

The American Senate and the Monarchist Coup

IT would indeed be extraordinary if all those interested in the Treaty fight did not see the German revolution as confirmation of what they had been saying right along. Those who claimed that the Treaty of Versailles was bad can now say that it has revived Junkerism. Those who claimed that the Treaty did not provide sufficient guarantee can now say that the need for guarantee is demonstrated. Those who insisted on ratification regardless of the nature of the peace can say with real sincerity that delay and discussion have resuscitated the militarists. And those who would like to wash their hands of Europe altogether can view with all kinds of new alarm the existing state of Europe. Finally, those who have believed that the League as a going concern was the only method of restoring order in Europe can argue forcefully that the absence of a League has embroiled Europe.

It will not surprise any one, therefore, if the New Republic also finds in the event a confirmation of its own previous beliefs. We have argued that the terms of the Treaty were unenforcible, that they would create a perpetual feud in Europe, and that the Germans were certain to conspire against the Treaty at every opportunity. Whatever popular support the Junkers have certainly rests on the belief that there is no tolerable future for Germany in Europe under this Treaty. We have argued that the Treaty did not furnish France or Poland or any other continental country sufficient guarantees of security, not because it did not give France full title to the Rhine frontier, but because it condemned a generation of Frenchmen to an endless quarrel with a generation of Germans. The French army today is on the Rhine. It holds the very frontier which Marshal Foch calls essential to the peace of Europe. The "guarantees" are actually in force at this very moment. They have not produced tranquillity.

We have argued that the effort to enforce the terms would destroy moderate government in Germany and bring to power an extreme faction either of the right or of the left. The party of revolt was united by the demand for extradition and no doubt emboldened by the awkward withdrawal of the demand. The incident typifies the whole relationship of the Allies to Germany under this Treaty: first a demand so severe as to create revolt and so impractical that it has to be revised; then an encouragement of the spirit of revolt by the very fact that weakness in pressing the demands encourages the Germans to revolt and evade still more.

The ratifiers draw two opposite conclusions from

this. The reactionaries say that if America were standing on the Rhine in force shoulder to shoulder with the Allies, the demands would be executed because there would be overwhelming force to confront the Germans. The liberal ratifiers say that if America were a party to the Treaty and a full member of the League, the demands would not have been made because the League would long since have been engaged in revising the Treaty. They cannot both be right. The Treaty cannot be enforced by the New York Tribune and Times and revised by the Evening Post and Globe. Or to put it upon the level of diplomacy, if America were in, the Treaty cannot be enforced by Messrs. Tardieu and Millerand and Foch and at the same time revised by Mr. Lloyd George and General Smuts. The question from the beginning of the discussion has been: would the American guarantee act as a stimulant to revision or as a stimulant to strict enforcement?

On this vital point good friends will honestly differ. We think that the American guarantee to this Treaty would have worked for strict enforcement. We believe that strict enforcement would in any case have wrecked a moderate republican government in Germany. We think that if the Allies had started in earnest to enforce the Treaty last September they would have destroyed Ebert by October. No regime in any country in the world could survive the enforcement of that Treaty.

Why do we think that American ratification would merely have hastened enforcement and, therefore, the destruction of Ebert rather than the liberalization of the terms? We think it because last summer when ratification was demanded the war psychology was in full blast, and any attempt to liberalize would have been called pro-German by our trembling statesmen. We think it because America had and has no diplomats capable of acting with the Allies to overcome the French veto. We believe it because the Treaty is so constructed that revision is a pious hope while enforcement is a solemn covenant. We do not believe that the President had the will or the skill or the knowledge or the power to do in September what he declined or failed to do in May and June. For these reasons we believe that the attempt to enforce the Treaty would have been made, and that it would have brought about then the revolution in Germany.

But there are some who do not wish to liberalize the terms. They wish to execute the Treaty by force, including in that force essential American force. They argue that the Germans are always the same, always predatory, always Prussian, and that nothing but force will ever keep them in order. We do not agree with this view of human nature, nor

which it rests. But supposing it were true, what conclusions are we to draw in regulating our own policy? Are we to say that public order in Europe consists in sitting on Germany's head? Perhaps it is necessary to police Germany that way. If it is, the Continent will have to do the job. America cannot and will not and should not. She has another mission in the world. All the arguments that American isolation is ended do not prove that America can devote the next generation to the watch on the Rhine.

This theory of America as the guardian of public order in Europe is a plausible and dangerous fallacy. For you cannot impose order on Europe from Washington. The only possible order in Europe is an order established by Europeans acting co-operatively as good Europeans. The assertion that America, burdened with staggering problems of her own, can keep a disorderly Europe from wrecking itself is a doctrine of political pauperism out of which no self-respecting civilization can grow. In effect we are asked to control the results of policies without being able to affect the causes of policy. We are to save France from being attacked, but we are not to abate French ambitions. We are to accept a moral obligation to uphold the status quo, but we have only a limited right to give advice as to how the status quo shall be administered.

That is not a possible role for America, and the Senate in our opinion, whatever its motives and manoeuvres, has done a great service to the American people and ultimately to the world in nullifying that obligation. The role America promised to play was of quite different character. It presupposed an honest peace of cooperation by the European peoples based on the consent which was sealed in the armistice. On that foundation, and only on that, did it promise American resources as the ultimate insurance of the stability of an intrinsically stable peace. That was an obligation which an American patriot could have asked this country to assume as a national contribution to international peace. For America to assume an obligation resting on radically different premises, and promising radically different results, was no part of the bargain. The nature of American liability in Europe had to be conditioned by the nature of the European system. The system actually set up and demonstrated since the armistice is one which in our judgment is so full of treacherous entanglements as to call for complete liberty of action and an unpledged policy. By remaining legally detached it is possible to remain morally disinterested. And only by remaining morally disinterested is it possible, we think, to serve our real interest in the public order of Europe.

A New National Party

IN a letter printed elsewhere in this issue Mr. Gilson Gardner raises a question which is troubling the minds of many people in all parts of the country. Is a third party possible and desirable? What he asks, would be the effect of the organization of such a party on the coming Presidential elections? His own answer is unequivocal and emphatic. A third party would enable millions of voters who have grievances against the present administration to express their dissent without being obliged to vote for a Republican candidate who, in any event, will be chosen for his regularity and unprogressiveness. As he considers it highly desirable to furnish progressive voters with a candidate and a platform, he asks the *New Republic* to favor the formation of a third party which is neither socialist nor standpat.

The *New Republic* does favor the organization of a third party. We have repeatedly explained why neither the Republican nor the Democratic machine is worthy of confidence as an agency of progressive economic and political policy, and why we do not believe in the possibility of reforming these parties from within. In spite of a large measure of sympathy with what Hiram Johnson stands for in his up-hill fight for the nomination, we cannot support him because he is running as a Republican on the straight and narrow path of party regularity. That fact renders his candidacy barren. He must subordinate his progressivism to his Republicanism. Should he become dangerous, the Republican machine would, if necessary, defeat him by the same unscrupulous methods by which it defeated Roosevelt in 1912. But even assuming the appearance of some miraculous uprising in his favor by the Republican voters which would force his nomination, his Republican associates in Congress would prove an insuperable barrier to the passage of any genuinely progressive legislation. In 1912 the Roosevelt progressives considered the phrase Taft progressives a monstrous absurdity. But it is no more essentially absurd than the phrase progressive Republicans in 1920. Men who seriously believe in a forward-looking economic and political policy do not enter into a partisan alliance with the self-confessed representatives of the necessarily unprogressive vested interests.

On the other hand it is precisely because Herbert Hoover will not call himself either a Democrat or a Republican and will not run for the nomination of either party that the *New Republic* can provisionally favor him as a candidate. The agitation in favor of Mr. Hoover is equivalent to propaganda for the formation of a third party. He calls