

He has introduced some measure of system and economy into the administrative and financial chaos, which has passed for government in New York City. He has begun the task of converting the Police Department from a doubtful protector of law and order into a positive promoter of social wellbeing. He and his associates have succeeded prodigiously in improving the health, contributing to the comfort, and relieving the distress of the inhabitants of the city. Finally he has tackled the all-important job of converting the schools of the city into agencies of individual and social growth. His reelection is compromised at the present time, not because he has been an unenterprising, unintelligent and squeamish public servant, but because of his courageous, energetic, perspicacious and unqualified devotion to the public welfare. The very excellence of his administration, the very thoroughness of his attempt to remedy abuses and to introduce new and better methods and purposes into the government of New York has raised against him a group of malcontents who have been injured or discommoded or outraged by the excellence of his plans for municipal reconstruction. They are leagued against him now and are responsible for the candidacy of his opponents. He is, consequently, honored by the number, the character and the arguments of his enemies. Owing to the intrusion into the campaign of the wholly irrelevant issue of the war, it will be difficult to focus public attention on the reasons which actually entitle Mr. Mitchel to reelection, but it can still be done—provided the peculiarly gallant and thoroughgoing nature of his services is presented with sufficient emphasis to the voters of the city.

**P**RESIDENT WILSON, in his answer to the letter of Mr. Max Eastman, editor of *The Masses*, is, of course, right in stating that during war "it is legitimate to regard things which would in ordinary circumstances be innocent as very dangerous to the public welfare." A new line must be drawn and the drawing of it is "exceedingly hard." But this answer does not meet the grievance to which Mr. Eastman in his letter had attached most importance. "I have repeatedly requested the Post Office," says Mr. Eastman, "to inform me what specific things or kind of things in my magazine they consider unmailable so that I might make up the magazine in such a way as to be mailable in the future, and they have stubbornly and contemptuously refused." If, consequently, Mr. Eastman's statement is not exaggerated, the real difficulty is not that a line has been drawn but that a line has not been drawn. An editor who is opposed to the war but wishes to avoid the con-

demnation of the law in his criticism of the government is not instructed as to where the line runs but is penalized for overstepping a limit as to whose whereabouts he has not been instructed. In fact, the post office censorship is operated under conditions which make it peculiarly oppressive and exasperating. A wise censorship would go to the editor of a journal that was printing attacks on the national policy which were considered to be dangerous and arrange, if possible, to have the criticism pared down to limits which were regarded as tolerable. In so doing the government would merely be following the same practice in dealing with editors that it has used in dealing with the management of an industry which was charging excessive prices for its product. It asks for powers of coercion, but before using those powers it tries first to secure its objects by voluntary agreement. In war huge increases of authority are necessarily conferred on administrative officials, but if the administration is wise this authority will be used with moderation and its extreme exercise reserved for an extreme emergency.

## War Propaganda

**T**HE New Republic has received recently many letters from readers who are troubled by certain phases of the foreign and domestic policy of the government. These letters come almost entirely from people who favored the declaration of war against Germany last April and who have been no less in favor ever since of vigorous and whole-hearted military, naval and economic coöperation with the Allies for the purpose of preventing German victory. But they do not want the vast power which their nation is now creating exerted exclusively for the purpose of preventing German victory. They were converted to the employment of such a dangerous and double-edged weapon as war partly because of President Wilson's previous propaganda in favor of international organization, and because they saw no way of effectively bringing the influence of this country to bear on behalf of lasting peace save by participation in the risks, the sacrifices and the labor of defeating German aggression. What troubles them now is a doubt whether the diplomatic management of the war by the American government, and the propaganda recently associated with it, is calculated either to promote lasting peace or to extinguish German militarism; and this doubt has been reënforced by the extent to which the government has recently been setting up a coercive censorship over public opinion. The doubters quote President Wilson's words, "Just as we fight without rancor and selfish object . . . we shall, I feel confident, conduct

our operations as belligerents without passion and ourselves observe with proud punctilio the principles of right and fair play we profess to be fighting for"; and they ask in all seriousness how far the American nation is being urged to conduct its war-like operations without rancorous passion and how far its government is itself proudly and punctiliously observing its advertised principles of right and fair play.

If these doubters raise any question as to the wisdom of the declaration by this country of war on Germany or as to the overwhelming importance of resisting uncompromisingly the triumph of the German military party, *The New Republic* has no sympathy with their criticism. The price of American participation may be heavier than was anticipated some months ago, but the increased cost is outweighed by the clearest possible testimony to its salutary consequences. When the decision had to be made, there was no way of being sure what the effect would be on the outcome of the war of an unrestricted submarine campaign. No one could certainly tell whether or not the connivance at its barbarities by this country would or would not be equivalent to an underwriting of German victory. We now know that it probably would have enabled the Germans to win. The combination of the submarine campaign, the Russian revolution and American refusal to resist the former and to support the latter would have reduced France, Great Britain and Italy to a struggle against odds which could hardly have failed to result either in a war of general extermination or in a treaty of peace favorable to Germany. Those who opposed American intervention are finally condemned by the manifest practical consequences of American abstention. By clearing the way for a triumph of the military caste in Germany it would have left democracy throughout the world with its back to the wall and condemned to adopt permanently instead of temporarily the handicap of militarism. In no country would the democratic movement have been more defenseless than in America. For we would have been isolated, distrusted and friendless in a world more than ever militarized, and we would have armed, not as at present with some hope of making a temporary use of military force contribute to enduring peace, but under the influence of a bad conscience and an overwhelming fear.

In this essential respect the wisdom of American participation in the war has been brilliantly vindicated by the event. Any criticism of the government which tends to a contrary conclusion and which implies a willingness to acquiesce in a victory for the German government, because of a reluctance to pay the price of its defeat, must be unequivocally repudiated. But this is not the whole

story. The letters of our correspondents suggest a criticism of the conduct of the war which assumes the need and value of implacable American resistance to German aggression, but which questions the means which are being adopted to make that resistance effective. They raise a doubt whether the American government is adapting its domestic policy to the need of securing the kind of support from popular opinion which is required for the success of its diplomatic campaign against the German government and for the fulfilment of its ultimate purposes in entering the war. That campaign consists essentially in our attempt to capitalize the moral superiority of the cause of the Allies, to assist military with political weapons, to state the political issue of the war in such a way as to impair German morale by undermining the defense psychology of the German people and at the same time to give increasing endurance and integrity to the morale of the enemies of Germany. But a nation which uses political weapons must conform in its own behavior to the spirit of its policy. Its people must cooperate with its government in offering to the German people the olive branch as well as the sword, and this the American nation is not doing and is not being encouraged to do by its own government. A diplomacy which depends upon a combination of coercion and conciliation is being sustained by a war propaganda which is exclusively vindictive and coercive in spirit and method. This propaganda is already compromising the success of the President's attempt to impair German morale, and unless it is checked its effect on the morale of this country is likely to be no less deplorable.

From the editorials which appear in the enormous majority of American newspapers, from the speeches which are being made by a majority of American patriotic orators, no one could possibly infer that the American government officially entertained a policy except that of a decisive military victory, which was to be obtained at any cost and which would be used for the purpose of chastising and humiliating the German people. Few newspapers and none of the speakers so much as refer to the President's alternative of a peace of reconciliation or greet with the slightest encouragement the efforts which are now being made by the liberal parties in Germany to defeat the aggressive designs of their own government. On the contrary the detestable practice of classing the whole German nation together as assassins and Huns seems to be coming into favor. Stump speakers sent out by defense societies are evoking in the name of American patriotism the most malignant and venomous passions of their audiences, not only against the whole German nation, but against everyone in this



country who disagrees with their attitude and who does not share their own rancor and intolerance. Temporarily the propaganda of patriotism has been divorced from every feeling and idea which last spring reconciled so many pacifically minded Americans to participation in the war.

How is it possible to pretend that a war conducted in such a spirit can make for enduring peace? It is this headstrong and vindictive state of mind, this easy confusion of blind pugnacity with the sense of absolute righteousness which has been and always will be the most fruitful mother of wars. As a matter of fact the people who are now laboring to infect American public opinion with their own virulence always have been and still are the enemies rather than the friends of lasting peace. They were doing their best to militarize this country before it entered into the war, and they are making the best of their present opportunity to continue the work, and their efforts will not cease after the war is over. When the President proclaimed in the Senate address of last January his program of constructive internationalism, they either sneered at it or denounced it. They can be counted on to resist any attempt to put it into effect. At present they are supporting Mr. Wilson, but they are supporting him only in so far as he is making war. They are deliberately endeavoring to neutralize his attempt to accomplish in part the better objects of the war by the conciliatory methods of a democratic diplomacy. One and all they are the President's bitter and irreconcilable personal enemies. They are only waiting for a good opportunity to turn on him and rend him once again as they did during the last campaign.

The government cannot escape some measure of responsibility for the ugly and sinister mask which is being fastened on the face of American patriotism. It could not have wholly prevented this perversion of the spirit, which, according to the President, would be punctiliously observed by the nation in its conduct of the war, but it could have done much to counteract the process of demoralization. The great failure in the domestic policy of the government has consisted in its management of public opinion. It has depended too much upon the repetition of the admirable phrases in which the President originally embodied his policy and has neglected the task of applying them to the concrete problems of domestic and foreign policy in a way which would increase their vitality. The official press bureau has done nothing to assist the President's diplomacy by disseminating its spirit, and by explaining its purposes and its consequences. It has done absolutely nothing to arouse the interest of public opinion in the constructive problems of the settlement. Its notion of information and

propaganda has been a poor survival of the muck-raking magazine. The result is that when two different kinds of agitation inimical to the success of its own policy started up, the government was placed at a grave disadvantage. It was not prepared to resist a militarist agitation which was dangerous to its work on behalf of enduring peace, and it could think of no answer to an agitation in favor of immediate peace except violent suppression. Of course the effect of suppressing the agitation for peace at any price and conniving at the agitation for war at any price has been to strengthen both extremists and weaken the supporters of its own intermediate policy. The peace propagandists rejoice in suppression because it drives their agitation underground where it will become much more irresponsible, insidious and menacing. The militarist agitators are permitted without protest to impose themselves on the public as the only unadulterated American patriots.

A sufficient, although not the only, objection, to such a method of managing public opinion is its tendency to impair the ultimate efficiency of our American contribution to the war. Not only does it increase the resistance which the American military and political power will have to overcome both at home and abroad, but it will inevitably tend to dry up the fountain of American moral endurance. The American people will eventually react against a war which they were induced to enter because it was intended to safeguard democracy and to promote organized peace, but which is being too much managed by people who are opposed to organized peace, who expressly repudiate the idea that it was intended to safeguard democracy and who by all their words and acts prove an utter lack of faith in any method of dealing with enemies and opponents except that of violence. No matter how drastic the measures adopted to suppress opposition to a war conducted in a spirit of vindictive and savage hatred, that opposition will grow. Such a war would be too offensive to American national conscience. It would be too injurious to American national interest. The President, by every promise which he made to the American people in leading them into war, is committed to evoking for its support a different kind of propaganda. Otherwise he will fail in his campaign to divide the German people from the German government; the war will become more than ever one of physical and moral attrition and of competitive annihilation; the Russian republic will be submerged for a generation or more; and ultimately the connection will be severed between the government as the official engine of organized power in America and the deepest sources of American moral endurance and aspiration.

## Diplomatic Nihilism

**W**ITHIN a few days there is to be held abroad a conference on Allied military plans. The men and the weapons of England, France and the United States have so far been concentrated chiefly on the western front, but at the new conference will be presented the claims of Italy for greater support in her Isonzo offensive; and her demands will raise the question whether there should be more vigorous activity in Macedonia and Serbia. The United States will be represented by military men with power only to report. The object of this arrangement is that of leaving our government a free hand. But the free hand will also be empty. The result will be to force the American government to endorse whatever the Allies decide. For no plan of operations can leave out of consideration American assistance, and if our government is presented with the alternative of either giving or refusing aid to a program already decided upon by its associates, there can be only one result. American preferences, if we have any, will have no chance to make themselves felt.

Italy will present a strong case. She will point to her success in the recent offensive; she will say that with such increases of supplies and men as the Allies might spare as the result of giving up a costly offensive on the western front she can press on perhaps as far as Trieste; she will urge the strategic value of attacking Austria, now the weakest and most pacific member of the Central European group. She may also hint that, unless she is able to show her restless people some tangible gain, it may be hard to keep them up to the fighting pitch. She could have secured the Trentino and a strip of land along the Isonzo without entering the war. It was the promise of more annexations which induced her people to fight.

The advocates of a vigorous attack on Austria and Bulgaria from the south can also put forward an exceedingly strong case. The Saloniki army is now in better condition, and the approaches to Macedonia have been cleared by energetic road-building. Greece is in the war. Not only has the menace of an attack in the rear been removed, but communications have been opened up which are vastly better protected against the submarine by the establishment of short routes across the Adriatic from Italian to Greek and Albanian ports. The old perilous journey from Marseilles to Saloniki is no longer necessary. A good military line has been established from the Adriatic to the Ægean. As possible prizes, the advocates of a campaign in this quarter point to the recapture of Serbia, the interruption of the Berlin-Bagdad railway, with disastrous results both to Turkey and Germany,

and the embarrassment not only of Austria, as contemplated by the Italian plan, but also of Bulgaria.

If the decision as to where Allied power is to be concentrated were purely a military matter, as the State Department seems to think, it would perhaps make little difference to us what decision is reached, assuming it to be the one that would cause the greatest injury to the enemy. Our Allies know infinitely more about the military situation than we do. But diplomatic considerations are necessarily involved. In the first place, the United States is not at war with Austria or Turkey; it has not even broken diplomatic relations with Bulgaria. Presumably there are good reasons for this anomaly. It is supposed to rest on a policy of encouraging the weaker of the Central Powers to exert their pressure on Germany for a reasonable settlement. Is the American government prepared to abandon this policy? For it is difficult to see how we could participate in either the Italian or the Serbian plan without declaring war on Austria and Bulgaria. This is not an insuperable objection, but certainly before the policy is abandoned, the American government should give to Austria and Bulgaria a final chance of accomplishing a result to which they have already contributed much. And if they should thus be induced to bring additional pressure on Germany, how would it affect the war aims of the Italians and the Serbs? Surely this is a large and very significant diplomatic issue if there ever was one.

Another diplomatic consideration is no less far-reaching. In the settlement the various Allies will assuredly make their territorial demands rest in part on the achievement of their armies. The decision to exert military pressure on one particular front is also a decision to encourage a territorial program. What object is of more importance to America, the recovery of Belgium, the reconquest of Alsace-Lorraine for France, the Italian ambitions on the Adriatic, or the recovery of Serbia and the program of the Jugo-Slavs? In a possible choice between the Italian and the Serbian programs the issue becomes still more acute, for part of the territory desired by the Italians is also claimed by the Slavs. Here is, in fact, the most pregnant difference of aims among the Allies. And these opposing demands will undoubtedly add much to the vehemence with which each of the two plans will be supported at the coming Allied military conference.

At present even if we had the opportunity and the will to adopt an attitude of our own in this matter, we have not the necessary information on which to base it. The official lack of policy is reflected in a weakness of organization. There is