

task. That I think is a fair statement of British public opinion on this question. But every day when I am in London I walk past Buckingham Palace to lunch at my club, and I look at that not very expressive façade and wonder—and we all wonder—what thoughts are going on behind it and what acts are being conceived there. Out of

it there might yet come some gesture of acceptance magnificent enough to set beside President Wilson's magnificent declaration of war. . . .

These are things in the scales of fate. I will not pretend to be able to guess even which way the scales will swing.

H. G. WELLS.

The "New Era" in Germany

IT is the common verdict of historians upon the Holy Alliance that it ruined a promising experiment in the organization of peace by its meddling in the internal concerns and the constitutional changes of independent nations. The moral that usually follows is that a concert of peace-loving states must be color-blind to the national politics of its component members. Empires and republics, oligarchies and limited monarchies must somehow contrive to find a sufficient link of fraternity in the common resolve to keep the peace. That is the abstract wisdom of academic theory. No league of nations could ever have been built upon it. The reactionaries of the Holy Alliance, who sought a basis of union in the common respect for the principle of authority in politics and religion, were better psychologists and franker men. Mr. Wilson is probably right when he lays it down that our future Holy Alliance of the nations must rest on the common adoption of democracy. A state which insists on maintaining, as Germany has done, a form of government which the rest of the civilized world regards as obsolete and reactionary, will always live isolated, and will always be, by reason of this wilful peculiarity, an object of suspicion to the rest.

The real case against the peculiarity of the German system is not that it is monarchical, nor even that it is imperfectly democratic. It is that this system was consciously maintained against the rest of the world and was admittedly the basis of a militarist organization of society. "Prussia," said Prince Bülow, "is a state of soldiers and officials," and he went on to argue that in history a strong military state has always required firm monarchical guidance. The refusal to adopt the parliamentary principle which has triumphed elsewhere in Europe was something more than individualism and something less than originality. It sprang from the resolve to be, in a world less suitably organized for action, more formidable, more imposing, more commanding than one's neighbors. We need not pause to discuss whether in fact this monarchical structure really is more apt for war than a democratic structure. The

important point is that the German ruling class undoubtedly held this opinion. It proclaimed thereby its abiding sense of the all-importance of war. The more it submitted in peace to the inconveniences and restrictions of an authoritative governing machine, the more did it confess its belief that the gains of war outweigh the fruits of peace. The root of this militarism was, it is true, partly fear. The German people was obsessed by the recollection of Jena and its sequel and knew by a sort of hereditary memory how dangerous it is in an armed Europe to be weak. The German people wore the Prussian crown, much as savages wear war plumes, in order to impress its possible enemies. If it was aggressive, the reason for that also was partly fear. It knew that the best form of defense is the bold offensive. Suspicious, fearful, uneasy, it sought to make itself secure by those tactics of bluff and intimidation which made it in the end intolerable. Its imagination oscillated forever between the two alternatives "World-Power or Downfall." It saw no middle course. It thought that a nation must be either hammer or anvil. It was a genuine dread of suffering the fate of the anvil which led it to play the part of the hammer. It had come through a bitter historical experience to this mood, and it crystalized its experience in a political constitution which warned the world that it was resolved to be active, formidable and strong. The tragedy of its situation was that so long as it acted on this theory, it was forever creating for itself fresh experiences which tended to confirm it. It bluffed and bullied, even when it had a sound case (as I think it had in the Moroccan affair) and when its bad manners annoyed and alarmed the rest of the world, it became more defiant than ever because it saw that hostile neighbors "penned" it in. Its fears redoubled, and with its fears its efforts to appear alarming. It refused to discuss disarmament. It scoffed at any international organization of peace. These were "snares" spread in vain before it. The Zabern affair gave its rulers, on the eve of the war, a final opportunity for a ringing and defiant assertion of the military and

monarchical principle against the will of the people.

How far has the war availed to alter this characteristic German attitude? The very question, it may be said, is absurd. As the war goes on, it only brings fresh examples of this native belief that a state must prevail by seeming terrible and ruthless to its neighbors. It could not be otherwise, and we may count on the pursuit of these tactics to the end. The High Command is in control while the war lasts, and in all that "Germany" does we shall witness at work, not the mind of the nation, but the mind of the General Staff. But the man is blind indeed who refuses to see beneath these phenomena the workings of a tremendous transformation. We had early in the war the promise of a "new orientation" from the Chancellor. Then came his undertaking to collaborate in Mr. Wilson's efforts to create a permanent organization of peace. For Mr. Asquith and M. Briand that involved no breach with the past. In theory, at least, no French or British statesman, for a generation past, has publicly opposed the development of the international idea. Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg did not attempt to conceal the abruptness of the change. He admitted that Germany had stood for the contrary principle, and he explained the advance in an eloquent gesture which pointed to the ruin and devastation of this war, and predicted that at its end "the cry will arise from all mankind for peaceful agreements and understandings to prevent the return of such an immense catastrophe." A few weeks later Count Bernstorff was making apparently official statements in favor of an international agreement to reduce armaments after the war. All this might have meant very little if we had been left with the prospect of a Germany which still retained in her domestic constitution a system of authority which is at bottom an organization for war.

The Kaiser's rescript on "the new era" completes the auguries of change. Two fundamental changes were necessary in order to transform the Europe which in 1914 staggered into the universal war. One of them was the overthrow of the Russian autocracy; the other was the reform of the Prussian franchise. On the monstrous basis of that class-franchise rested the Prussian state "of soldiers and officials": it was the foundation of the Prussian monarchy as we have known it. By her population, her energy, her industry and her ruling tradition, Prussia will always be the predominant partner in the Empire. To reform Prussia is to transform Germany. If the "new era" meant only the destruction of the three-class franchise in Prussia it would mean much; but it cannot stop here. Already an All-Party Committee of the Reichstag is working out the form in which it

will for the future define the Chancellor's responsibility towards the sovereign people. So inevitable is the change that Herr Zimmermann has publicly predicted an alteration of the imperial constitution by the consent of the Kaiser and the other federal princes. One may make too much of the paper defects of the German imperial constitution. The Reichstag always had the power to extort reform, since it always had and occasionally exercised the power to refuse money supplies. The chief task of a chancellor was always to manage its groups, and he rarely contrived to pass his budgets or his bills without large concessions and modifications. An obstinate Reichstag could always oblige him (as in 1907) to face a general election. The human factor in politics is, however, vastly more important than paper constitutions. The Reichstag lacked authority, not because it had no power, not because the Kaiser was an "autocrat," but because it rarely had a coherent majority, or a will of its own. For that, the isolation of its two largest parties was chiefly to blame. On the one side was the clerical center, immobile, unchanging, subject neither to growth nor decay, a party into which voters are born and baptized, and which they quit only at death. On the other side was Social Democracy, obstinate in its refusal to coöperate fruitfully with others. Here, too, the war has brought change. There is a certain fusion of parties. The Majority Socialists have dropped the international idealism and revolutionary tactics of their party, and lost in the process something of their old unbending honesty and independence. But they have become in consequence a practical and opportunist parliamentary party. They can take their place in the ranks of a national movement. It is possible at last to imagine some active and effectual impulse originating in the Reichstag. The Kaiser and the Chancellor have, indeed, deferred the promised internal reforms until the coming of peace, but the Chancellor's balanced negative was the most hesitating refusal that ever came from a statesman in power. The nearly unanimous vote of the Reichstag has given an overwhelming mandate for reform. When even the *Kölnische Zeitung* presses for immediate action, it is reasonable to hope that some beginning of the coming changes will be made, even while the war continues.

While this hopeful movement proceeds in Germany, towards the spontaneous destruction alike of her political reaction and of her militarism (twin phases of the same attitude) there develops in England an ominous tendency to impose upon her an enforced transformation by military dictation. The policy of refusing to negotiate with the Hohenzollerns is now advocated by several of our

more popular newspapers. A few of those who preach this extreme course are sincere but simple-minded democrats, who really imagine that the Kaiser is an unpopular autocrat and suppose that by signalling to the German nation, groaning under his tyranny, we shall induce it to make a revolution. Others are less ignorant, and more astute. These are the people who from the first days of the war called for the total crushing of the enemy, the dismemberment of his allies, the seizure of his colonies and his fleet and the imposition of an overwhelming indemnity. Then our ultra imperialists boasted that they would "dictate peace in Berlin." Now they talk of "refusing to make terms with a Hohenzollern." It comes to the same thing. The German people will never, under foreign dictation, dismiss the Hohenzollerns, until Berlin has been occupied and the last of their armies overthrown. Not even the Minority Socialists would welcome "liberation" by such means. President Wilson warned Europe last December that the prolongation of the war was endangering civilization itself. To fight on until the German nation had lost all power of resisting the final humiliation of a foreign interference in its form of government, would be to pursue the extremest form of a dictated peace. This school of thought delights to talk of Napoleon. It forgets that Napoleon was an adventurer, a usurper and a man of genius. The Kaiser is none of these things. It forgets that only a generation passed from Napoleon's en-

forced abdication, before the French people, brooding all the while on his glories and wrongs, revived the tradition of his militarism, and brought back his nephew to power. The parallel moreover ascribes to the Kaiser a personal ascendancy and authority which he never has possessed. The only result of the adoption of this policy (assuming that we could endure the years of warfare which it would entail) would be that a sullen Germany, counting its dead by millions, and brooding over the loss of its independence (for a state that is forced against its will to change its rulers is no longer independent) would resolve, by force or fraud, to evade or overcome the restrictions placed upon its armaments by Europe. The precedent of Jena would be ever present, both to it and to its enemies. We should be forced into a prolonged military occupation to guarantee the new régime, and so far from having ended militarism in Europe, we should have given it a new lease of life. Enforced democracy will not bear the fruits of liberty. By this policy we shall not make democracy secure. The risk of pursuing it is that by openly threatening the right of the German people (as our forefathers put it in 1689) "to choose their own governors," we may confirm the fears that underlay their militarism, and check the hopeful movement by which they are preparing for themselves a new era and more liberal era.

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The War Power of the President

WAR, as a social function, differs in kind, not merely in degree, from a croquet party or an afternoon tea. This important truth, apparently self-evident, is realized only with much travail by a peace-loving and peace-wonted people. For the present generation of Americans three years of fighting in Europe have done much to prepare our minds for the whole truth. Yet the din of preparation for our part in the great struggle does not drown the protests of those who are shuddering to see the conventionalities of the tea party shattered and ignored.

Even among those who are convinced that we were obliged to fight, there prevails more or less the notion that we must do it gingerly, with anxious consideration for the ways of liberty and law. The Kaiser, all agree, must be brought low, but editors wish to see it done without censorship of the press; professors and public-square orators expect the process to raise up no obstruction to the flow of words and even of ideas; there are those who hope

that the whole enterprise may go on in the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount; Congressmen wish to see it finished without exaltation of the executive as compared with the legislative branch of the government.

These ideas per se are sound in political science, wise in law, admirable in Christian morality. It is well that they be thoroughly debated now at the opening of hostilities, and employed in shaping the course of legislation. Many people will expect them thus to have some appreciable effect on the actual conduct of the war. This faith is bound to suffer a grievous shock if, as is by no means impossible, the war shall prove to be a prolonged and hard-fought struggle. A disillusionment will come such as came during our War of Secession. In that strenuous time lofty ideals of liberty and law and cravings for the ways of Christian righteousness were freely proclaimed as the guides for action, but what determined the course of events when the struggle was at its fiercest was the judg-