

# The New REPUBLIC

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### The Week

**W**ITHIN a week or two the Knox resolution repealing the declarations of war against Germany and Austria, will have passed both houses of Congress and probably have received the President's signature. What then? The Republican party will have ended the war but it will not have achieved peace; and the problem of achieving peace will remain as difficult and formidable as if the Knox resolution had never been considered. The Republicans are still hesitating between two dubious and unsatisfactory courses. They can either ratify the Treaties of Versailles and St. Germain with the League of Nations omitted and subject to some substantial reservations, or they can negotiate separate treaties of peace with the former enemy countries. In the first case there would not be any great difference between ratification and rejection. They would ratify minus so many and such important provisions of the Treaty that they would need a conference in order to determine their relations with their former associates in the war. In the second case the negotiation of peace with Ger-

many would leave open many grave questions, both legal and economic, which would also require for their settlement a treaty with France, Great Britain, Italy, Belgium and the new Central European states. In other words, the real problem in any event is to negotiate a general settlement to which all the belligerents in the late war can agree. President Harding and Mr. Hughes can hardly avoid, before they are done, the summoning of a new world conference to assemble and deliberate in Washington.

THE decision of the Supreme Council to delay any enforcement of the "sanctions" against Germany indicates a sharp difference of opinion among the Allies as to the desirability of extreme coercive measures. Great Britain and Italy, as opposed to France, would gladly avoid the responsibility of diastatic coercion. We hope that the friends of conciliation and peace among nations can use the breathing space if not to bring about a permanent settlement, at least to propose an acceptable trial plan of some kind; but at this moment it does not look as if the few days of grace would restore even a semblance of peace to Europe. They are too short to alter the psychological and economic facts which underlie the present crisis and which seem to be irresistibly pushing Europe towards further disorder and chaos. On the one hand France, still bleeding from the war and involved in a desperate financial predicament, has a legal claim on Germany which, if collectible and collected, will save her credit. Her present rulers are possessed of irresistible military force, which they are perfectly willing to use on behalf of collection. If they succeed, well and good. If they fail they will only have removed an hereditary and, as they claim, an irreconcilable enemy. On the other hand Germany, still emaciated by the blockade and without a chance of meeting her liabilities, knows she cannot pay as much as the French demand and is unwilling to utter any more insincere promises. Great Britain and Italy are disposed to let her off and are hostile to the French policy, but they will not carry their hostility to the point of breaking with

France. This the French politicians know and it gives them the whip hand in the parleys. Themselves reckless of consequences, prepared for an extremity of action, and asking for nothing from the signatories of the Treaty which is not written in the bond, the rulers of France realize the strength of their position and will, we believe, push their advantage to the extreme limit of tolerability. Sooner or later the French army will march.

**I**S there any way of changing for the better the psychological facts which may soon let loose on Europe a new flood of suffering and disaster? Perhaps. If the American government were mentally prepared to negotiate an agreement with Great Britain and Italy to oppose France, should she adopt single-handed an extreme policy; and if it were ready at the same time to use American economic power for the scaling down of European liabilities and the promotion of European economic recovery, it might be able to stop the new outbreak. There exists in France a widespread although inarticulate feeling of dissatisfaction with the harsh chauvinism of the present French policy, and if France were isolated and explicitly condemned by her Allies, this dissatisfaction would gain largely in volume and aggressiveness. The difficulty is that the American, the British and the Italian governments are not ready to take the necessary step of protecting Germany against France. The last two are bound by the Treaty of Versailles and do not dare to undertake its revision. The American State Department is seeking a way out which looks in the direction of a compromise between what the French demand and what the Germans are willing to pay.

**BUT** a compromise which is forced on Germany by the kind of coercion which is now being used will not serve. Whatever the Germans pay they have got to earn by thirty years of prodigious individual and collective self-denial and hard work. If they are forced to promise payments which seem to them utterly excessive and unjust, they will so resent their treatment that they will be incapable of the required effort. It is a real danger that as the result of seeking an adjustment by compromise, the Germans will feel compelled to sign an agreement which they do not believe themselves able to carry out and on which they will eventually default.

**THERE** are powerful reasons to be urged in favor of pressing both the Germans and the French to accept a compromise. Even though the new arrangement called for payments by Germany which imposed an excessive strain on her ability and her will to pay, an accepted compromise would mean the temporary delay in the use of force and this

delay might permit beneficial changes in the states of mind of the former belligerent nations. Yet if through American mediation a compromise of that kind were negotiated, it is very doubtful whether it would succeed. The statesmen of those nations who were the enemies of Germany during the war must sooner or later accept one of two alternatives. They must either work with Germany and seek her consent to any contract which they ask her government to sign. Or they must adopt the only course which will in the long run enable them to dispense with the necessity of securing the consent of so numerous, intelligent and energetic a nation to the conditions which determine its welfare. They must frankly make up their minds to destroy the independence, economic power and the national self-respect of the German people.

**THIS** second alternative the Allies have actually pursued in writing and executing the Treaty of Versailles. It is the alternative which is implied by imposing demands on Germany which are and must be forced upon her people at the point of the sword. But as yet no Allied statesman will frankly proclaim or admit what the meaning and effect of their policy of coercion is; and public opinion in Europe and this country is still too clouded by justifiable resentment against Germany to understand what the effect must be on the spirit of a nation which is expected to undergo prodigious self-denial and labor with a loaded and cocked pistol pressed against its stomach. Europe will never recover composure and peace and American mediation will never bring about an acceptable and workable compromise until the consequences of the method of coercion are understood and the method itself abandoned in the interest of a method of consent.

**SINCE** 1885 there have been four hundred and fifteen lynchings of Negroes in Georgia,—more than in any other state. The recent Williams case, in which eleven Negroes were killed, adds the existence of a widespread system of peonage to this fearful distinction. But Georgia's conscience is at work, in the person of her governor, Hugh M. Dorsey. Governor Dorsey has published a booklet, called the Negro in Georgia, which is a circumstantial recital of outrages upon Negroes in the state within the last few years. All the cases cited were voluntarily sent to the Governor by Georgians. In only two of the 135 cited was a crime against a white woman involved. The others were of various kinds: Negroes lynched, Negroes beaten, shot, whipped; Negroes held in forced labor, prosperous Negroes forced out of their country by violence or threats of violence. "In some cases," says the Governor, "the Negro is being driven out as though he

were a wild beast." The testimony before him came unsolicited, and, he believes, were an effort made to collect more of it, conditions would be found to be actually many times worse. "If the conditions indicated by these charges should continue," says the governor, "both God and man would justly condemn Georgia more severely than God and man have condemned Belgium and Leopold for the Congo atrocities." One needs to remember that these words are from a Southern governor to realize how brave they are.

AND Governor Dorsey knows exactly how he intends his words should lead to acts. He wants laws establishing a State Constabulary. He wants authority to appoint "at any time a commission to investigate lynchings . . ." and power to remove any official it may find to have failed to uphold the law. He demands that "a financial penalty be imposed upon any county in which a lynching may occur." He urges compulsory education for both races. There are other remedies, too: such as a campaign by the churches to place in every part of Georgia "a sufficient number of Sunday Schools and Churches, where, in their separate places of worship . . . both races will learn . . . the Gospel of justice and mercy . . ." Publicity has been the Governor's chief aim, and he urges it to be continued: there should be a "careful investigation of facts as to the treatment of the Negro"—to be made, he adds, "by Georgians and not by outsiders." He is quite right: since Georgia's conscience is aroused, let her clean her house herself and have from outsiders only the encouragement a fearless governor deserves.

SENATOR MOSES, of New Hampshire, has introduced into the Senate a resolution for the investigation of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers. Mr. Moses suspects that the clothing unions are among the most dangerous centres of radicalism; he charges that as a result of strikes of these unions the production of garments in the United States has been cut to 25 per cent of normal. Does the Senator believe that the general collapse of the market, the consumer's strike against too expensive clothes, has had nothing to do with the drop in production? One may disagree with his reasoning and yet be fully in sympathy with the aim of his resolution. It calls for a searching inquiry "into the conditions in the clothing industry of the United States . . . the causes of industrial unrest . . . and its bearing upon the cost of clothing to the public, the purposes, objects, methods and tactics of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers . . ." Such an inquiry would lead far: it would bring out the facts as to their side of the dispute which the unions

have been unable to make public, it would bring out facts about the employers' side which are not generally enough known. The facts are complicated and clouded, the issue that rests upon them, while clear enough at bottom, is not by any means clear in the public mind. An investigation can dispel the fog. By all means let us have it.

THE California Assembly has passed a bill, aimed at industrial espionage, substantially to the effect that "any person or corporation who shall employ any other person for the purpose of joining any union of workingmen to secure knowledge of their activities on trade union matters, or to foment strife among the members, or to agitate them to commit offenses against the public peace, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor," and face the penalty of a fine of \$250 or three months imprisonment or both. This bill was passed by a vote of 52 to 11, while amendments, in favor of the open shop, that would have made it ineffective, were defeated 41 to 25. We extend our thanks and congratulations to the California Assembly. If only a small one, this is at any rate a beginning.

## The German Offer

TWO questions present themselves to one who examines the last German proposals dispassionately. The first question, and the least important is: Has Germany made the best offer she can afford? Probably not. Germany is trying to get off as cheaply as she can. But the second question is crucial: Is the offer so inadequate that an intelligent statesmanship would reject it forthwith, as not even a possible basis for further negotiation? The French government wanted to reject it, but no one looks to the French government for a statesmanship tending toward a reestablishment of peace in Europe. Any German offer whatsoever would have been denounced by the French, as designed to stave off the invasion of the Ruhr. It is reported that General Foch has declared that the better the German offer, the more necessary the exaction of "guarantees"—i. e., the seizure of districts vital to the existence of Germany. We cite this statement merely to indicate the worthlessness of the judgments passed upon the offer by the official French press. A judge who will convict whatever the evidence is no judge at all.

Nor is anything to be inferred from a comparison of the figures worked out by the Reparations Commission with the German figures. The Commission's figure is 132,000,000,000 gold marks as compared with the German figure of 50,000,000,000. Both are in terms of present values, so