

# The New REPUBLIC

*A Journal of Opinion*

VOLUME XVII

New York, Saturday, December 7, 1918

Number 214

## Contents

Editorial Notes .....	146
Leading Editorials	
The Mob in High Places.....	149
Jugoslavia.....	151
The Outlook for Protectionism.....	153
The New Labor Alignment.....	155
General Articles	
The Post-War Mind..... John Dewey	157
Buffer Employment..... Walter Weyl	159
On Dandyism..... Arthur Symons	161
End of the Trail (Verse)..... Brian Padraic O'Seasnain	162
Willard D. Straight.....	163
The Crisis Among the Allies..... H. M. Kallen	164
Correspondence .....	168
Reviews of Books	
Henry Adams..... F. H.	169
Another Poet of the Streets..... L. U.	171

**N**EITHER President Wilson's friends nor his enemies have felt uncertain as to the real reasons impelling the President to attend the Peace Conference. Underneath the apparent unity of war time, political sentiment throughout the Allied world has developed sharp lines of division. There are at present two great international parties. One of these looks forward to a peace of reconciliation, to be perpetuated by a solidly established League of Nations, under which every state, great or small, shall enjoy security, justice and equality of economic opportunity. The other party would impose a punitive peace, to be perpetuated by a formal or informal combination of the chief Allied Powers, with their frontiers strengthened by strategic annexations and the Central Powers kept under control by dismemberment, by naval and military restrictions and by economic burdens and discriminations. The former party, predominantly liberal and labor, has come to regard President Wilson as its natural leader. It believes that his presence at the Peace Conference will place an effective check upon the machinations of the Tories, the im-

perialists and the exponents of an international order founded on power instead of justice and good faith. And the American opponents of a liberal peace have been equally convinced that the President would exert a potent influence upon the settlement. For that reason, and essentially for that reason alone, they have been fertile in the invention of reasons why the President should remain away from the Peace Conference.

**W**HAT made the whole world listen eagerly to the President's message was the hope of the liberals, the fear of the reactionaries, that now at last the President would come out into the open and throw down the gauntlet to the enemies of the kind of peace for which he stands. Such tactics would doubtless have solidified the international party of reaction, but it would also have focused democratic sentiment everywhere. In the final conflict around the peace table the reaction might still have been the winner, but, if so, it would have been by virtue of superior strength, not by virtue of craft, in which it excels. And in the uncertain popular temper of Europe, it is a question how far the reactionaries would care to go, if the issue of force were sharply drawn. Even the most conservative of European statesmen would prefer not to be exposed in their illiberalism at a time when Bolshevism is rampant. But President Wilson has not chosen to draw the issue. Ostensibly he goes to Paris merely to offer an authoritative interpretation of principles universally acceptable. That is an evasion that liberals throughout the world must bitterly regret.

**T**HOSE who hoped that the President's address would promise vigorous leadership for the period of reconstruction must now be thoroughly disillusioned. It was not to be expected that in the press of international business the President should have had time personally to work over such problems as railway, shipping, labor and agrarian reconstruction and to outline definite poli-

cies relating to them. But the President is supplied with a body of advisers who should have been able to conduct thorough inquiries and outline for the President policies that he could safely accept as his own. Only the Treasury Department appears to have had a programme tangible enough to be underwritten by the President—and that, as it happens, is not a very far-seeing or enlightened programme. As for the rest, the President has referred the whole matter to Congress, without prejudice and without preference, knowing very well that in Congress there is practically no sign of leadership or of vision.

SO far as external policies are concerned Governor Hughes's address at Columbia University will bring comfort to American liberals who have been afraid that the Republican party might fall solidly behind the blind traditionalism of Poin-dexter and Lodge. The most radical adherents of world reorganization by means of a League of Nations can find satisfaction in Mr. Hughes's contention that the forthcoming treaty of peace must not only make provision for an international tribunal for the judicial determination of the questions arising under the treaty, but must make provision "for other international conferences, or what will be in substance international assemblies of a legislative character, where additional rules of international conduct will be established by consent of the nations." The great drawback of all schemes for international government by judicial tribunal is that without a legislature to change the rules of international relations in harmony with changing conditions, courts would be limited to the enforcement of the status quo, which often becomes intolerable injustice. It is, therefore, a great gain that a jurist like Mr. Hughes should show himself free from the narrow legislative conception of international relations and recognize that treaties and courts alone cannot satisfactorily settle all international difficulties. With the last Republican Presidential nominee as well as the last Republican President thus clearly in favor of a League of Nations, Messrs. Roosevelt and Lodge may yet fail to impose their opposition on the Republican party in the Senate.

MR. HUGHES is not one of those who would have everything as it was before the war. He would put an end to the policy of prohibiting business combinations as such, and require the government "to provide intelligent supervision which will aim at the detection and punishment of abuses and not at the crippling of opportunities rightly used." He would also put an end to "futile opposition to the right of collective bargaining on the

part of employees." All this is good so far as it goes. If we can actually devise methods of control by which we can retain the advantages of business combination without suffering under the oppression of monopoly, why should we persist in the endeavor to keep competition alive? Especially if the business combination is ready to accept loyally the correlative principle of labor combination. But if Mr. Hughes has worked out such methods of control, he does not disclose them. Those who have followed the record of Mr. Hughes's achievements will be confident that any methods of control that he might propose would be eminently efficient in protecting each tangible property interest against the encroachment of other interests. Cut-throat practices could not live under a regime devised by Mr. Hughes. That is much, but it is not all. What would Mr. Hughes do if his lawful combinations proceeded in the most gentlemanly way to raise prices and draw to themselves an undue share of the national income? He does not say. But until he is ready to accept price control, or public sharing of excess profits as an offset to freedom of combination, the plain citizens of America will continue to regard him as a class conscious, instead of a nationally conscious, statesman.

"IN saving the world, have we lost our Republic?" A great many persons besides Mr. Hughes have asked this question. One man is disturbed over the fact that freedom of press and of assembly have been restricted under the Espionage act as the founders of our government never intended them to be restricted. Another man is disturbed because freedom of conscience, the ideal which in our early history drew such multitudes of men and women to us from across the seas, has been pretty well shot to pieces by the administration of the conscription act. Still others are disturbed by the extent to which unlawful coercion has been applied to the individual, supposedly with patriotic intent but without warrant of law, and the acquiescence of the authorities in the process. Nothing of this kind disturbs Mr. Hughes. He is not trembling for human liberty threatened with chains, but for property curbed in its privileges. The Food Administration, which made possible the provisioning of our Allies, the Fuel Administration, which has managed somehow to keep the essential furnaces going, inspire Mr. Hughes with especial dread. What if they should be continued after the war? Government operation of railways is almost as terrifying to Mr. Hughes. Verily the Republic would be lost if the nation were to make up its mind to keep under strict control the three chief essentials of material existence, food, fuel and transportation.

WHEN Lloyd George, three years ago, entered into a compact with Lord Northcliffe old friends warned him that he was trusting his fortunes to one who, having no principle, could not stick to a policy and, having no roots, political or other, could not be faithful to any ally. The sensational turning of the Northcliffe press this week fulfills exactly the expectation of all who know the currents of English political life. Lloyd George is attempting to ride all the horses in the ring together—promising the Liberals a settlement in Ireland and land reform for England, while offering tariffs to the Tories, and the German colonies to the mob, along with the Kaiser's head in a charger borne by that great champion of public law and right, Sir Frederick Smith. Northcliffe, on the other hand, sees the mounting tide of Labor and knows that the returning soldier will demand a policy of domestic reconstruction vastly more radical than the measures to which Lloyd George will be restricted if the election should leave him where he seems to be today, in the grip of the reactionaries led by the Bonar Laws, Curzons, Milners. Mr. George, it is probable, can make no fresh strategic stroke during the closing days of the campaign. But the chances are that on the whole this typical piece of treachery has done him a good turn. Because of it, on December 14th, Mr. George may be a million progressive votes to the good. The Northcliffe press has never won a general election.

THE United Berlin Soldiers' Council, by a vote of 300 to 2, has declared for the earliest possible calling of a national convention. The vote, which is a victory for the present moderate Socialist government, renders the immediate disruption of Germany less probable. The Germans are convinced of the necessity of standing together at the Peace Conference and they know that to break up into fighting factions means a restoration of order and the establishment of a government by Allied troops. On the other hand extreme Socialists of the Liebknecht type would probably welcome such Allied intervention, since their concern is less with the German republic than with a world revolution, which could not but be furthered by an Allied invasion. But the average German Socialist or non-Socialist fears a "dictatorship of the proletariat" which would lead to bloodshed, disorder, the secession of the South German states and the march of French and British troops to Berlin. That the moderate Socialists can keep permanent control is of course not assured. It will depend upon the food situation, upon the government's success in finding work for millions of demobilized soldiers, and finally upon the terms of peace, which may either permit Germans to work out the sen-

tence within a reasonable period or may leave them hopeless and desperate. For the time being, however, the call for a national convention should unite all but the extreme parties.

THERE are several excellent reasons for withdrawing the Czecho-Slovak troops from Russian soil. First and foremost, they are needed at home. The new Czecho-Slovak state cannot afford to devote part of her scanty military resources to an enterprise of doubtful morality and policy which, besides, does not concern her in the least. In the second place, the Czecho-Slovaks in Russia are thoroughly discontented. Since the Omsk coup they have come to realize that they are really fighting in the cause of reaction, not in the cause of democracy. And, finally, their situation grows perilous. We may discount as heavily as we like the statement of General Syrov, their acting commander, that by next summer the Bolsheviks will have a well organized army of between three and four million men. Yet we cannot escape the conviction that the forces opposed to intervention are growing stronger, and that the Russian accretions to the interventionist armies amount to nothing. This is admitted by the interventionists themselves, who are crying loudly for help. Help is not what the Czecho-Slovaks want, but release from the obligation imposed upon them, as a condition of their national liberation, to continue in an enterprise in which they have neither interest nor faith.

WHAT difference does it make whether we pay off our war debt as soon as we can or drag out the payments through several generations? There is a difference in the aggregate interest we shall have to pay, but if that interest comes out of the pockets of the American people, it goes back into the pockets of the American people. As a nation we are neither enriched nor impoverished by the transaction. Why then should anyone make an issue of early repayment? Frankly, it is a class matter. If the debt is to be paid off at an early date, we shall have to retain our present heavy taxes on incomes and profits. If repayment can be postponed, there is a fair chance that the interest, and eventually the principal also, can be extracted from the masses, through indirect taxation of wide incidence. Therefore the rich may be expected as a rule to oppose early repayment, and the poor, unless deluded by propaganda, ought to favor it. This is putting it bluntly, to be sure. Mr. Sisson, of the Guaranty Trust Company, speaking for "financiers," puts it far more suavely. The early payment of the debt "involves a redistribution of the control of the wealth of the country. Necessarily, the taxes will be paid quite largely



by those whose incomes are evidence of their capability to use wealth advantageously for themselves and for society. Therefore, if we had an ideally just system of taxation, it would still be probable that the rapid payment of the debt from revenues collected would involve the transfer of wealth from those capable of using it so advantageously." Those advantageous users of wealth, of course, are the rich. Mr. Sisson does not draw the correlative conclusion, equally indisputable, that the slow repayment of the debt would involve the transfer of wealth from those who are not in his eyes capable of using it advantageously, the poor.

## The Mob in High Places

**R**ECENTLY the Socialists of New York City decided to hold a public meeting in order to celebrate the revolution in Germany and the foundation of a new socialistic republic, and to ventilate certain of their grievances against the American government about the conduct of the war. The managers of the meeting were scrupulously careful not to challenge the municipal authorities by proposing to display the red flag, and in assembling as they did they were only exercising one of the oldest and most precious rights of the citizens of a free state. Yet this meeting was assaulted by a mob of soldiers and sailors, and those who attended it were only partially and with the utmost difficulty rescued from extremely rough handling. A few days later another meeting, called not by the Socialists but by a woman's international league, for the purpose of supporting President Wilson's formulation of peace terms and the declared policy of the administration not to intervene in the domestic affairs of Russia, suffered from a similar assault. In both cases the police did their best to hold the rioters in check, and they succeeded fairly well. Yet the municipal government is alarmed at the disorderly temper of the soldiery and has appealed to the War Department for help.

There is nothing very extraordinary, nothing necessarily very sinister about these facts. Soldiers on leave are always prone to disorder. Advocates of compulsory service like to dwell upon the value of military discipline in molding the raw material of a democratic people into law-abiding and public-spirited citizens; but this claim is merely one of the many romances of the military mind. Soldiers generally think of themselves as men who, when their feelings are aroused, are privileged to use violence; and military discipline is necessarily so repressive that when men are temporarily released from it they naturally go on the loose. What is sinister

about these incidents is less the riotous behavior of the soldiery than the prevailing attitude of the press and of well-to-do people toward the behavior of the soldiery. They find excuses for it and look upon it with scarcely concealed satisfaction. Like trades-union officials in the case of a strike, they do not openly approve of the unruly strikers who "beat up" a scab, but they are perfectly willing to accept "irregular" assistance in making the personal safety of their opponents precarious.

Their attitude of mind is fairly represented by the editorial comment on the first of these riots which the New York Times printed on November 27th. After congratulating the police on the workmanlike manner "with which they baffled the unlawful attack," the Times goes on to say: "As for the soldiers and sailors, they acted lawlessly, as it was perfectly certain they would act when a temptation beyond the power of the ordinary man to resist was held out to them. The condemnation justly due them for yielding to the temptation should be applied in much greater measure to those who held it out." These words point clearly to one conclusion. According to the Times, it is much more reprehensible for Socialists to assemble and ventilate their convictions in a perfectly orderly manner, than it is for a mob of soldiers to use violence in breaking up their meeting. If this verdict is true, the government should certainly deprive Socialists of the right of free speech and free assemblage. The exercise of the right as it now stands confronts a democratic state with an impossible alternative. It permits one group of American citizens to express opinions in public which are intrinsically so odious that another group of citizens is exposed to an irresistible temptation to beat them up. If the government does not abandon the right of free speech and free assembly and prohibit Socialist meetings, it is, according to the Times, practically provoking disorder. What would we think of a father who exposed his wayward son to an irresistible temptation to "lawlessness," and then punished the boy for yielding?

So far as we can observe, the Times in assuming this attitude of condoning violence when used against Socialists fairly represents the opinion of the American ruling class. This class has ceased to have any sincere belief in the desirability of free discussion as a safeguard against the accumulation of popular grievances and as a necessary condition of the vitality and mobility of public opinion. It is carrying over into a period of peace the appetite for suppression and persecution, the intolerance of opposition and the glorification of blind and unruly popular feeling which was stimulated by the war. The government unleashed the passion for persecution by beginning to prosecute and jail Socialists for