

PEACE WITH AMERICA

BY DR. BERNHARD DERNBURG

[The article that follows is fairly representative of moderate opinion in Germany toward the treaty just concluded with the United States, so far as this sentiment is indicated in the press.]

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A PERSON who has followed the negotiations at Washington between the Administration and the political parties, and between the House of Representatives and the Senate, upon the Knox-Porter resolution, will be quite prepared for the treaty which Germany has just concluded with the United States. America struck out in a definite course of its own, and the only question for Germany was whether we could reach an agreement with the United States on a basis of the terms which were thus prescribed. It was not an easy question to answer. We could not do what we did in the case of China: avoid another acknowledgment of the Versailles Treaty. Such a reservation was impossible. Wherever the Versailles provisions are not incorporated in the Peace Treaty with America, it is due to America's wishes and not to our own. For instance, the provisions relating to territorial changes in Europe are not accepted by us because America refuses to assume responsibility for those changes in any case. On the other hand, Washington's interest in oil makes it insist upon taking a hand in the mandate system. The second ranking delegate of the United States at Versailles, Secretary of State Lansing, says that the mandates were established originally solely to prevent Germany from claiming the value of its colonies as a set-off in its reparation payments. And Lansing must know.

America rejects Article 13, which relates to international laws to protect workers, because American employers fear that this would upset labor conditions in America. I merely cite these examples to show that such exceptions as are made to the Treaty are not due to regard for Germany.

The situation is still worse in respect to those provisions of the Versailles document which have been incorporated in our new agreement with America. All the economic oppression; all the impossible demands for reparation; every violation of Wilson's Fourteen Points; the incredible interpretation of physical damages to civilians as including compensation for crippled soldiers and pensions to their families; all the curtailments of Germany's control over her own ports and rivers; all the one-sided, most-favored nation privileges with which that treaty saddles us, we have subscribed to anew. The document is merely a new edition of the Versailles blood code, in spite of the fact that two years' experience has shown its economic impossibility and its disastrous consequences, not only for Germany, but even for America with its millions of unemployed. Last of all, we accept the treaty provisions regarding the military occupation of our territory, a separate tariff district in the Rhine country, and the diabolical contrivances incorporated in the sanction policy of the Entente.

In spite of all that, the Berlin Government has 'swallowed the devil at sight,' and I believe it has acted wisely. The Minister of Foreign Affairs put the situation aptly when he said: 'We must draw a line through the past.' We must, indeed, make a new start. This Peace Treaty is a final line drawn through the past. From beginning to end the document itself is soulless and dead — a mere formality.

What we need, however, is a new basis. That will eventually be found in the souls and sentiments of the two peoples. It does not exist to-day. It would be folly to refuse to see that. Germany, and all that is German, are still far from popular in the United States. In fact, they are cordially hated by many Americans. The reason for this is familiar. First, the people there are convinced that Germany, consciously and intentionally, brought about the war, just as Article 231 of the Versailles Treaty says. In admitting America's charge, as we have done by accepting the eighth section of the treaty, — the point of which is Germany's recognition of her guilt, — we have made it imperative to begin the final settlement of our intellectual and moral relations with America with a vigorous protest against this article. That will not add to our popularity. It will be interpreted as proving our arrogance and lack of repentance. Moreover, the average American, who knows little of international affairs in Europe, does not wish to trouble himself to make a searching investigation, which, it seems to him, will lead to no practical result. So he contents himself with what he calls a 'slogan.' But that does not change the situation. We shall come back insistently to that point.

The charge that Germany *alone* is responsible for the war is a propaganda lie. Its falsity can easily be proved.

Wilson, and Lloyd George, and other Entente authorities, have themselves recognized that it is untrue. Finally, we are, after all, a nation of sixty million souls, fairly well educated and civilized people, with a national sense of honor. It will be unendurable for us to be merely tolerated and patronized. Consequently, when America is really ready to have the atmosphere clarified, it will be our first duty to have this guilt question settled — and settled right.

But when we come to the point, who was responsible for war between Germany and the United States, we are on different ground. That is a count against us which condemns us, in American eyes, for the high taxes, unemployment, and business crisis which now prevail in their country, and for the killing and crippling of American soldiers during the war. This sentiment is likely to breed permanent bitterness; and we must admit, if we are honest, that our submarine policy made it impossible for the American government to maintain peace in defiance of the public sentiment of its citizens.

On the other hand, however, America would have suffered from many of the economic evils of which she now complains had she not entered the war. And long before a single American was killed by a German bullet, hundreds of thousands of Germans had been slaughtered on the battlefields of France by American bullets. We do not dispute America's account against us; but we have a set-off, which, in the interest of the future, we hope we may speedily forget. That set-off is America's active support of our enemies, with money and weapons, from the outset of the war; her failure to protest effectively against the Entente policy of starving us by a blockade; her complicity in continuing that blockade for months after the Armistice. Again, after the American

army and American equipment gave Germany her knock-out blow, and Wilson proclaimed his lofty idealist peace terms; after we accepted those terms and laid down our arms, a peace treaty concocted in the darkness of secret diplomacy was imposed upon us, which fulfilled in no respect and, indeed, absolutely contradicted every one of the Fourteen Points—at least so far as Germany is concerned. Even the Americans themselves have repudiated the most important sections of that treaty. America has come out of the war rich and powerful. We are weak and impoverished. If, then, we are willing to wipe the slate clean, to forget our own injuries and bitterness, and to turn over a new leaf in the international ledger, it is we who make the greater sacrifice.

But if the new account which we are now opening, and which we are promised shall be kept in a spirit of fairness and friendliness, is to benefit us, America must do her share. We know that her citizens wish to keep clear of Europe, to attend only to American matters, to leave the Old World to its fate. But that will not do. You cannot remodel a whole world, — as Mr. Wilson tried to remodel it, and in part succeeded in doing, at Paris, — and merely because the result does not please you, say: 'I wash my hands of the whole business.' Any man — and still more, any nation — that aspires to honor and prestige, must accept responsibility for its acts. The American people cannot say simply: 'We disavow Wilson. We are through with him. We are going to be practical.' Has Germany cleared herself of all responsi-

bility for the war and the war's results by sending her Kaiser into private life and changing her government?

But, quite apart from the moral side of the question, America will be compelled by the necessity of events to interest herself in Europe, and above all, in Central Europe, which is now so largely her own work. For the Versailles Treaty and its impossible terms have ruined America's best customers, to the profit of England and France; and America has received no compensation for the loss. When we have to pay eighty marks or more for a dollar, we can buy nothing from America. And the situation is not improving. A great trading nation like America must protect her markets. Apparently we must still harp on the old familiar truth, that the economic world is a unit, which is either sick or healthy as a whole. One infected limb infects the whole body. That is so simple and obvious, and yet it is so hard for many to comprehend!

And it is not the economic world alone that is a unit; the intellectual and moral world is, likewise, a single whole. Hate begets hate, loving-kindness begets loving-kindness, character begets respect. These are immutable truths. But the world cannot be healed in a moment. I hope the new treaty with America will pave the way to political and economic betterment. But to the common people of Germany and the American Union, and to them alone, must be left the task of finding a way to moral betterment and mutual understanding. Let Germans not fail in that part of the common task before us.

HUNGARY IN DISTRESS

From *Le Correspondant*, August 25
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No nation of Europe admits that it fought an offensive war. Simple-minded people may be distressed by this perverseness; but any student of collective mentality will admit that it exists, so far as we can judge the state of a nation's mind.

Hungarians have a confused and one-sided idea of the origin of the war. Serbia's reply to the Austrian ultimatum was never published in their country. Most Hungarians do not know yet that Serbia ever made such a reply. Their other information is on a par with this. How can we expect them, therefore, to feel that they are responsible? Public opinion has been moulded entirely by Austrian documents, which made it appear that Count Tisza, speaking in the name of the Hungarian people, was the only member of the Vienna cabinet who held out against declaring war.

When hostilities actually began, the people of Hungary regarded the conflict as purely for national defense. Their unity and the integrity of their territory had been constantly threatened for centuries by the surrounding nationalities. They knew that irriden-tist elements existed in all their border districts. Since 1848 they had been acutely conscious of the Pan-Slavism astir along their eastern frontier. Consequently, Hungarians believed in 1914 that Serbia's ambition was a national menace which they must remove once for all, at any cost. Therefore, in the minds of the people, Hungary entered the war to preserve her integrity.

When Rumania joined the Allies, the threat against Hungary at once became more definite and dangerous. Last

of all, the terms of the Peace Treaty just imposed upon his country prove to the average Hungarian, if any proof were necessary, that his conception of the war was right.

It follows that no one is more discredited in Hungary to-day than the men who opposed the war. The Socialists, who are charged, rather oddly, with having voted against war appropriations, although they did not have a single representative in Parliament at the time; the Freemasons, who are alleged to have conspired to bring about defeat and revolution; and the Jews, who are accused of being slackers and war profiteers, have to bear the full weight of unpopularity for the nation's military defeat and present suffering.

In fact, their invincible national pride prevents the Hungarians from admitting any military defeat whatsoever. They attribute their disaster solely to the revolution, instead of ascribing the revolution to their military collapse. This obsession, which reverses the true order of events, makes the state of public mind in Hungary difficult for outsiders to understand.

Hungary's political progress has been retarded by local conditions. For more than a century after the middle classes in many other parts of Europe were in full possession of the government, Hungary retained its feudal institutions. Whenever a cabinet resigned, the only question was: 'What nobleman will be appointed Premier?'

When the monarchy and the feudal régime went down together, the middle classes were not ready to take the reins of government. They had received no training in democracy; they lacked