change of language in the courses of the University would limit its educational influence to a much smaller clientele than at present, and would impair its position as a research institution for a half century to come.

DURING December, the Austro-Hungarian bank, which still functions as a bank of issue for the territories of the former monarchy, increased its circulation by 1,370,000,000 crowns. At the end of the year, 54,481,000,000 crowns of its notes were in circulation. Were exchange normal, this would be equivalent to more than \$10,000,000,000, but it now represents little more than \$100,000,000 in American currency. This bank still has some \$57,000,000 in gold and silver in its vaults.

RECENTLY the Bavarian Peoples Party, which is a Clerical organization with a strong following among the peasantry, withdrew from its alliance with the national Centre party. Local autonomy versus centralized government is the dividing issue. However, the Peoples party itself contains groups that dissent from this action. The Christian Trade Unions, which are an important element in the party, are reported to oppose leaving the Centre, and support its leader, Erzberger — himself a South German — in his national policy.

AMONG the recent financial changes in Europe resulting from the outcome of the war, is the transfer of the headquarters of the old Austrian Agricultural Bank from Vienna to Paris. This institution takes the new name of *Banque des pays de L'Europe Centrale*, and will have branches at Vienna, Prague, and other cities of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, as well as at London. Austrians and Czecho-Slovaks will be represented on the Board of Directors. The accounts will be kept in francs. This bank was organized in 1880 with a capital equivalent to about one hundred million francs.

ACCORDING to an article signed, 'A Ship Owner and Importer,' in *La Revue Hebdomadaire*, the fuel famine in France is caused by transportation delays rather than by an actual scarcity of coal. France is receiving the latter from Great Britain, Belgium, and Germany, as well as from its own mines. Seven hundred thousand tons have accumulated at Rouen awaiting shipment. According to this writer, the transportation difficulties are due to the introduction of the eight-hour day for maritime and dock laborers. So great is the congestion of traffic at the principal French ports, on account of slow unloading and towage delays, that steamers frequently have an unnecessary demurrage of from fifteen to twenty days. Indeed, the situation at these ports is so bad that boats engaged in coastal and river traffic avoid them wherever possible, even though they may be forced to content themselves with less remunerative local freights that contribute nothing toward the relief of the fuel famine.

## GERMANY DEBATES TRYING THE KAISER

[*Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (Liberal Democratic Daily), January 23]

### I. *A Public Forum in Berlin*

A DENSE throng stands gaping at the principal entrance of the former Imperial Diet Building. The 'New Fatherland Union' has summoned a public meeting where Hellmut von Gerlach and Eduard Bernstein are to discuss the surrender of the former Kaiser. Every seat has been taken for two days ahead. The hall is packed and people are standing in the galleries. It is a mixed audience, including Conservatives and Radicals, supporters of the monarchy and advocates of a dictatorship of the proletariat, and democrats of every shade. Beautifully clad ladies and gentlemen, humble citizens of the middle class, and workmen fresh from their labor, sit side by side. There are thousands. Everyone takes part in applauding and interrupting. The only man who remains silent is the old janitor who stands on the left beyond the President's chair, immovable, as he formerly was when speeches in honor of the King and Fatherland were delivered in the same hall.

Hellmut von Gerlach opens the debate. He is a little man, with a white forehead and a sharp, pointed beard which gives him just a suggestion of Mephistopheles. He speaks clearly and vivaciously — a born debater.

The Peace Treaty contains several articles, including financial provisions, which it is von Gerlach's firm conviction can never be carried out. But Article 227, which requires the surrender of the former Kaiser, can be complied with

if the government so desires. 'The Emperor has voluntarily expatriated himself and separated himself from the nation, by which he believed he was so devotedly loved' (laughter), 'and it is quite within the bounds of probability that the Entente will demand that Germany request Holland to surrender the Kaiser.' In that case, the government should comply with the demand, so that foreign nations might recover their confidence in Germany's loyalty to its engagements. *Pacta sunt servanda*. Treaties must be fulfilled, not only when they are to our advantage, but equally when they are to our disadvantage. That is the situation under the law.

Politically, to surrender the Kaiser is to incur the danger of reaction.

'Millions, including many highly educated and thoughtful men, would like to see Wilhelm back on the throne. The country press is having a bad influence in that direction. Under such circumstances, to bring him to the bar of an Entente court would constitute the greatest possible campaign asset for the German Nationalists.' The speaker had discussed this question with representatives of the Entente. He had called their attention to the fact that by strengthening the Nationalist movement in Germany, they were strengthening militarism the world over. A Conservative French Diplomat replied to this that the Entente was only doing what the German Republic had neglected. Von Gerlach thought the domestic danger of surrendering the Kaiser might be avoided if the Entente, after organizing the League of Nations, modified its claim and turned Wilhelm over for