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THE price of West Indian islands is going up. Some fifty years ago the American government considered it sufficient to offer \$7,500,000 for St. Thomas and the other Danish West Indies. The bargain was not consummated, but its failure did not turn upon financial considerations. In 1902 the price was \$5,000,000. To-day the administration, subject to the consent of Congress, is willing to pay \$25,000,000 for the same property, if property it be. It is an enormous sum, and the Senate may be no more willing to ratify the treaty than it was in 1867, but it will be unwise to refuse. The Danish West Indies are cheap at the price in spite of the fact that the increasing production of beet sugar has rendered the cane-sugar crop of the islands less valuable. What the United States would buy is protection against the possible occurrence of an ugly and costly international dispute. The \$25,000,000 would constitute the paid-up premium upon an insurance policy against one specific liability to war. Denmark wants to sell the islands, and under international law she has every right to convey her sovereignty to any other nation. But the American government would be certain to oppose the transfer

of the islands to a strong European naval power. In all probability the American people would be willing to fight in order to prevent the establishment of a strong naval base so near the Atlantic terminus of the Panama Canal. Thus the purchase of the islands will remove at once and forever not the least dangerous of the possible causes of quarrel between the United States and a foreign country.

AMERICAN public opinion should not, however, cherish any illusions as to the significance of an acquisition by the United States of the Danish West Indies. It is part of a project of imperialist expansion. It confirms the establishment by this country of a sphere of influence including all the territory and all the waters adjacent thereto between the United States and the Panama Canal. Within that sphere of influence American interest and policy are to determine the foreign relations of all the other states. It may even determine certain phases of their domestic affairs—whenever, that is, domestic disorders bring with them the danger of foreign interference. This particular corner of the world must be dominated by the United States, because the alternative military or naval domination by any strong European Power might be dangerous to American security. The domination brings with it a serious responsibility for the welfare of the peoples whose freedom of action is being impaired; and American liberals will have no duty more sacred than that of safeguarding these national wards against possible exploitation. But there is only one way of making it unnecessary for nations which possess effective physical power, to assume such international responsibilities. An international organization which could provide for the security of great nations could also provide against the exploitation of smaller ones. Americans who are opposed to imperial expansion should fight it, not by fighting projects of expansion, which can be justified as a matter of legitimate national interest, but by aiming to substitute for it an international organization which would seek security for

all peoples rather than for those only who are powerful.

**T**HE very bad impression made by the British blacklist is due to apprehension of what might be called its reverberatory effects. Wednesday's newspapers carry assurances from Sir Cecil Spring-Rice that the blacklist is not intended as a secondary boycott, and that the blacklisted firms will not be stopped in their dealings with neutral countries. But as a matter of practice it is feared that the effect cannot be limited. There is a report for example that Dutch steamship lines are refusing to carry blacklisted goods. This is due to a general policy of commercial frightfulness which leaves the smaller neutrals at Britain's mercy. The terror is almost certain to be contagious, so that other firms dependent on the goodwill of the Allies will inevitably fear to deal with the blacklisted firms. While there may be no reason to question the technical right of a government to regulate its national trade, the actual fact of commercial interrelation in the modern world makes it impossible to define sharply the limits of such action. We are confronted with something larger than the legal privileges of a government.

**S**YMPATHY for the Allies must not distort American judgment of the blacklist. It is one thing, for example, to acquiesce in the "blockade" as a military measure. American opinion on the whole does acquiesce. But what it finds hard to understand is the military value attached to a measure which fights German commerce not within the German Empire. It is one thing to close up Germany so nothing can go in or out. That bears a direct relation to the outcome of the war, the freeing of Belgium and France. It is quite another matter to make war on German trade with neutrals in the United States, South America and China. To the American mind this looks like mere commercial aggression not for the objects of the war, but in the interests of British merchants. The real danger of the blacklist is that it is regarded as a measure growing out of the hateful policy of a war after the war. There is an internal struggle in England to-day between the protectionist Tories and the free-trade liberals, and the peace of the world depends on the victory of the liberals. Permit measures like the blacklist to pass unchallenged, and the appetite of the Tories will grow by what it feeds upon.

**F**RIENDS of Mexico ought not to delude themselves with the view that much turns on the course of the formal diplomatic negotiations pending between the United States and Mexico. Our

soldiers may remain on Mexican soil without necessarily threatening the integrity of Mexico; they may be withdrawn without necessarily removing the risk of aggression. What almost everything turns on is the rate of progress Carranza is making in the pacification of the northern Mexican states. So long as Villa, or the mere name of Villa, can raise formidable bands of outlaws, able to evade indefinitely the constitutionalist armies, we shall be forced to keep our National Guard regiments on the border. Conceivably this may mean a period of several years. Now, by no stretch of the imagination can a life of watchful waiting on the actual border be made to seem attractive. The citizen soldiers, scorched by the sun and whipped by the wind and dust, and eager, besides, to return to their civil employments, will feel very keenly the shortcomings of *mañana* as a principle of pacification. They are bound to prove prolific letter-writers, and effective propagandists for a Mexican policy that bears a really conclusive character.

**I**T may be a wholesome thing for Americans to lay the greatest possible stress upon the fact that among the forces that have tried to bring about intervention in Mexico are the base and greedy desires of grafters and exploiters. It is not a wholesome thing to make this factor appear sole or even paramount. There are a great many American interests in Mexico that are as unimpeachable in character as any property interests are likely to be, and their destruction through perennial disorder is something we have no right to view with equanimity. There are interests of subjects of European Powers whose destruction we must view with grave concern. Europe will not forever be too much occupied to turn its attention to Mexico. Furthermore, we can not be indifferent to the monstrous iniquities practised by bloodthirsty bandits upon the peaceable and helpless part of the Mexican population. Murder, mutilation, and robbery are not morally to be regarded as beyond the scope of our interest even if all parties concerned are Mexicans. It is possible that any attempt on our part to protect our legitimate interests in Mexico would make a bad matter worse. But this is not tantamount to a denial of the existence of such interests.

**N**O statesman or political group of Europe has made a pronouncement more auspicious for the future of nations than the recent declaration by the majority of Socialists in the French Chamber of Deputies—signed by 87 of the 106 Socialist members. They endorse appropriations for the continuance of the war, since they rely upon the statements of Mr. Asquith and Viscount Grey that the purpose of the war is to establish a just peace,

to be maintained by international contracts. But they demand that this purpose shall be stated in more explicit terms. They protest against anything that will support von Bethmann-Hollweg in "the false affirmation that the war had as its object at the beginning and will have as a consequence the destruction of the political liberty of Germany or the annihilation of its economic life. At this time it appears to all that in order to avoid a return of the barbarity unchained on Europe we must think of what already has been called 'the society of nations.' To that end it is necessary vigorously to oppose to those who know nothing but violent solutions our will to arrive at the rightful solutions, to which alone the coalesced forces of nations will bring the weight of their sanction."

**S**PECIFICALLY, the French Socialists fear the proposed economic union arranged at the conference of Paris. After stating that they favor reasonable measures of developing the production and exchange of goods among the Allies, they go on to say: "But our duty is not to reinforce a régime of extreme protectionism of which the working classes of all the countries would bear the cost, nor even to develop in regard to Germany a vital system of economic restriction that would be at the same time a source of certain future conflicts. . . . We will not accept a prolongation in an economic war of the disasters of the European war." The three Socialist members of the Cabinet could not, it is true, sign this statement, because as members of the government they had already become parties to the economic agreement. But their support of that agreement cannot be long-lived with a majority of their party against them. From the beginning of the war France has faced the facts, France has acted with a whole heart. Frenchmen of all convictions have been first among the citizens of the Allied countries to give their brains and their bodies unquestioningly to halt German aggression. It is still more to the glory of France that in her legislature has been expressed the first powerful and uncompromising opposition to the short-sighted injustice which now threatens the Allied cause from within.

**T**HE breakdown of the settlement in the garment-workers' strike will be regretted by few save the manufacturers themselves. It would have healed none of the old antagonisms. It would have created new and doubtful embarrassments. If we deplore the violence by which that breakdown has been accompanied, it is yet necessary to realize how fully it is to be traced to the utter blindness of the employers to any social interest in their industry. It is true that the union would have kept

certain advantages. It would nominally have preserved the preferential shop. A more effective method for the selection of unionists was to have been devised. The agreement by the Manufacturers' Association to register all direct sub-contracting would, in the doubtful event of its being fully carried out, have marked a great step forward. Nothing was more subversive of industrial order than the old anarchy which left the unions helpless before the chaotic network of inter-relations between contractors and sub-contractors. The result of the suggested system of price determination by experts would in all probability have been a continuous series of small strikes destined only to irritate both sides. The right to discharge may have been, as Mr. Schlesinger argued, less formidable than it appeared. It may have been doubtful whether its restoration would have cast any greater burden than the old upon the union funds; for, under the old system, the delay in getting the Board of Arbitration to work almost always resulted in some two thousand men being out of employment. Arbitration, moreover, tended always to the production of discontent since the Board tried to evolve a series of principles by which each issue was to be judged instead of dealing *de novo* with the facts which arose. In these aspects, it is possible to see the benefits which the union leaders urged upon the strikers. And they were wholly right in the argument that the splendid manner of their struggle, the common suffering they finely endured, have contributed to the solidification of union sentiment.

**T**HERE is, however, another and a darker side. The elimination of the Board of Arbitration largely destroyed the value of the protocol. It was a denial, forced by the Manufacturers' Association upon the union, of the principle that the public is interested in the methods of industrial organization. It was a fresh assertion of the impossible position that a manufacturer has an ownership which places the shop conditions entirely at his disposal. The Association could further claim that though they had granted an increase in wages, it had yet to be shown whether the new machinery for its enforcement would prove at all adequate; and we may be permitted to doubt whether the Association would have assisted the workers to secure it. The restoration of the right of discharge placed once more a dangerous weapon in the employers' hands. It is always easier to carry through a discharge than it is to organize a strike in protest. That right was the main weapon with which, before 1910, the employers prevented the growth of unionism in the industry. While they had pledged themselves afresh not to discharge any worker on account of his activity in the unions, we



know by hard experience how fatally easy it is to substitute complaints of inefficiency and insubordination for the real grounds of dismissal. We believe, in fact, that the unions would have had grave difficulty in retaining the preferential shop. The settlement would only have opened the way for a yet more serious conflict in the future.

**W**HAT above all emerges from the strike in its present stage is the splendid solidarity displayed by the workers. For three months they have faced the prospect of starvation with a grim determination that has not been surpassed in the history of American unionism. It has been a strike thus far without violence, and in this respect it was a notable advance on the situation of 1910. From the first the workers had public sympathy on their side; but it must be frankly said that public sympathy did not imply an equal public support. What is even more regrettable is the absence of any organized support from the American Federation of Labor. Mr. Gompers did, indeed, take part in one stage of the settlement proceedings; but beyond that official mark of recognition nothing decisive has been done. The American Federation will miss a great opportunity, unless it ranges its forces solidly behind the garment workers. It can now afford a convincing demonstration of labor unity which will influence the whole of American industry. Nothing will go further to show the manufacturers that on questions of principle labor knows no limit to industrial unity than such an attitude. Its failure will be evidence of an implicit sectionalism from which it is time the leaders of organized labor shook themselves free. An injury to one is an injury to all wherever the fundamental principles of unionism are concerned.

## Mexico Rediviva

**A** FEW weeks ago Mexico and the United States were hesitating on the verge of an involuntary and depressing war. The calamity has finally been avoided, but it has not been avoided as the result of any attempt to settle or even frankly to consider the essential controversy between the two countries. During the heat of the crisis Secretary Lansing drew up an indictment of the behavior of the Carranzistas, which can fairly be described as one of the most formidable bills of grievances ever presented by one government to that of an ostensibly friendly and competent neighbor. That bill has not been paid. It has not even been acknowledged. In so far as the grievances were genuine they have lost none of their sting. What has occurred in the meantime

is merely a change in the attitude of the quarrelling non-combatants—a disposition on the part of each government to drop questions of prestige and to allow the other government to save its face. As a result of this exhibition of mutual goodwill, some kind of a border agreement may be patched up. Although the arrangement will not expressly provide for the withdrawal of the American troops now on Mexican soil, the troops will nevertheless be unobtrusively and steadily withdrawn. They will be retired without having accomplished the object of the invasion, but their retirement will not be ordered by the Mexican government or enforced by the Mexican army. As soon as the retirement becomes a fact American opinion will be placated by the explanation that the border has been rendered secure. Carranza will reap the glory of emancipating Mexican soil from the contamination of armed Americans and of an explicit or implicit tribute to the unimpaired integrity of Mexican sovereignty. The border will be rendered more secure than it was, but at a vastly increased cost to the American government.

The tribute to Mexican sovereignty will not, however, alter the facts. As Abraham Lincoln pointed out, you cannot fasten five legs on a sheep by calling a tail a leg, because even though you call a tail a leg it remains a tail. That an immediate collision has been averted and Mexican sensibilities soothed are desirable results, but results, however desirable, become much less desirable in case they have been accomplished at the expense of an express or an implicit lie. To perpetuate in still another document the fiction of Mexican sovereignty is to increase the ultimate difficulty of bringing about a satisfactory adjustment between Mexican susceptibilities and the facts of the Mexican foreign and domestic situation. Mexican sovereignty depends less upon verbal acknowledgment of its inviolacy by the American government than upon the ability of the Mexican nation to meet the necessities and responsibilities of its own life. It is impaired less by the unauthorized presence of American troops on Mexican soil than by the load of political and financial obligations which the revolution has imposed upon the national resources. If the Mexican nation were capable of meeting these obligations without default and without assistance, it would remain as independent as it was in 1908, but it has already defaulted, and if left to its own resources it will continue to default. Its own citizens are suffering from the defalcation more than are foreigners. Mexico requires American aid not for the recognition of Mexican sovereignty but for its restoration.

Mexico can, of course, legally vindicate its sovereignty by repudiating its obligations; but it