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### The Week

**D**ECLARING that Article X is "the very backbone of the whole Covenant," Mr. Wilson in his talk to the Senate Committee did more to take the backbone out of the backbone than the most determined reservationist. The first sentence of the article declared that the members "undertake . . . to preserve"; the second sentence, that the Council "shall advise upon the means by which *this* obligation shall be fulfilled." Everybody, from Mr. Root on, has read that as meaning that while a member might reject the advice as to means, it was nevertheless bound in some way or other to fulfill the obligation. A nation might choose its own form of action, but it was bound to achieve the result. This is not Mr. Wilson's view. He thinks that in rejecting the advice as to the means by which "*this obligation*" shall be fulfilled, a nation is legally released from the necessity of fulfilling the obligation. This at least is what his statement says. And, as he points out, since one member of the Council can prevent a unanimous vote, one member can nullify the whole obligation. Thus we arrive at the remarkable conclusion that so far as Article X goes, nobody is pledged to defend anybody else unless everybody agrees to defend the victim. Just how this can constitute the very backbone of any-

thing, it is a little difficult to see. Nations were always at liberty to defend one another if they chose to.

**H**AVING emasculated the article legally, Mr. Wilson revived it morally. "It is binding in conscience only, not in law." But the difficulty here is to discover the meaning of "it." Is "it" the undertaking to preserve, or is "it" the duty of acting on the Council's advice as to means? Presumably "it" is the undertaking itself and this, says the President, is "a very grave and solemn moral obligation." Undoubtedly it is, and since this is the case how does it in fact differ from a legal duty, assuming that the United States respects its pledged word? It does not differ, and so by a roundabout process of reasoning one is compelled to return to the obvious view, that in spite of all pleading Article X is to all intents and purposes a treaty of alliance under which we are obligated to go to war to defend the territorial and political status as revealed in the year A.D. 1919. For, assuming that we take morals seriously, Article X cannot be at one and the same time an engagement which binds no one without his consent and a very grave and solemn moral obligation. Either it means nothing or it means a very great deal. It cannot mean both. The fact that the President attempted to make it mean both is a conclusive argument either for eliminating it entirely or for interpreting it with complete definiteness in the articles of ratification. For it will not promote the stability of Europe one little bit to hasten the ratification of a guarantee the nature of which the author himself finds it so difficult to determine. If Article X is necessary to the reorganization of Europe, it would be an excellent plan to let Europe know what we are prepared to have it mean. For there could be no greater tragedy than to have Europe proceed on one theory of American obligation only to find in time of crisis that Congress had a totally different view.

**M**EXICO's actual offenses against America should not be condoned, but neither should they be viewed through the red mist of a press that has raged for years because Mexico goes unsubjected. The Carranza government should have suppressed banditry in the northern states. It should have provided definitely that existing foreign investments of a bona fide character should not be disturbed. It has been urged in Mexico's defence that Mexican nationals have been slain with impunity on our side of the line; that the

Sonora land laws are no more unjust to Americans than the California land laws to the Japanese. It has been urged that the United States government has taken no effective action to suppress the smuggling of arms to the bandits. Our failure to fulfill our own international obligations, say Mexico's apologists, is in large part responsible for Mexico's failure to fulfill her obligations. All those observations are perfectly just, but the tu quoque argument does not convince when addressed by the weaker nation to the stronger. Mexico, if she is wise, will not follow the example of the United States, but will improve upon it.

**R**ICHES may be a blessing to a powerful state; they are a curse to a weak one. If Mexico did not possess the richest petroleum fields in the world, and unimaginable wealth in metals, we should not now be feeding on tales of Mexican atrocities. There would be in fact fewer atrocities if bandit leaders could not fortify their hopes with the promise—perhaps unauthorized—of substantial assistance from foreign financial interests. Such atrocities as remained we should discount in the light of the fact that banditry is no worse in northern Mexico today than it was in our own Rocky Mountain regions in the middle of the last century. We should never have been beguiled by the childish notion that there is anything even remotely resembling anarchism or communism in the Carranza regime. We should on the contrary have credited that regime with its actual achievements: the restoration of the currency after a period of hopeless disorder; the extraordinary recovery of transportation and trade; and above all, the huge improvement in the political, social and economic condition of the working classes. Much remains to be done before Mexico reaches the level of security and prosperity her friends wish her to attain. She is rising steadily toward that level, as we should recognize if we did not hunger after Mexican wealth which we cannot morally seize until we have sufficiently blackened Mexico's reputation.

**W**HAT is the meaning of the threat of a radical change in our Mexican policy? President Wilson and Mr. Lansing must certainly be aware of the fact that intervention in Mexico would be less easily justified today than at any time since the assassination of Madero. Are they impelled by any other influence than a sense of the desires of democratic, as distinguished from imperialistic America? It is common gossip that promises have been given to England and France that the Mexican investments of British and French nationals will be better safeguarded in the future than they have been in the past. Ever since the first revolution our European friends have been insisting that it is our duty to make Mexico safe for their enterprises. The administration was unwilling to undertake, in behalf of European interests, a police job which it could not decently undertake in behalf of American interests. But in the matter of Shantung, President Wilson showed how far he was willing to commit America in order to win the support of Japan for the League. Did any other country urge that support of the League would be more cheerfully given if a new Mexican policy were inaugurated? This we refuse to believe, if for no better reason, because Mexico is too near home and the consequences of intervention too serious.

**D**URING the presidency of Mr. Taft, an official calculation is said to have been made of the probable cost of "cleaning up" Mexico. The services of four hundred thousand soldiers through at least two years would have been required—so it was estimated—and the money cost would have run into the billions. Since then the standards of war expenditures, both in men and in money, have greatly advanced. Besides, Mexico would be much more nearly a unit against us. In the time of Taft we could perhaps have played one of two fairly matched factions against the other. Today there is no important faction opposing the Carranzista government: only scattered bandit bands in inaccessible mountain fastnesses and a few juntas of Diaz intransigents mostly on our side of the line. A million men and five billion dollars might suffice to subjugate Mexico; hardly less. Where are the men and the billions to come from? Must we resort again to conscription and to increased direct taxation in order that the oil and metal profiteers may be secure in their projects of rapid enrichment?

**T**HE position of British ambassador to Washington is no easy one to fill at this time. But Viscount Grey can count upon the assistance of his own greatest quality—the ability to impress all with whom he deals that he is a man of sterling sincerity and disinterestedness. In all the controversy which his diplomatic career has aroused, men have found it possible only to quarrel with some of his judgments, never with his intentions nor with his habit of fair-dealing. The memorandum of Prince Lichnowsky is a vindication that any statesman might envy, and more than balances the criticisms made by Englishmen either of the original Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907 about Persia, or the hesitations of the Twelve Days of 1914, the somewhat evasive replies to questions about the Franco-British commitments, or the bungling Balkan diplomacy during the war which began with the unfortunate secret treaty of London. Lord Grey's views on this treaty and the League created at Paris are not known, for he has been in retirement due to ill-health. But it is believed that he is in general sympathy with that noble band of Britishers for whom General Smuts has been the spokesman. To believe that of any diplomat today is to pay him the highest possible tribute of good will.

**T**HE White Terror has begun in Hungary. An Associated Press dispatch from Budapest says that seven thousand men and women have already been rounded up "as a result of anti-Bolshevik raids by the Rumanians, assisted by the new Hungarian police force." And, as might be guessed, "many aristocrats personally aided in ferreting out the Bolsheviki." A White Terror was made inevitable by the course of Allied policy. To the Hungarian trade unionists the Allies promised peace and a lifting of the blockade if the Communists were ousted. The trade unionists overthrew Bela Kun and set up a moderate socialist government. Whereupon the Allies broke faith—agreed that the invading Rumanians be constituted delegates to carry out their orders in Budapest, and opened the way to the restoration of a Hapsburg monarchy. Hungary is today

ruled by a foreign army and a clique of the Tisza aristocrats the very ones against whom both peasants and workmen rebelled.

**MEANTIME** the diplomats in Paris, after a week of looting and violence on the part of the Rumanians, have sent a note to Budapest saying that this sort of thing must stop. British and American representatives in Budapest had protested strongly against the action of the Rumanians—Captain Gregory, an American representative, declaring he would not assist in sending food to Hungary if the Rumanians were going to requisition it—"If the Rumanians will not leave I am going home." The Peace Conference has accordingly bade the Rumanians stop their pillaging—and though Hungary remains under the rule of a Rumanian army and a Hapsburg who seized power in a coup d'etat, the Conference piously assures everybody that it wishes "to preserve for that country a free expression of the national will." How the Conference note was received in Budapest an Associated Press dispatch has the following to report: "The Rumanians continue their requisitions, although late last night they acceded in principle to the demands of the four Allied generals that requisitions should cease."

**THE** effect of what the Allies have done in Hungary is described in a cable to the New York Globe from one of its European correspondents. "The Hungarian upheaval," says this dispatch, "gave the Allies a splendid opportunity of proving to the Russian people that they are fighting only Bolshevik excesses. Instead they proved to the great satisfaction of the Bolsheviks that they indeed are looking upon the fight against Bolshevism merely as a convenient method of defeating socialism and restoring the monarchist reaction. Now—while the anti-socialist newspapers of the entente countries are celebrating the supposed 'triumph' in Budapest—the Bolsheviks in Moscow and extreme socialists all over the world are celebrating what for them is a real victory."

**TWO** recent dispatches to the New York Times show how news is sometimes made to work as propaganda. On July 30th the Times printed a Washington dispatch discussing the inquiry of Ambassador Morris into the government at Omsk. "Morris's Reports Favor Kolchak" read the headline; and the dispatch itself declared that thus far the reports were "favorable to recognition," showed Kolchak "actuated by the highest motives," etc., etc. The reader gained a very favorable idea of Kolchak—as no doubt it was intended he should. And had Mr. Morris agreed with the Times no one would have been the wiser. But two weeks later the Times found it necessary to print a second dispatch from Washington: one which said that "Ambassador Morris's preliminary reports have all been unfavorable to the recognition of Kolchak," and such as to "emphasize the essentially military character of his government." To the frequency with which news dispatches have been used for propaganda in such a way as this, is due in large part the fact that we are still without peace in Russia.

## The End of the Kolchak Myth

**I**N an effort to establish the good faith of Kolchak's government at Omsk the propagandists have long been building the legend of its democracy. Kolchak, they have said, would restore popular government. But Kolchak began by destroying popular government—when he overturned the democratic, non-Bolshevik government at Siberia and set up a regime of his own. To cover this autocratic seizure of power the propagandists have worked overtime. Blocs of insignificant parties have been marshalled as evidence of widespread political support. Endorsements have been juggled to make it seem that the twenty million members of the Russian cooperatives had pledged their support to the Omsk government. In May the propagandists talked of the democratic army Kolchak led, an army made up of soldiers who greeted their leader as redeemer of new Russia. Peasants, they declare, were enlisting willingly in the holy cause. Everywhere Kolchak was advancing—winning easily against half-hearted opposition. To the American press a French wireless reported on May 13th that Kolchak was making plans "to begin an advance on Moscow."

Today, three months later, there is little that can be salvaged from the wreck of early summer hopes. "The position of the anti-Bolshevik army commanded by Admiral Kolchak (says a Washington dispatch to the New York Times, August 12th) is so critical that official Washington is now openly apprehensive of the collapse of the entire movement headed by Kolchak. . . . Entirely trustworthy information received by the government within the last forty-eight hours shows that the Siberian forces have retired an additional 160 to 170 miles—this being the third extensive retirement in the last few weeks."

Kolchak's retreat has been a rout—despite the extraordinary advantage of facing an enemy who was occupied on three other fronts. For the complete collapse of his May offensive, the propagandists, of course, have a ready answer. Lack of outside aid, they say. Kolchak needed munitions—and until it was too late we gave him none. That is an argument popular with Kolchak's apologists, but a poor explanation for the disinterested public. Aside from whatever advantages Kolchak had for production of munitions within Russia (until a month ago he held the vast coal and iron fields of the Urals and the steel plants at Ekaterinburg) we know in fact that the Allied Powers did send great shipments of arms and ammunition to Siberia. That fact is officially confirmed. Addressing Parliament on July 29th,