

Aiding the Enemy's Diplomacy

THAT the changes in Russia did for the time being make worse the military situation of the Allies is patent enough. But they have so far improved their diplomatic position that, if properly used, the military disadvantage might in large part be offset. Yet so far there seems little disposition to profit by the diplomatic change, or indeed to make the quite necessary modification in our own policy demanded by the new circumstances.*

What from the beginning has been the ultimate, as apart from the incidental—though perhaps more visible—object of the war? It has been to prevent the formation of a great, powerful Central European block which, dominated by a militarist Prussia, would constitute a menace to the whole western world. Our method of meeting the danger of a Prussianized Central Europe has been based, first and last, upon setting up, athwart the German pathway to the East, independent states that should be able to resist the Austro-German pressure by the buttress of Russian power, reinforced by Italy and ourselves operating through the Mediterranean. That policy has, since the Russian Revolution, obviously become impossible.

Even though Russian military assistance remain active during the war, Russia is going to be too absorbed in her own internal problems, during our generation at least, to risk further wars for the purpose of supporting the foreign policy of the old régime. We might create M. Miliukoff's independent Bohemia with its subject German population. But if, ten years hence, it found its position untenable, side by side with a cohesive German block of ninety millions odd, can we imagine the Russian socialist federal republic, wrestling with inevitable internal difficulties and very probable reactionary movements, risking a succession of wars arising out of the complexities of Balkan politics? Does anyone any longer pretend that our policy in southeastern Europe, as it existed as late as the beginning of this year, is still practicable?

Yet there is more than a chance that the same end could be achieved in another fashion.

An American authority noted early in the war that "whatever else Germany might have conquered, she had conquered her allies"—Austria, Bulgaria, Turkey. If Germany won they would be her vassals; if she lost they would all but dis-

appear. It is certain that a power like Austria did not relish the position of vassalage. What has prevented her—or for that matter the peoples of Central Europe as a whole—from seeing what seems self-evident to us, namely, that from the point of view of their ultimate freedom and well-being, they have much less to fear from our victory than from Prussia's? President Wilson in his last speech (June 14th) said:

We know now clearly that we are not the enemies of the German people. . . . Austria has acted, not upon its own initiative, or upon the choice of its own people, but at Berlin's dictation, ever since the war began. Its people desire peace, but they cannot have it until leave is granted from Berlin.

If the President is right in this assumption that we are not opposing any vital interest of the peoples of Central Europe—and we believe it passionately, believe, that is, that they had no cause to fight us since we did not threaten their rights or interests in any way—then what has created a misconception which induces Germany's allies to accept so humiliating a position, and the German people themselves to suffer such long agonies for a victory which will not be for their welfare but merely for the ambition of a class that for the most part they detest?

Both the Austrian state on the one hand, and the Social-Democracy of Germany on the other, have been led into that humiliating position mainly by the bogey of "the Russian peril," the "pan-Slav menace." For Austria, vassalage to Berlin seemed the only alternative to Slav dominance and to dismemberment at the hands of Russia. The fear of the Slav overcame the fear of the Prussian. But since the Russian Revolution the fear of the Slav has largely disappeared. The Russian world is for a generation at least going to be too busy with its own upheaval and disorder to be a menace to anybody abroad (unless the danger to Russia itself should lead to a military dictatorship in that country, a dictatorship that might be pro-German).

It naturally takes time for the full meaning of a fact of this kind to sink into the consciousness of a whole people—especially a submissive and well drilled people like the German—and cause a revision of settled opinions. But already it is having its effect.

The Prussian can no longer create panic in the Austrian mind with the bogey of pan-Slavism. Hence the obvious change in the relations between Vienna and Berlin. The new emperor is display-

* Note—At the time this article was written the German Reichstag crisis had not taken place, and the Allies had not announced their conference for a revision of war aims. It is now still more pertinent.—THE EDITORS.

ing an attitude which has already excited the wrath of the German jingoes. He is reviving the policy which aims at satisfying the claims of Slav nationality within the framework of the Dual Monarchy. Undoubtedly if he did not look to Germany for defense he would go farther still.

Meantime a parallel movement is going on against the domination of Prussian policy in Germany itself. The main factor in rendering the Social-Democrats so pitifully helpless in resisting the war aims of the Prussian has been also the bogey of Czarist Russia. It was the argument of "the Russian peril" which made it impossible for the more stalwart minorities in Germany to make any headway among the general public, and helped to prevent the increasing suffering of the great mass from finding expression in political protest. There is thus taking place an alliance, or community of aim, between the Austrian Empire and parties within Germany itself in resistance to Prussian overlordship.

This fissure is of course only just beginning to reveal itself. Were it to deepen, however, the German government would have increasing difficulty in maintaining its internal position. The instrument it uses would become less pliable and less reliable; and as conditions become more acute the block might show increasing tendencies to disintegration. How many of us have grasped the real significance of the fact that if the statement of President Wilson to the effect that we are opposing no real interest of the German people is really true—and to us it seems self-evident—the Central Empires hold together and carry on the war simply because the masses of their people are the victims of a disastrous illusion? If these could be brought to see what seems obvious to us, the war would stop in a week by the utter collapse of the morale of the army and navy, by vast desertions, by sabotage in munition works, by the hundred and one ways by which a people determined not to fight simply do not fight.

That we have a great belief in the value of merely civilian pressure on Germany we admit by the fact of maintaining the blockade. We know that the army and navy will suffer last of all from any shortage. What we are aiming at is the creation of pressure against the government by the suffering of civilian population.

Yet ever since the beginning of the war we have in our policy deliberately offset this intended effect of the blockade by doing our best to persuade the German and the Austrian that verily he must look only to the triumph of the Prussian for protection; that we shall give him none at all. It is true that in one message we have repudiated any idea of "destroying German nationality," whatever that

may mean. But a phrase in an official message has as little chance of reaching the real consciousness of the enemy peoples as the weird schemes of scattering leaflets by aeroplane in enemy towns or trenches. Not so does a whole people argue itself from falsehood into truth. What impresses them is the general aspect of our policy as they gather it from our press, our public actions, our reiterated declarations. Where in that press, or in those declarations, have we ever given the subject peoples of Central Europe the assurance that after the war we would protect them from the enemies that rightly or wrongly they have feared; from Russian Pan-Slavism, British tariffism, Balkan intrigue, French vengeance, or what not? The statement of our war aims so far made not only does nothing to aid those forces within the Central Empires which are so indispensable to our success (for so long as the Prussian can count upon the support of the solid block of Central Europe we shall not destroy his militarism even though we win the war) but tends to aid those welding forces which it is our desire to undermine.

We have, in one form or another, proclaimed our main war aims to be about as follows:

- (1) The destruction of Prussian militarism.
- (2) The rearrangement of European frontiers on a basis of nationality.
- (3) "War after the war" against German trade.

We have emphasized the last by an Allied Conference on methods of carrying the policy into effect—a proof of seriousness of intention not accorded to the other items.

Our censorship has so operated as to encourage in the enemy countries a maximum interpretation of this program. That is to say, while papers of the *Morning Post* and *National Review* order, with their "thorough" policy of crushing Germany now and in the future, have been allowed very free circulation here and abroad, organs favoring a liberal interpretation of the above program have been discriminated against as "pro-German," with the result that the censorship has played the game of the German and Austrian militarist parties, by enabling them, on the strength of the statements of our reactionary press, to argue in this wise:

The destruction of German military power means that we are to be deprived in future of any effective method of national defense, and that we shall be at the mercy of any enemy that cares to affront us. We are fighting for the right to defend ourselves, the most elementary form of political freedom.

The liberation of subject nationalities is a euphemism for the dismemberment of Austria and the subjugation of German and Magyar minorities to hostile rule; while the economic program of the Paris Conference is sufficient proof that our people and their

children will be deprived of their fair opportunity in the world, of that economic expansion so necessary for an increasing population. We must defend our right to those things with our own power.

It is not a question of whether this is a correct interpretation of our aims, but of whether our policy has made it possible for the enemy governments so to represent them, and of what chance it has given to the democratic minority in Germany, or the liberal and home rule minority Austria, to make headway in their respective countries.

The truth is that our general surrender to the temper of wartime has caused us to disregard as negligible the political, economic, and moral forces at work within the Central Empires. We have taken no trouble to utilize them for the purpose of our policy. How could we do so?

Let us imagine a new Paris Conference of the Allies—or a Washington Conference would be better still—meeting to consider among themselves the character of the “guaranties” which they expect not only to receive, but to give; and as a result of their deliberations making it plain that:

(1) The new Society of Nations which the Allies constitute will stand for the valid rights of a peaceful, law-abiding Germany as much as for those of a Belgium or a Serbia, and will pledge themselves to protect not only the small state from aggression, but the great as well.

(2) The Allies will not attempt to remedy one wrong by creating another, in Austria or elsewhere. They are prepared to accept such modification of the old conception of national sovereignty and independence as may be necessary in order to make a real Society of Nations workable and the freedom of one state compatible with the welfare of another.

(3) A Germany or an Austria that is prepared to accept the obligations—freedom for subject peoples, some limitation of armaments, or what not—which attach to membership in the new international society, will also be accorded its privileges: equality of economic opportunity in areas that have in the past been the cause of dissension, access to the sea, economic rights of way through foreign territory.

President Wilson, while still a neutral, proclaimed these as the things for which America would be prepared to stand. Let the Allies proclaim them as the things for which they stand as belligerents.

In shifting the discussion from immediate territorial readjustments to future international arrangements and Germany's place therein, the Allies would have this immense advantage: they would be dealing with matters in which the balance of forces is in their favor instead of against them. When we make claims for large territorial rectifications, the Germans are in a position to remind us of the war-map; but when we come to the question

of Germany's future privileges in the world at large, we are entitled to say:

The war map may show in your favor; but you are absolutely unable to impose your will on any of your major enemies. We, the Western Allies, have created a Society of Nations, dominating not only western Europe, but the whole of the New World, the whole of Africa, and virtually the whole of Asia. If you hold your conquests and create a militarized Mitteleuropa at the cost of exclusion from the privileges of such a Society of Nations, you will lose immeasurably more than you will gain.

The argument presented by such an alternative would appeal not only to everything that has in the past fought autocracy in the Central Empires—the Social Democrats, the subject nationalities, the liberals—but to the great commercial and industrial interests that have heretofore supported imperialism. Commercial and industrial Germany would not lightly face permanent exclusion from, or unfavorable treatment in South America, Asia, Africa.

It comes to this—That in our international relationships we have neglected the large part of the persuasive and coercive moral forces by which society normally deals with the recalcitrant member, the criminal. The real social control in any community is not merely the threat of punishment—crime is often worst where the punishments are most ferocious—but the positive advantages offered to every member in obeying the law and accepting its obligations. Not only do we say: “Break the law and we will punish you”; but we also say: “Obey the law and we shall see that it protects you, and that you enjoy its advantage.” And it is that part of the “sanction” which is probably the most operative.

But the analogous sanction, to be applied by the Allies to Germany, although powerful at present, is destined probably to lose much of its force with the passage of time. The more the stress of war compels Germany to become self-sufficing, the less will the threat of our blockade and the hope of access to our raw materials weigh with her. Turkish cotton, wood pulp cellulose, synthetic rubber, are so many weapons drawn from our armory.

But since this inducement, or pressure, or offer, whichever you care to call it, can be applied without in any way stopping or slackening the war, by means of the Allied Conference and Declaration indicated above, statesmanship would indicate some such step immediately.

We have never made any real offer to the German and Austrian peoples as apart from their governments of after-the-war protection by means of a real League of Nations. We have, on the contrary, with our vague talk of “the destruction of

German militarism " and our definite plans at the Paris Conference for differentiation against German trade, done the precise opposite. We have in fact, in our diplomacy, played the game of the enemy governments. It is time that we played our own.

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The Literary Guy

NO one is astonished when he hears that a stockbroker is a pretty good boxer. A stockbroker is a "regular fellow." But when one is told that Maeterlinck is a pretty good boxer, one is astonished. Maeterlinck is a "literary guy." There is scarcely any difference in the working conditions of stockbrokers and book-writers. The work in each case is indoors, mercilessly exacting while it lasts, calling equally for concentration and endurance and speed. The occupational diseases are also the same—so-called nervous breakdown, dyspepsia and thirst. But for all the similarities the world is not of one mind about these species. It looks on one of these two male types with powerful romantic favor, on the other either with repressed suspicion or with embarrassed interest. And it is not the broker who is so charily received.

An explanation may be offered for this distinction. What keeps the broker so romantic is not his strapping gait or the ribbon in his cocky hat. It is the promise that some day at the end of his rainbow there will be a pot of gold. The author is a drooped and shambling figure not so much because he is actually shabby as because he gives so little promise of ever flying about town in a car. The broker who has a car may be insolvent. The author who has a car may be as dependable as the golden goose. But for one person who thinks of the dashing stockbroker as fraudulent, there are a hundred who really can't see why the author does it. After the impecunious clergyman and the penurious professor, the indigent author is a most settled popular conception. One has only to suppose a clergyman ordering champagne, a professor buying orchids, an author invading the Ritz or the Blackstone, to feel the ache of a piteous incongruity.

Imagine an old author who dressed like Russell Sage. Everything that Russell Sage used to wear had a shine, except his shoes. Had he been a mumbling author instead of a money-bag, how people would have shunned him, for then his shabbiness would have stood for economic failure instead of eccentricity, and nothing is deemed so tiresome in an old man as the evidence that he

hasn't "made good." Russell Sage "made good." Threadbare and dilapidated as he was, he stood for so many dollars that men quaked when they approached him. He had a halo even among the office-boys of Wall Street—and always when it comes to popular halo there is no comparison between the author and the most moth-eaten millionaire. There are two very dull clubs in New York: one excludes men who haven't written a book and the other practically excludes men who haven't acquired a million. The authors do not take their books any less seriously than the moneyed men take their millions. Both clubs are stupefyingly egotistic. But when it comes to the deference that has been inculcated in curtains and armchairs and mirrors and marble, in bellboys and doormen and servitors, the mere literary men are as ineffectual as a blunt lawn-mower. By sheer pressure they may compel deference in their club but, as soon as they have passed, those that have bent resume their upright state. Before the men of wealth, however, everything goes down like grass under the razor's edge. It is not by any means because of a difference in the scale of wages, though manners are of course a marketable commodity with servants, as with actors and clergymen and doctors. It has also something to do with wealth itself. The boastful consciousness of knowing Midas is not confined to less successful business associates. The steward who serves the great man with huckleberry pie and a glass of milk is also in his orbit, and feels the metallic attraction of Midas even in feeding him pie.

But think, you may conventionally retort, of the admiring ladies who like nothing so well as an author or an authoress. Think of the lapdog poet. Are the poets despised because of their lamentable economic aspect? Are the parlor iconoclasts, wreaking massacre among the conversational clay-pigeons, at any disadvantage because they are poor? Do they not rather wear a halo where the tea-party stockbroker wears a hang-dog look? Yes, but what kind of halo? The literary guy is all the more a literary guy in the neighborhood of bibelots and bric-à-brac. He is a condiment, a confection, a meringue. The fashionable women who want him on hand are women like those of Fragonard, little as they admit it in an age of sansculotterie. Outside their well-garnished establishment there is a pretty summer-house where it is amusing to give one's finger-tips to novelty. This is not a place that does honor to the writer but a place where he is given little liberties, like the marmoset that may perch on a shoulder and play with a curl. If the marmoset misbehaves, the lady expects to spank him and send him back to his lair. It is on exceedingly few occasions that