

GERMANY THE NEXT REPUBLIC?

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Germany, According to Ackerman, Is Like a Man on the Verge of Nervous Prostration, Ready to Collapse as Soon as Artificial Means of Stimulus Are Withdrawn—Then the Entire Political, Military and Economic Organization Will "Cave In"

But It Remains With the Allies to Make It Impossible for the Kaiser and His Junkers to Find Additional Sources of Stimulation—Every Minor Military Victory Can Be Magnified and Every Diplomatic Blunder Can Be Seized to Serve Prussia's Purpose

IT IS almost impossible to say whether Germany, as a nation, can be starved into submission. Everything depends upon the next harvest, the length of the war and future military operations. The German Government, I think, can make the people hold out until the coming harvest, unless there is a big military defeat.

In their present undernourished condition the public could not face a defeat. If the war ends this year Germany will not be so starved that she will accept any peace terms. But if the war continues another year or two Germany will have to give up.

I entered Germany at the beginning of the Allied blockade, when one could purchase any kind and any quantity of food in Germany. Two years later, when I left, there were at least eighteen foodstuffs which could not be purchased anywhere, and there were twelve kinds of food which could be obtained only by Government cards. That is what the Allied blockade did to the food supplies. It made Germany look like a grocery store after a closing-out sale.

The Food Situation in Germany

Suppose in the United States you wanted the simplest breakfast—coffee and bread and butter. Suppose you wanted a light luncheon of eggs or a sandwich, tea and fruit. Suppose for dinner you wanted a plain menu of soup, meat, vegetables and dessert. At any grocery or lunch counter you could get not only these plain foods, but anything else you wanted.

Not so in Germany! For breakfast you cannot have pure coffee, and you can have only a very small quantity of butter with your butter card. Hotels serve a coffee substitute, but most people prefer nothing. For luncheon you may have an egg, but only one day during two weeks. Hotels still serve a weak, highly colored tea and apples or oranges. For dinner you may have soup without any meat or fat in it. Soups are just a mixture of water and vegetables. Two days a week you can get a small piece of meat with a meat card. Other days you can get boiled fish.

People who keep house, of course, have more food, because as a rule they have been storing supplies. Take the Christian Scientists as an instance. Members of this church have organized a semi-official club. Members buy all the extra food possible. They then divide, and store away what they want for the "siege"—the time when food will be scarcer than it is today.

Two women practitioners in Berlin, who live together, bought thirty pounds of butter from an American who had brought it in from Copenhagen. They canned it and planned to make this butter last one year. Until a few weeks ago people with money could go to Switzerland, Holland and Denmark and bring back food with them, either with or without permission.

Some wealthy citizens who import machinery and other things



The potato harvest was a big failure, and an additional tax was put upon the municipal kitchens.

from outside neutral countries have their agents smuggle food at the same time.

While the Dutch, Danish and Swiss Governments try to stop smuggling, there is always some going through. The rich have the money to bribe border officers and inspectors. When I was in Dusseldorf last October I met the owner of a number of canal boats who shipped coal and iron products from the Rhine Valley to Denmark. He told me his canal barges brought back food from Copenhagen every trip and that the border authorities were not very careful in making an investigation of his boats.

In Dusseldorf, too, as well as in Cologne, business men spoke about the food they got from Belgium. They did not get great quantities, of course, but the leakage was enough to enable them to live better than those who had to depend upon the food in Germany.

When the food supplies began to decrease the Government instituted the card system of distribution. Bread cards had been very successful, so the authorities figured that meat, butter, potato and other cards would be equally so. But their calculations were wrong.

When potato cards were issued each person was given nine pounds a week. But the potato harvest was a big failure. The supply was so much less than the estimates that seed potatoes had to be used to keep the people satisfied. Even then the supply was short, and the quantity to be sold on potato cards was cut to three pounds a week. Then transportation difficulties arose, and potatoes spoiled before they reached Berlin, Munich, Hamburg, Dresden, Leipzig and other large cities.

The same thing happened when the Government confiscated the fruit crop last year.

One day I was asked on the telephone whether I wanted to buy an eleven-pound ham. I asked to have it sent to my office immediately. When it came the price was \$2.50 a pound. I sent the meat back and told the man I would not pay such a price.

"That's all right," he replied. "Doctor Stein and a dozen other people will pay me that price. I sent it to you because I wanted to help you out."

Dr. Ludwig Stein, one of the editors of the Vossische Zeitung, paid the price and ordered all he could get for the same money.

"When Americans ask, 'How long can Germany hold out?' I reply, 'As long as the German Government can satisfy the vanity and stimulate the nerves of the people, and as long as the people permit the Government to do the nation's thinking.'"

When I left Berlin the Government had issued an order prohibiting the sale of all canned vegetables and fruit. It was explained that this food would be sold when the present supplies of other foods were exhausted. There were in Berlin many thousand cans, but no one can say how long such food will last.

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"How Long Can Germany Hold Out?"

How long a time that will be no one can say. It was formerly believed that whenever a nation reached the limit which Germany has reached it would crumple up. But Germany fails to crumple. Instead of breaking up she fights harder and more desperately. Why can she do this? The answer is simple: Because the German people believe in their Government, and the Government knows that as long as it can convince the people that it is winning the war the people will fight.

Germany is today in the position of a man on the verge of a nervous breakdown; in the position of a man who is undernourished, who is depressed, who is weighed down by colossal burdens, who is brooding over the loss of friends and relatives, but of a man who feels that his future health and happiness depend upon his ability to hold out until the crisis passes.

If a physician were called to prescribe for such a patient his first act would in all probability be to stimulate this man's hope, to make him believe that if he would only "hold out" he would pass the crisis successfully. But no physician could say that his patient could stand it for one week, a month or a year more. The doctor would have to gamble upon that man's nerves. He would have to stimulate him daily, perhaps hourly.

So it is with the German nation. The country is on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Men and women, business men and generals long ago lost their patience. They are undernourished. They are depressed, distressed, suffering and anxious for peace. It is as true of the Hamburg-American Line directors as it is true of the officers at the front.

There have been more cases of nervous breakdowns among the people during the last year than at any time in Germany's history. There have been so many suicides that the newspapers are forbidden to publish them. There have been so many losses on the battlefields that every family has been affected, not once, but two, three and four times. Dancehalls have been closed. Cafes and hotels must stop serving meals by 11 o'clock. Theatres are presenting the most sullen plays. Rumors spread like prairie fires. One day Hindenburg is dead. Two days later he is alive again.

But the Kaiser has studied this war psychology. He and his Ministers know that one thing keeps the German people fighting—their hope of ultimate victory; their belief that they have won already. The Kaiser knows, too, that if the public mind is stimulated from day to day by new victories, by reports of many prisoners, of new territory gained, of enemy ships torpedoed, or by promises of reforms after the war, the public will continue fighting.

So the Kaiser gambles from day to day with his people's nerves. For two years he has done this, and for two years he has been supported by a 12,000,000-manpower army and a larger army of workers and women at home. The Kaiser believes he can gamble for a long time yet with his people.

Just as it is impossible for a physician to say how long his patient can be stimulated without breaking down, so it is impossible for an observer in Germany to say how long it will be before the break-up comes in Germany.

(CONTINUED TOMORROW)

A TRIP TO HOG ISLAND, WHERE THE WORLD'S BIGGEST SHIPYARD IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION



WORKMEN ON THEIR WAY TO WORK AT THE SITE OF THE PLANT

The American International Corporation is back of the gigantic enterprise that will bring additional fame to the Delaware River and bear out its reputation as "the Clyde of America."



TIES FOR THE RAILROAD SPUR THAT WILL TAP HOG ISLAND

The mammoth shipbuilding plant, when completed, will boast of fifty ways on which 50 vessels, each of 5000 tons, can be constructed at one time.



RUSHING LUMBER TO THE SCENE OF OPERATIONS

The plant will cover 900 acres of land and will employ 15,000 men continuously on day and night shifts.



LAYING FOUNDATIONS FOR THE RAILROAD SPUR WHERE IT WILL CROSS THE ERSTWHILE BED OF A CREEK



LABORERS BUILDING ONE OF THE ROADS THAT WILL LEAD TO THE HEART OF THE SHIPYARD