

The New REPUBLIC

A Journal of Opinion

VOLUME VI

New York, Saturday, April 1, 1916

Number 74

Contents

Editorial Notes.....	224
Leading Editorials	
A Catechism for Presidential Candidates.....	227
How to Free the Seas.....	228
The Question of State Police.....	230
General Articles	
The War after the War..... H. N. Brailsford	232
What's in a Pagoda?..... Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant	234
Russia's Door Ajar..... Gerald Morgan	236
Capitalism of the Camp..... Alvin S. Johnson	237
Iridescent Art..... Ezra Tharp	239
Correspondence.....	240
Books and Things..... F. H.	242
Reviews of Books	
On Many Fronts..... F. H.	243
Changing Russia..... H. S.	243
Paul Elmer More..... Randolph Bourne	245
The Dawn of California.....	247

THE facts first, of course, in regard to the explosion on the Sussex and other boats, if the facts are to be obtained. But short of a direct admission from Berlin, the facts may be exceedingly difficult to obtain. There will be a party which believes that the explosion was due to a mine, and within that party there will be no certainty whether the mine was sown by the Germans or was one of the British mines loosed from its moorings. Floating mines are more anonymous than submarines, and constitute the final barbarism of warfare at sea. They respect absolutely nothing, yet it is almost impossible to fix responsibility for them. If the seas are now infested with drifting mines as the China seas were after the Russo-Japanese war, it is hard to see what effective action our government can take. There is here one of the problems which will require international regulation after the war. While the war lasts we must probably expect a series of accidents for which it will be practically impossible to call anyone to account. But if it is proved that the Sussex or the Englishman were attacked by torpedoes, the policy of the United States is clear and the need for action obvious.

A DISAVOWAL from Germany will not be sufficient. What the case shows is that even with good intentions on the part of the civil authorities submarine warfare cannot be conducted with regard to the safety of the noncombatant. Assuming that the Sussex was attacked, assuming that the attack was an accident, it was an intolerable accident which proves that the submarine is a weapon that cannot be used safely against merchant ships. The incident occurred in broad daylight on a calm sea. The Sussex was an unarmed and altogether inoffensive passenger ship. If accidents happen even under these conditions, then the time has come to outlaw the submarine as a commerce raider. It seems to us that Mr. Wilson's policy ought to be to call on Germany for a total abandonment of submarine warfare against merchant ships, under the penalty of a break with the United States and a threat of organized assistance to the Allies. Mr. Wilson cannot accept a disavowal, and if he brings about a rupture we hope he will do so on a broad principle. He might say in effect: "The experience of the last year proves the impossibility of the submarine. We shall not tolerate a succession of accidents followed by expressions of regret. You have had your chance to show that the submarine can be used humanely. You have failed. Abandon it altogether as a weapon against commerce or we shall throw our weight to the side of organized sea power."

A RMOR-plate concerns pleading on their knees for the right to live and reform present a spectacle altogether new in the history of private money-making from public need. If the House will refrain from passing the Senate bill for the establishment of armor-plate works, the Bethlehem Steel Company will furnish one-third, or more if desired, of the armor plate required for the contemplated five-year program at \$395 a ton—a price decidedly lower than the company has charged the government at any time in the last ten years. Or if Congress suspects that this price is still too high, the

company will permit certified public accountants to make estimates of the cost of producing plate, and on the basis of such estimates offer terms that will commend themselves to the Secretary of the Navy as being quite as low as the price at which the government could manufacture plate. Drop the designs against our lives, and we will refrain from extortion for a space of five years.

IT is an economic absurdity that when we already have private plants capable of furnishing all the armor plate we need, we should still be forced to proceed to the erection of a public plant. There could be no clearer case of competitive waste. We grow eloquent over the waste entailed by the competitive paralleling of railways, by the duplication of manufacturing or commercial capacity. But in all such cases a modicum of additional utility is created. The eleven millions to be invested in a public armor-plate plant will add nothing whatsoever to the national wealth; private capital will be diminished in the precise measure that the public capital is increased. But this particular form of private capital throughout the world has a black record. Everywhere it has sought to coin money out of bitter national need, and frequently it has helped to create the need in order to coin money. If the principle could be established once for all that armor plate and other munitions of war should be furnished patriotically, at cost inclusive of a fair return on capital, there would be no reason for governmental manufacture. Let the existing armor-plate plants announce their readiness to accept such a principle, not only in filling contracts under the contemplated five-year program, but in all future dealings with the government; the project of a government plant could then safely be dropped. We should then no longer be confronted by the alternatives of extortion or waste of capital.

THE State Department announced recently its intention of preparing and sending to American diplomatic representatives abroad a general statement of its position in relation to the questions of sea law which are now subjects of international controversy. The decision to utter such a statement should, we believe, be reconsidered. Marine law is not at the present time in a condition to be either authoritatively or profitably expounded. It is changing rapidly and radically. Nobody can tell with any certainty how many of these changes will be accepted after the war and how many will be rejected. Nobody can tell how they will affect the interests of the United States, or what policy the American Government will decide to adopt towards them. In fact, it is of much greater importance for American international lawyers to agree upon

what our policy ought to be than upon what the law is or appears to be. Under such conditions silence is gold and utterance is silver or something worse. Authoritative expositions of a fluid body of law are likely to prove embarrassing hereafter. The State Department should shun rather than seek opportunities to register in irretrievable documents what can at best be plausible guesses about dubious rules.

EFFECTIVE opposition in Congress to a larger military and naval establishment has collapsed. The Hay Army bill was finally passed by the House with but two dissenting votes, of which only one represented uncompromising disapproval of preparedness. The advocates of a regular army of over two hundred thousand men proved unexpectedly numerous. There is every indication that in the end the existing army will be almost doubled in size instead of being increased by forty per cent. Congress is also likely to provide more ships for the navy than the President demanded. The critical condition in Mexico may have had something to do with this increasing disposition to prepare for war, but it is not a sufficient explanation. Ever since Congress assembled, the popularity of "preparedness" has been growing. The seventy or eighty votes against it which were to be collected in the House from among Mr. Bryan's personal followers faded away. The speeches made by Mr. Wilson during his trip to the Middle West accomplished all that could be expected. Congressmen heard from their districts, and decided, no matter what their personal convictions, that they could not be caught on the unpopular side. Mr. Bryan has become isolated in his own party. He cannot oppose Mr. Wilson, yet he cannot support him without being placed in a humiliating position. A voter who wants to register his disapproval of the policy of preparing for possible war will have to vote the Socialist ticket.

PREPAREDNESS is politically successful, but its advocates should not become too enthusiastic over their victory. Their success is more apparent than real. Although Congress will add a certain number of soldiers and guns to the army and ships to the navy, the majority of its members are in reality opposed to any thorough preparation either for war or peace. They are accepting preparedness in the same spirit that they have accepted in the past so many other plans of national reorganization. Congress and in general the ordinary American party politicians are masters of the art of killing by concessions. As soon as agitation in favor of any costly political innovation or reform becomes urgent, the politicians of both parties yield

gracefully to the popular demand, knowing full well that their concession in legislation can be nullified by bad administration or else actually converted into a source of professional and local political profit. That is what has happened to almost all the recent attempts at social and political reconstruction both in state and nation. They are vitiated in practice either by crude administrative arrangements or by actual administrative lethargy or disloyalty. So it will be with military preparedness. Congress will authorize additions to the regular army without providing any sufficient inducements to recruit the new soldiers. It will arrange for a reserve of state militia which will be of great political but of doubtful military benefit. It will appropriate without regret hundreds of millions for new regiments and battleships, but it will not touch the prolific sources of congressional military and naval graft. This is the profoundly and perennially discouraging aspect of American politics. Americans fight a series of battles over candidates and policies; they celebrate their victories and mourn over their defeats; but they never sufficiently realize that the battles are shams and that the real and the only victors are the local politicians of both parties.

PRESIDENT WILSON would hardly consider himself justified in issuing a warning "that there are persons all along the border who are actively engaged in giving as wide currency as they can to rumors of the most sensational and disturbing sort" with the obvious object "of bringing about intervention in the interest of certain American owners of Mexican properties," unless he had more definite proof of the fact than serves as basis for the ugly suspicions now current among private citizens. Probably the President knows, for example, who it was that set afloat the false rumors that Herrera had joined Villa. Such acts are, in morals and perhaps in law, crimes of a grave order, and it is to be hoped that the President will not limit his action to the publication of warnings to newspaper readers. The public has a right to know who the persons are that are engaged in a conspiracy to bring about war between two friendly nations. It has a right to know what property interests are demanding a national sacrifice of such magnitude. If this work of disclosure falls beyond the province of the Department of Justice, at any rate it would lie within the power and capacity of a congressional investigating commission.

SIMILIA similibus curantur; counter poison with poison; fight the Devil with fire. These are some of the sound and venerable maxims that crowd upon the mind as Mr. Hearst announces

that his papers will conduct a crusade against brutality—just now, the brutality of the prize fight. The Willard-Moran bout was a bestial, sickening affair, enough to turn the strongest stomach. One wonders, however, if there is not an element of disappointment in Mr. Hearst's present aversion. Willard didn't knock his opponent out: he was too humane in the punishment he administered. As Mr. Hearst's own Right Cross remarks, "as a sporting event" the fight was a "crass failure." "Willard, therefore, in all seriousness is a failure as a champion. He is considered too kindly of heart. He is too human." One is reminded of the outraged Milwaukeean who announced his conversion to prohibition. What he wanted to prohibit was not beer, but foam.

EVER since President Taft mobilized the army on the Mexican border, it has been evident that an expedition into Mexico might at any time become necessary. It has also been recognized that campaigning in northern Mexico would present peculiar difficulties, and that much would depend upon prompt and sure location of bodies of the enemy in the deserts and cañons of that forbidding country. For this work modern science had provided an extraordinarily effective arm in the aeroplane. Everyone knew that aviators would encounter exceptionally adverse conditions for flying in the rarified air, subject to gusty draughts from the high mountain valleys, with few practicable landing places in the regions where their services would be most needed. What the situation demanded was a large corps of aviators, with high-power machines and the most reliable motors known to engineering. Now the test has come—what showing do we make? We find ourselves possessed of six aeroplanes, small and low-powered, incapable of rising over the mountain barriers, or of carrying sufficient fuel and food to insure the safe return of the aviators after a scouting expedition. Of the six aeroplanes, four are already out of commission, and the chances are that before Villa is caught the whole army air service will be extinct. A practical people we are indeed.

TO sweeten a name is more noble than to change it; but the sweetening process takes time, and time is money. This in effect is the reply of the practical men to the worshippers of historical continuity, in New York and out of it, who are protesting so bitterly against changing the name of the Bowery. As a physical fact, the old Bowery of the later nineteenth century is extinct. The gaiety and license, the melodramatic criminality, the political dexterity of the Bowery have passed into the shades of backwoods moralizing and campaign oratory.

Even the vaudeville circuits know the Bowery no more. All that remains is an indefinable popular aversion, as toward a person once wicked and entrancing, but now wrinkled and reformed. It is merely a matter of sentiment, but it makes a practical difference of ten cents a square foot in rental values. Cooper Street, Hewitt Street, or Gaynor Street might at first seem merely an alias, but memories in New York are short and easily deflected. Who now recalls the original virtuous purpose of Tammany Hall?

HISTORICAL analogies are said to be misleading; most of them, however, are worth at least a moment's reflection. At the close of the Revolutionary War the people of the American states were intensely embittered against England, and inspired with deep enthusiasm for France. French statesmen had long enviously regarded the American colonies as markets from which British colonial policy had excluded French merchants. They were therefore confident that French goods would replace British in the territory they had helped to free. Indeed, this was one of the practical arguments advanced by Americans for French intervention. But within two years, the British merchant had reassumed control of the American import trade. The British furnished the goods America wanted, on credit terms to which the Americans were accustomed. Just now there is much talk of the supplanting of German trade in Russia by British, French and even American. Russian sentiment doubtless favors the change. But if history teaches any lesson, it is that sentiment is a fugitive basis for commercial relations.

A Catechism for Presidential Candidates

A. *American policy during the war.*

1. Have you been in favor of an embargo on munitions?
2. Would you have exerted greater pressure upon Great Britain to compel her to reform the so-called blockade?
3. Would you have sent the "strict accountability" note to Germany? If not, what would you have done? If yes, would you have been in favor of any action to secure guaranties from Germany during the time between the war-zone proclamation and the sinking of the Lusitania?
4. If you were in favor of such action did you say so at the time, and when?
5. Would you have broken off diplomatic re-

lations after the sinking of the Lusitania?

6. Would you have used any measure of reprisal, or would you have declared war?
7. If not, has there been any incident since the Lusitania which in your opinion required the rupture of relations or a declaration of war?
8. Do you think that the United States was under a moral obligation to protest at the violation of Belgium?
9. If you do, when did you first begin to think so, and what was your first public utterance on the question?
10. Do you think that the United States should have taken any action in regard to the violation of the Hague conventions in such matters as the bombardment of undefended towns? If so, what action, and when did you make your first public utterance in regard to it?

B. *American foreign policy.*

1. Do you believe it will be necessary for the United States in the near future to come to a definite understanding with some European Power? If so, with which Power?
2. Do you approve of the President's Pan-American policy, which provides for a guaranty of territorial integrity under a republican form of government in all the states of this hemisphere?
3. Do you think the United States has or can expect to have sufficient military force to undertake this responsibility alone?
4. Have you agreed in general with the President's Mexican policy? If not, would you have recognized Huerta?
5. Would you have intervened at any time since the fall of Huerta? At what time would you have intervened?
6. Are you in favor of the Haitian protectorate?
7. Are you in favor of the Nicaraguan treaty?
8. Are you in favor of the original Colombian treaty?
9. Do you favor the abandonment of the Philippines? If so, under what conditions?
10. Do you think the United States ought to take any action to preserve the integrity of China?

C. *Preparedness.*

1. On what standard do you base your estimate of the navy which the United States ought to have? That is, what considerations ought to determine our naval policy in respect to Great Britain, Germany and Japan?