

The military party in Germany were probably fully aware of the risk they incurred by throwing so much of their reserve power into the offensive, but it was their only chance of self-preservation. They could not afford to wait. The whole industrial machine of Germany was breaking down with increasing rapidity. Her Allies were on the verge of exhaustion. The moral endurance of the German people would not survive under the circumstances the strain of another winter. Thus their astonishing victories were the precursors and in part the veritable cause of an even more astonishing debacle. They might have avoided the necessity of the gamble by seeking a general peace at the time of the Brest-Litovsk negotiations on the terms offered by President Wilson, but that would have meant the surrender of all their predatory objects and ultimately of their leadership in Germany. So they ran true to form and continued the gamble until the end. As a result of doing it they will have to pay a heavier penalty to the people in their own and enemy countries whose sufferings they wantonly increased.

FOREIGN students of American public opinion are constantly inquiring how far the comment of the press may be taken as indicative of the views of the mass of the people. Were the plain people of America as frenzied in their fear of the Self note as were the great majority of the editorial writers, and are they now as confident that the President's reply closes the door to any peace not specifically acknowledged to be a peace of unconditional surrender? These are questions it is impossible to answer. The average American editorial writer is attempting, not so much to lead public opinion, or even to express it, as to keep his own record straight. He wants to play safe, and when the country is at war, safety lies on the side of extreme bellicosity. It is much safer to see traps where none exist than to fall into an actual trap unawares. American newspaper opinion must accordingly be taken as a combination, in uncertain proportions, of editorial caution and of genuine public opinion. The same thing, we suspect, is true of British newspaper opinion.

THE independent candidate for U. S. Senator from Minnesota, Mr. Willis Greenleaf Calderwood, reminds us that the Congress about to be elected will probably deal more with questions of reconstruction than with war problems. The Republicans have once more re-nominated Senator Knut Nelson, who is pledged to support the President's war policies; the Democrats have put up no candidate. The progressive elements in

the state, therefore, have nominated a man who will not only enthusiastically support the war but will look beyond to the problems of democratic readjustment which may prove almost as difficult as was reconstruction after the Civil War. Mr. Calderwood is an excellent candidate, keen, clean, democratic, popular and with an unimpeachable record. He is in favor of equal suffrage, prohibition, the initiative and referendum, the public ownership of public utilities, an executive budget. His candidacy is likely to raise the tone of the campaign and to force a preliminary discussion of perplexing questions of internal policy which will demand a settlement the moment the war comes to an end.

The Defeatists

ONE by one the enemies of President Wilson's plan of a League of Nations as the instrumentality of impartial justice at the Peace Conference are coming out into the open. Mr. Roosevelt has, of course, from the start been eager and frank in his opposition. Senator Lodge, although like Mr. Roosevelt he formerly favored a similar idea, is doing his best as the leader of the Republicans in the Senate to line up his party against it. Mr. Leslie M. Shaw in his published correspondence with Mr. Tumulty pointed out with undeniable force the incompatibility between the President's plan and the exclusive nationalism characteristic of the Republican economic tradition. Organizations such as the American Defense Society and the Navy League look upon the enterprise with the same irreconcilable hostility as does the Fatherland party in Germany. Last but not least Mr. William Randolph Hearst has tentatively enlisted in the ranks of the President's opponents. In a signed editorial he has repudiated the obligations which the American nation would have to assume as one member of an organized society of nations. It will be a comforting spectacle to those who detest the Jacobin spirit in all its manifestations to see the New York Tribune and the New York American aligned on the same side of an essential issue in opposition to the President.

A peculiarly interesting declaration of hostility has recently appeared in the Villager, a journal of limited circulation in Westchester County, New York, whose expressions of opinion derive exceptional significance from the ability of its editor. It protests against Mr. Wilson's uncompromising association of a League of Nations with America's war aims, for reasons which, if true, would condemn the whole project as impracticable and dangerous. "We can and must defeat Germany," says the Villager, "but we cannot defeat her ambition." "We cannot change her heart." The Ger-

mans are incorrigible. The Allies should treat them as if under no circumstances could they become worthy of confidence. The dominant object of the peace settlement should be the permanent organization of a preponderance of power, not to promote impartial justice, but to guarantee the future safety of an anti-German alliance. A nation such as Germany has proved herself to be will cease to be dangerous only because she ceases to exert power and only in so far as she ceases to exert power. Any association of nations which may result from the President's efforts should be designed as an instrument of force so overwhelming that a policy of future discrimination against Germany would be irresistible.

This attitude towards the problem of winning the war registers a frank and an illuminating departure from the former attitude of such journals. Last fall and winter they protested against any statement or discussion of war aims because, they said, victory was the only war aim. Military victory would be all sufficient and would by its own intrinsic virtue teach the German people the indispensable lesson and deliver the world from the threat of German domination. But now that military victory is imminent, the Villager assures us that it is not sufficient and is not the only war aim. The defeat which the Allied armies are inflicting on the German army at such a terrific cost will not impair the predatory disposition of the German people. The Allies must continue the war after the war. The measure and guarantees of the ultimate victory do not derive from military success, no matter how overwhelming. They derive from the political policy which prevails during and after the peace conference. That policy, according to journals such as the Villager and statesmen such as Senator Lodge, must be determined chiefly by the politics of power. Military victory in the war, having failed to effect any change for the better in the disposition of the German people, military policy and military values should mould the terms of peace.

Thus conservatives are now beginning to admit the impotence of military victory alone to assure the greater and more permanent political victory upon which the winning of the war finally depends. They are in this respect coming around to the position which has been occupied by the New Republic before and since America entered the war. They concede the need of supplementing a victory of the Allied soldiers with a victory of Allied statesmanship. But the political policy with which they propose to secure the fruits of military victory is in sharp conflict with that proposed by the President. After concealing for many months their political solution of the war under the dictum that victory

was the only war aim, and after condemning all discussion of Allied political purposes as an attempt to win the war with words, they are now gathering to defeat the solution which the President has explicitly and repeatedly proclaimed to be the official policy of the American government. They may well succeed, for they represent a deeply rooted tradition (that of "macht-politik")—and intense emotion (that of fear, hatred and revenge)—and a powerful body of interest and opinion in all the Allied countries (that which seeks to preserve the international status quo ante). But if they succeed, they will succeed also in frustrating the generous emotions, in defeating the liberal purposes and in preventing the salutary political results which the liberal democratic leadership has associated with the cause of the Allies. What boots it if we break up Middle Europe, emancipate the Slavs, and root out the Turks if we do not take advantage of the victory over imperialism to organize a new society of nations based on equality of right?

We wonder whether they have fully considered the implications and consequences of their possible success in substituting a victory of power for Mr. Wilson's proposed victory of justice. In the address to Congress asking for a declaration of war against Germany the President clearly indicated the liberal and ultimately conciliatory nature of the political purposes of which military victory was to be the instrument. In his subsequent series of war papers and speeches, he reiterated and expanded his original proposal for a League of Free Nations as the essential agency of international justice, and for a permanent political defeat of Prussian power politics. As a result of these pledges hundreds of thousands of his fellow-countrymen entered the war sustained by the conviction that they were fighting to give birth to a new world of international peace and justice. Reassured and fired by his words, labor leaders in France and Great Britain persuaded thousands of their followers to overcome war weariness and to support their governments without flinching. His winged words were distributed in enemy countries for the particular purpose of gaining the confidence of the Bulgarian, Austrian and German people, and of making them believe in the disposition of the Allied governments to work for impartial justice. During all this time these doubters and opponents of the President's plan, except in one or two instances, remained silent. They permitted the victory for which all were working to be associated with the League of Nations. They conducted no propaganda in the press which clearly revealed to the world the existence of any quarrel between Americans as to the final political solution of the war. They

never raised in Congress the question of repudiating the pledge made by the President of American participation in the League. They were satisfied with suppressing their own fears, scruples and convictions, and with abusing those of the President's supporters who emphasized the need of associating the winning of the war with the formation of a League of Nations. Yet now in spite of the unqualified nature of the President's pledge, the extent to which it is believed by the plain people in all countries and the suppression hitherto of overt opposition, his enemies are now planning to defeat it. If they succeed, the American citizens and the citizens of other countries who accepted the President's pledge at its face value would be tempted not without reason to charge the American government with being perfidious.

It is these opponents of the League of Nations who are the genuine defeatists. If the vindictive passions which they incarnate dominate the work of the peace conference, democracy will have fought the war in vain. For no sooner is military victory assured than the opponents of democratic internationalism proclaimed the moral and political ineffectuality of what the armies have achieved. We must treat the Germans, although defeated, just as if they were not defeated. We must fear them just as much, and we must take just as many precautions against them. And because we fear them we must use our victory over them chiefly to make them fear us. We must treat them, that is, much as they would have treated us and neutralize the necessary lack of impartial justice in our policy by a preponderance of power. In fine, we must ourselves adopt permanently a politics based on power as a safeguard against the possibility of German recovery. We must ourselves organize into an international system the Prussian "macht-politik" as a precaution against its use by the Prussians. They are ready to have Prussianism conquer us just at the moment of our victory over Prussia. It is from this fate that the President has sought and still seeks to save the western democracies by organizing the League of Free Nations. If we needed any further proof that there was no other way, the arguments and the alternative policy of his critics would supply it. They postulate the impossibility of any change in the disposition of the German people as the reason for a permanent system of international discrimination against Germany which would itself act as an insuperable barrier to any such change. The Germans would be offered a choice between being the victims of the new world order or its conquerors. If the counsel of these men is followed, the Allies will be apotheosizing

force and perpetuating war as the best method of securing the fruits of a military victory won by the proclaimed guardians of democratic liberty.

For Whom Will They Speak?

THE most widely read of all Lord Northcliffe's newspapers indicates that among the conditions which must be imposed upon Germany is the surrender of certain military and other criminals, who are named. The list includes Lenin and Trotsky. The paper does not indicate how the German government is to deliver the bodies of its Russian protégés—whether we are to authorize a German expedition to Petrograd or Moscow for the purpose of their arrest—but the proposal reminds us very vividly of the fact which sooner or later we must face, namely, that when we come to make peace the enemy governments are not the only governments whose credentials we shall be compelled to scrutinize, of whom we shall be compelled to ask: "For whom do you speak?" While our trouble with Germany is that the government is not sufficiently revolutionary, with Russia it is that it is too revolutionary. Mr. Roosevelt has indeed reminded us that "Russia" is as little to be trusted as "Germany."

The matter is fundamental, not alone in the sense that it touches one of the great difficulties of self-determination and a democratic diplomacy, but also in the sense that the course of Russian development during the next decade or two will bear decisively on the future of German power and militarism. If the reaction from chaos in Russia is virtual absolutism, which well it might be, we shall be faced with a combined Russo-Prussian revival of militarism, looking it may be for support towards the east ("one of Russia's two faces is turned to the east") as a counter balance to the forces of the west. Nor indeed does the difficulty end there, for the situation we face in Russia in an acute and developed form, we are likely to face in lesser degree in the case of most of the belligerent states during the period of political reconstruction. If it be true that the Bolshevik government in no sense represents Russia can we say that governments in Britain, France and Italy to which the immense bulk of the labor and radical forces are bitterly hostile can adequately represent those countries?

We are likely shortly to run into a situation in which we shall discover that we have not really faced the question of method of democratic representation and control in the field of international politics. How far the reaction against the older ideas both political and economic for which the present governments of the European Allies stand