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First to Last—the Truth: News—Editorials—Advertisements

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The New Diplomacy

Did secret diplomacy of the oldest school ever achieve such amazing mystery, such complete concealment of a world secret under one man's hat as that accomplished by President Wilson working in the name of "open covenants of peace openly arrived at"?

That phrase is like the other phrases of the fourteen and the six and the four the whole world possesses. It means, like them, everything or nothing. The world has possessed the phrase "the freedom of the seas" for many years. It gained no new notion of its significance when Mr. Wilson adopted it. The same is true of a league of nations. To further his conception of these two phrases Mr. Wilson goes to Europe, against the will of the bulk of the nation. Yet he has never confided in the nation to what sense of these words he holds or in what sense he proposes to fight for them. He has never explained these views even to the Senate, which shares with him the constitutional authority over treaties.

By the appointment of the most distinguished minds of America to the peace conference he might have done much to reveal the aims of his diplomacy. At least he would have granted certain securities of conference and debate and a joint wisdom. That, too, he has denied the country.

We reach almost the eve of his departure in this state of utter mystery and doubt. In these last hours, when it is too late for the nation to discuss or reply, Mr. Wilson proposes to appear before Congress and state his views. He may say much or little. But he cannot remove the extraordinary impression which his method has produced; he cannot, in this eleventh hour, replace secrecy by open discussion; he cannot receive from the country and bear with him to Versailles the views and mandate of his nation. He will go to impress upon the peace conference his own personal views, shared possibly with Colonel House, shared possibly with a few other intellectual intimates, but kept, until too late for criticism, from the American people.

A Government Trading Company for Russia

Little doubt now remains that the Administration is headed straight for a wide-open policy of government ownership or governmental enterprise, of apparently every description. This was fairly demonstrated in the seizure of the cables after all military or political necessity was passed, by the refusal to permit the Mercantile Marine to sell its stock ownership in British ships and by the decision this week to buy the land of the Hog Island plant at the appraised valuation so that the whole of Hog Island would be a government enterprise. This, on top of government railways, telegraphs, telephones, government shipbuilding and, to a degree undreamt of by the framers of the Federal Reserve act, government banks, with apparently the decision to continue, if not broaden, the policy of governmental aid to private enterprise through the War Finance Corporation, pretty well clinches the fact.

If anything were lacking it would be supplied by the singular announcement now made by the War Trade Board of the formation of "The United States Russian Bureau, Incorporated," a company created by the War Trade Board and supplied with a paid-up capital of \$5,000,000 from government funds. The head of it is Mr. Vance C. McCormick, present chairman of the War Trade Board and sometime chairman of a certain political national committee. The purpose of this new government corporation which thus falls out of the blue is, it is announced, "to engage in the business of exporting to Russia and Siberia agricultural implements, shoes, clothing and other commodities which the Russian and Siberian raw materials in return."

This idea of a government corporation to engage in export and trade in a dis-

tant country is certainly governmental invasion of business with a vengeance. Some further light on the purposes of this remarkable innovation lies in the additional announcement that:

"One of the chief objects which the company will have in view will be the encouragement of private capital to engage in trade in Russia and Siberia as shipping becomes available for the purpose. Its policy will be to cooperate with, encourage and promote such trade with Russia as will assist in the rehabilitation of her economic life and to cover by its direct operations only such portions of the field as cannot at present be served readily by private enterprises."

Nor is all this a tentative plan for the future. Before the general or business public hears a word of it the corporation is already in operation. It has "already begun the transaction of business by the dispatch of three vessels from the Pacific Coast to Vladivostok." The public is further advised that "by addressing the Russian Bureau persons interested in Russian trade may receive more detailed information."

We shall follow the operations of this company with great interest. Many of our large corporations, the Heavestor Company, the Singer Company, Mr. Ford's auto works, the Crucible Steel Company, the life insurance companies and a host of others, already have large investments in Russia, many of which are now, to all intents, pretty much a dead loss. Is "The United States Russian Bureau, Incorporated," to attempt anything in the way of rehabilitation of American enterprises already in Russia, or the rescue of their plants and funds from the pirate crew in whose hands Russia is clearly one of the greatest problems that face this country and the Administration. But is a government-owned trading corporation, under the direct control of an extremely active, able and highly sophisticated politician, and purposing to engage in a miscellaneous barter of boots, shoes, tooth brushes or hair dyes, an effective and statesmanlike approach to the task?

The Crisis in Germany

The Majority Socialists in Germany, backed by the bourgeois elements, are clinging fast to the life line of German unity. They are still Germans first and Socialists afterward—just as they were in 1914, when they incontinently abandoned the doctrine of proletarian brotherhood and supported the Kaiser in his long-planned war of conquest.

The Majority Socialists still have a strongly developed nationalistic sense. They appreciate the economic advantages of a unified German state. For centuries Germany was a collection of small kingdoms, principalities, grand duchies, free cities and what not, loosely bound together and all jealous of their own privileges and rights. They spent most of their time quarrelling among themselves. Prussia and Austria were rivals for control in the German world. At last Prussia outwitted and vanquished Austria and became the cornerstone of a new and materially prosperous German Empire.

The Majority Socialist leaders want to insure the perpetuity of the imperial union before they reorganize society on the Marxian model. Therefore men like Kurt Eisner, the provisional President of the Bavarian Republic, insist on the maintenance of the Federal Council and on the immediate election of a national assembly charged with creating new federal machinery. They are anxious to see the terms of peace executed before the big experiment of a federal socialist republic is launched.

Against these moderate advisers are ranged the Minority Socialists and the Independent Socialists of the extreme Spartacus group. The Reds want to reorganize society at once and to postpone the election of a constitutional assembly until the social revolution has been practically accomplished. They care little for the fate of Germany as a nation. They would dismember her as Lenin and Trotsky dismembered Russia if they thought partition would give them a freer hand in prosecuting their class war against the bourgeoisie. They are Bolshevik, unashamed. And though they are now a small minority, they hope, through the aid of the Berlin mob and of the military soviets, to impose their programme by terrorism on the Socialist Moderates of the Ebert, Scheidemann and Eisner stripe.

The struggle between Kerensky and the Bolshevik minority in Petrograd is, in fact, now being staged over again in Berlin. Herr Haase, one of the Red leaders, maintains that it is impracticable to elect a national constitutional assembly until all the soldiers are demobilized and able to vote. Meanwhile he expects to use the power of the undemobilized military soviets to establish a Red government, strong enough to dissolve any assembly which might attempt to dispute its will or undo its work.

The political crisis in Germany is thus becoming more and more sharply defined. Bolshevism is rampant and uncompromising. If its leaders can seize power in Prussia they will hold Germany by the throat. Bavaria and the other South German states may threaten to secede. The Rhineland may seek independence and protection under an Allied occupation. But the rest of Prussia will remain Red, will turn to civil war as a relief from foreign war and will attempt, by scrapping the old order and dissipating the economic resources which remain,

to escape payment both of the internal war debt and of the vast sum in reparations owed to Belgium, France and Great Britain and to the other maritime nations whose shipping the German U-boats destroyed.

The returning soldiers will decide whether Germany is to remain a real nation, economically able to discharge its peace obligations, or will be split into minor states, all seeking to minimize and dodge a reckoning, or become a Bolshevik mock-commonwealth, with neither the power nor the will to pay. It is a gloomy prospect. Germany's reconstitution may easily become as serious a problem to the peace conference as Russia's is. The Germans Bolshevikized Russia. Now that crime returns to plague and destroy them. And Germany only a year ago imagined itself morally and materially qualified to conquer the world!

The Chapman Case and After

Governor Whitman has made a wise and accurate disposition of the Chapman case. To have permitted the execution of this boy would have been to permit a grave blot upon the judicial record of the state. On the other hand, to have pardoned him or sent him off with a light sentence would have been an encouragement to crime by youths of an age especially subject to the teachings of an object lesson. No tenderness for the young can be permitted to imperil the safety of society.

There remains now the larger and more important problem of dealing with the Paul Chapmans of the future. As The Tribune has repeatedly pointed out, the present law is egregiously out of date. It must be brought up to the standards of current wisdom and conscience. There must be no exceptions to the jurisdiction of our children's courts in the case of crimes punishable by death. And the entire jurisdiction of these courts should be extended two years, up to the eighteenth birthday. The Tribune hopes that the state Legislature will find time to press these changes to an early passage. The risk of another Chapman case, with its possibility of the legal killing of a child, must be removed from our Penal Code as speedily as possible.

What Sort of Decorations?

We cannot see why there should be any serious quarrel between Mayor Hylan and the Fifth Avenue Association over the decorations to greet our returning soldiers. The two plans proposed are fitted to two entirely different types of parades. The sole question to be determined is which sort of pageant the city is to make ready for.

The scheme of the Fifth Avenue Association for an "Avenue of the States" was conceived to greet mixed divisions of the Rainbow type. And surely if our city is called upon to welcome men from all the states such a setting is admirable. The method of letting each state decorate its own block needs to be carefully controlled by a central authority in order to obtain some unity of design and to prevent blunders. And it offers a courteous and effective way of uniting the country's interest in a national occasion, and considering the large number of other state Americans in our town the scheme is simple and practical.

But are we to have such parades? Mayor Hylan understands that demobilization at camps will present such national shows. If he is right we shall have only our local units, such as the Twenty-seventh Division, to greet; and, unquestionably, for such a parade an Avenue of the States possesses no fitness whatever. A return to the general design of the Avenue of the Allies would be far more suitable and would better symbolize what would be passing in our hearts.

We hope the Mayor and the Fifth Avenue Association will first ascertain from the War Department who is to parade and will then get together and decorate to suit.

Straps for the Short

To the Editor of The Tribune. Sir: The ingenious methods of Mr. Theodore P. Shonts for herding his human cattle in the different subways of New York City are admittedly beyond all praise, especially that generous foresight which has provided straps for the swaying mortals in the "rush" hours.

From the expression on the faces of these dear people between South Ferry and 157th Street and Broadway the experience must be beatific, and no doubt for those who are tall, or even of good medium height, blessings for Mr. Theodore Shonts emanate from their hearts all the way; but for a little woman who has to travel on the subway every day it is little short of torture to be flung about at every stoppage, and I know that many a time a seat has been offered to me by some gentleman if only to preserve his headgear and cravat from my frantic clutches in an effort to keep the perpendicular.

Of course, having paid my fare, I wouldn't think of demanding a seat, but I would like to offer the suggestion to our good Mr. Shonts that he should provide alternate long and short straps, so that short people, too, might enjoy the rhythm of the sway in peace and comfort.

EMMA TEMPLE SCOTT.
New York, Nov. 27, 1918.

And Shoes and Ships, Too

(From The Philadelphia Evening Ledger) Cabbages and Kings are about equally scarce in certain European countries.

THE THREE WITCHES



Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog.

Adder's fork and blind-worm's sting,
Lizard's leg and howlet's wing.

For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

MACBETH

The Greatest Thing of All

By Frank H. Simonds
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THE beginning of a propaganda designed to abolish the greatest of all the gains of this World War will surprise no one, but it should carry a universal warning. The Peace Congress soon to meet may or may not succeed in creating a League of Nations, with the power to regulate international relations for the future. All this will be experimental, but nothing is more certain than that there can be no League of Nations unless it is founded on the understanding and mutual gratuities which have been created between the United States and the nations with whom it has been associated in the great struggle.

To those who know contemporary Europe there is something almost pathetic in the eagerness of French, British and Italian peoples, of the mass of these nations, to demonstrate their gratitude for aid given by the United States, aid which, however decisive when it arrived, would have been useless if the British and the French had not held the line against German barbarism for more than three years.

Nor is the emotion confined to Europe. It is a fact known to every one that there is in this country to-day a totally new sense of responsibilities and of associations in the business of the world. And underneath this is the substantial foundation of respect and admiration for the two great nations which have faced German might for the four years of war. The mass of the American people long ago demonstrated their determination that the French should have Alsace-Lorraine, even if the winning of it involved an American campaign against Metz and Strasbourg, with all the inevitable carnage.

Precisely in the same way the mass of the American people are agreed that there shall be no limitation by the Peace Congress or elsewhere of the powers of the British navy, which has been the bulwark of the Allied cause. There is a new and a real sense of appreciation alike of the magnitude of British effort and the loyalty of British purpose in the United States. There is a general understanding that the British nation has advanced over far more than half the distance which has separated two peoples speaking the same language and meaning the same thing by the words which they use.

Sensible and informed Americans know that the British and the French people are eager to preserve and expand the friendship cemented by the blood of the men of all three nations shed in the recent struggles. The great basis for international peace is international friendship and confidence, not written agreements, whether these agreements

One Holding Company for Railroads

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: The resignation of Secretary McAdoo brings the railroad question to the front as an acute issue.

It is generally conceded that the railroads must not be made the football of politicians, nor again the football of speculators; hence, we cannot consider the present system or the old one.

It is generally conceded that they must be cooperative, not competitive, and that they must be run by railroad men.

The railroads themselves have shown us how this result can be obtained. One big holding company is the answer. It might have nothing but bonds, which could be guaranteed by the government. If this holding company has no common stock, it becomes a real public service corporation, in which capital gets a fair return and labor of all kinds, from the manager down, can be paid in proportion to service rendered. There are no obstacles in the way of such a plan, under which we should get all the benefits of government ownership without its dangers.

Moreover, it would give an opportunity to the great railroad managers of the country, many of whom are highly patriotic, to serve the community.

This is no new scheme; it was proposed before the government took over the roads. It is brought up now because we are rapidly being brought face to face with a most delicate problem, the solution of which will be a most important factor in our economic development in the years to come.

H. L. GANTT.
New York, Nov. 25, 1918.

Burlesonized Mails

"The Rutland Herald" tells its readers, under a Brattleboro date, that relatives of Miss Marion Rice, who is a Red Cross nurse now in France, have just read a letter from her in which she wrote that the day before the mails brought her a Christmas package which was mailed in Brattleboro in November, 1916. Miss Rice added that the contents of the box were edible, a fact which speaks volumes for Vermont cookery.

The deliberate progress of this box and its ultimate delivery bring much comfort, or should, to some thousands of people who have mailed like boxes to members of the American Expeditionary Force. These boxes may be years in transit, but eventually they will reach the addressees. As late as 1937 grizzled veterans of the great war, then home and engaged in peaceful pursuits, will be gladdened by the receipt of boxes of cigarettes, cake and candy shipped to them by friends in this country in 1917. The mails may be slow, but they are frequently sure.

A Record Without a Blemish

(From The Kansas City Star)

Carl Brown, of "The Atchison Globe," who joined the army last week and probably will be discharged next week, declares his intention of running for office on his soldier record.

A Week of Verse

Promise of Spring, 1918
(From The English Review)

THE boy-sun laughs, and Day
Scatters his beams
Where the youngling shadows play;
And in the wounded fields
The new buds break, and put
Their lips to the morning's kiss.
And where
But yesterday a thousand loves and dreams
Moved to their close,
The rusted wire is fair
With heedless greenery.
And soon the rose
Shall make of this
Mould of young sacrifice a flaming rout
Of passionate bloom that yields
The largesse of their brief mortality.

And wondrous, clear, across the breeze
Again I hear the Suffolk seas.
And fair and fleet over the grass
I hear the feet of children pass.
And where I stand, by many graves,
Are cliffs and sand, and hurrying waves,
And where the guns lie hid to slay
The river runs through yesterday.

STEPHEN SOUTHWOLD.

The Flute

(From The Century)

"STOP! What are you doing?"
"Playing on an old flute."
"That's Heinie's flute. You mustn't touch it."
"Why not, if I can make it sound?"
"I don't know why not, but you mustn't."
"I don't believe I can—much. It's full of dust. Still, listen:

"The rose moon whitens the lifting leaves,
Heigh-ho! the nightingale sings!
Through boughs and branches the moon-thread weaves.
Ancient as time are these midnight things.

"The nightingale's notes over-bubble the night.
Heigh-ho! yet the night is so big!
He stands on his nest in a wafer of light.
And the nest was once a philosopher's wig.

"Moon-sharp needles and dew on the grass,
Heigh-ho! it flickers, the breeze!
Kings, philosophers, periwigs pass.
Nightingales hatch their eggs in the trees.

"Wigs and pigs and kings and courts,
Heigh-ho! rain on the flower!
The old moon thinks her white, bright thoughts,
And trundles away before the shower."

"Well, you got it to play."
"Yes, a little. And it has lovely silver mountings."

AMY LOWELL.

Driftwood

(From The Century)

MY forefathers gave me
My spirit's shaken flame,
The shape of hands, the beat of heart,
The letters of my name.

But it was my lovers,
And not my sleeping sires,
Who taught my spirit how to flame
With iridescent fires.

As the driftwood burning
Learned its jewelled blaze
From the sea's blue splendor
Of colored nights and days.

SARA TEASDALE.

We

(From The Pagan)

WE are the singers
Who of our great love have made
A strange, unlettered song,
And have sung it,
Silently.

We are the singers,
Singing our poor hearts out in desolation
Sealing with weak leaders of song
The high wall of the world;
Battling hopelessly
With ignorance, and meeting
Ignominious defeat.

We are the singers
Who of our great desire have sung
Strange melodies
That end in discord.

JOSEPH U. HARRIS.

And Yet—

(From The Pagan)

DELICATE, angular letters,
Already fading a little;
Only a few careless words
Scrawled on a title-page:
And yet—you smile at me,
Over the heads of the dead,
Across the darkened void,
As you have smiled at me
Across the lighted ballroom,
Over the heads of the dancers.

RUTH CLAY PRICE.

Romance

(From The Pagan)

THE house next door is of bricks.
Soft, old, brown bricks,
A vine climbs up the side,
And sparrows chirp in the vine;
They twitter, and chirp, and murmur
In the twilight and at dawn;
Some folks hate the English sparrow,
But to me the wall and the vine
And the twittering of the sparrows
Is as romantic as nightingales
In the garden of some old castle.

ADAM PEARSALL.

Kings

(From The New Witness)

HE held a penny in his hand,
And looked at it this way and that,
"I'm big and red and round," he said,
"While he is little, cold and flat."

"I've serfs and vassals, gold and land,
The penny-king, he hasn't any;
Yet when I'm dead and dust," he said,
"He'll still be worth a penny."

WILFRED WILSON GIBSON.