

GERMANY THE NEXT REPUBLIC?

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The German People Had Childlike Faith in Von Hindenburg, and When He Told Them That the Verdun Defeat Was a Tactical Success They Believed Him and Hailed Him Once More as a Conqueror

But the Socialists Refused to Be Blinded by False Claims and Explanations by the Military Party That Fail to Explain—A Big Allied Victory or Moral Support Would Go Far to Help the Radicals

MANY times during the war Germany has been on the verge of a collapse. President Wilson's ultimatum after the sinking of the Sussex in the English Channel brought about one crisis. Von Falkenhayn's defeat at Verdun caused another. The Somme battle brought on a third. General Brussiloff's offensive against the Austrians upset conditions throughout the Central Powers. Rumania's declaration of war made another crisis. But Germany passed all of these successfully.

The ability of the German Government to convince the people that Wilson was unneutral and wanted war caused them to accept Germany's note in the Sussex case. The defeat at Verdun was explained as a tactical success. The Somme battles, with their terrible losses, failed to bring a break-up because the Allies stopped attacking at the critical moment.

Von Hindenburg, as chief of the General Staff of Central Europe, remedied the mistakes of the Austrians during Brussiloff's attacks by reorganizing the Dual Monarchy's army. The crisis which Rumania's entrance on the Allies' side brought in Germany and Hungary was forgotten after Von Mackensen took Bucharest.

In each of these instances it will be noticed that the crisis was successfully passed by "stimulation." The German mind was made to believe what the Kaiser willed.

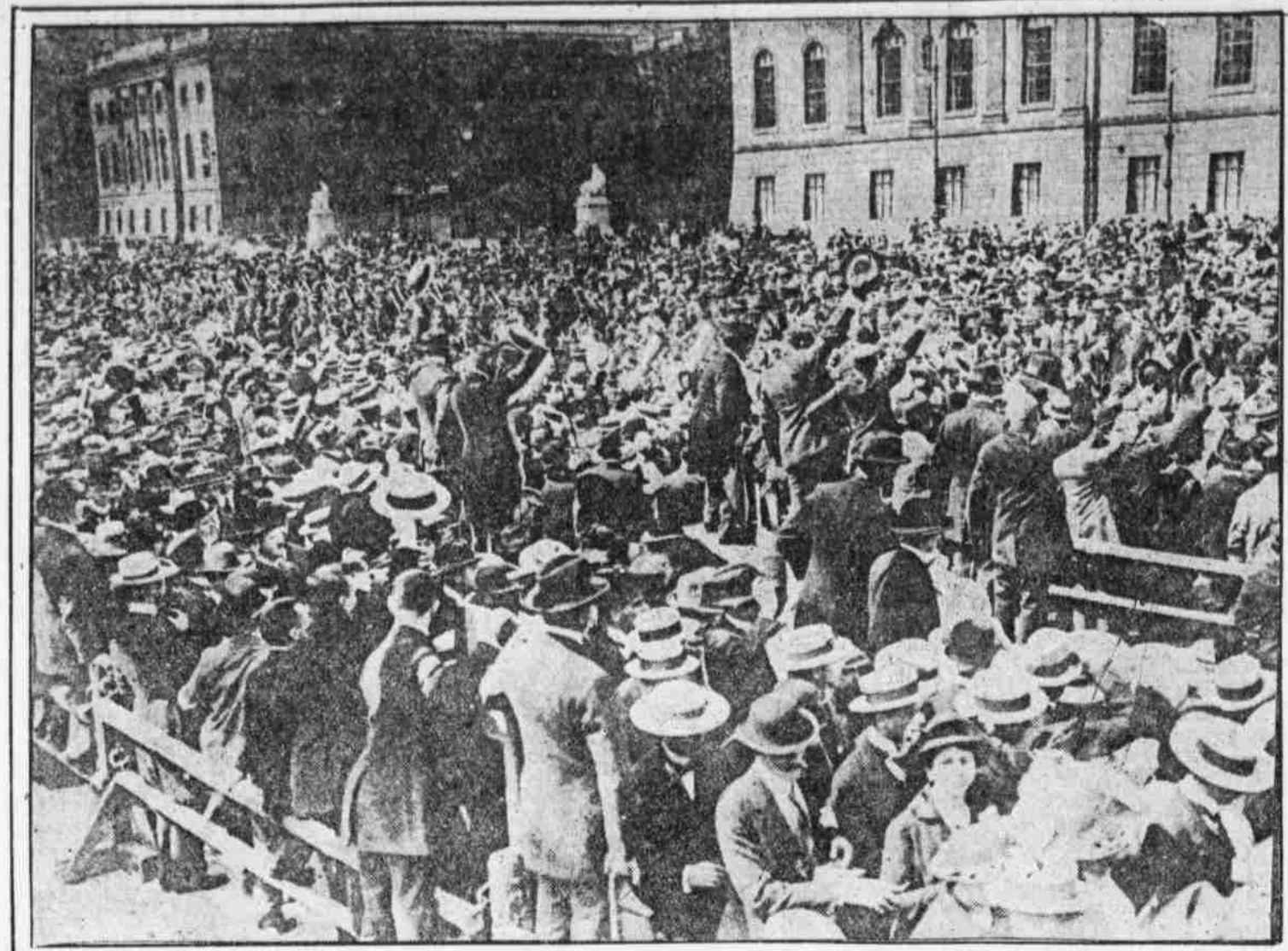
But what about the future? Is there a bottomless well of stimulation in Germany?

The German People Are Beginning to Think

Before these questions can be answered others must be asked: "Why don't the German people think for themselves? Will they ever think for themselves?"

An incident which occurred in Berlin last December illustrates the fact that the people are beginning to think. After the Allies replied to President Wilson's peace note the Kaiser issued an appeal to the German people. One morning it was printed on the first pages of all newspapers in bold-face type. When I arrived at my office the janitor handed me the morning papers and, pointing to the Kaiser's letter, said: "I see the Kaiser has written US another letter. You know, he never wrote to US in peace time."

There are evidences, too, that others are beginning to think. The Russian revolution is going to cause many Socialists to discuss the future of Germany. They have discussed it before, but always behind closed doors and with lowered voices. I attended one



"If Paul von Hindenburg says a retreat is a victory the people will take his judgment." The photograph shows a Berlin crowd cheering Von Hindenburg's "victorious" troops.

night a secret meeting of three Socialist leaders of the Reichstag, an editor of a Berlin paper and several business men. What they said of the Kaiser that night would, if it were published, send every man to the military firing squad. But these men didn't dare speak that way in public at that time. Perhaps the Russian revolt will give them more courage.

But the Government is not asleep to these changes. The Kaiser believes he can continue juggling public opinion, but he knows that from now on it will be more difficult. But he will not stop. He will always hold forth the vision of victory as the reward for German faithfulness. Today, for instance, in the United States we hear very little about the German submarine warfare. It is the policy of the Allies not to publish all losses immediately; first, because the enemy must not be given any important information,

if possible, and, secondly, because losses have a bad effect upon any people.

But the German people do not read what we do. Their newspapers are printing daily the ship losses of the Entente. Submarines are returning and making reports. These reports are published and in a way give the people the impression that the submarine war is a success. We get the opposite impression here, but we are not in a position to judge better than the Germans, because we don't hear everything.

The important question, however, is: What are the German people being told about submarine warfare?

Judging from past events, the Kaiser and his navy are undoubtedly magnifying every sinking for the purpose of stimulating the people into believing that the victory they seek is getting

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neared. The Government knows that the public favors ruthless torpedoing of all ships bound for the enemy, so the Government is safe in concluding that the public can be stimulated for some months more by reports of submarine victory.

Military operations in the west are probably not arousing the discussion in Berlin that the plans against Russia are. The Government will see to it that the press points regularly to the possibilities of a separate peace with Russia, or to the possibility of a Hindenburg advance against England and France.

The people have childlike faith in Von Hindenburg. If Paul von Hindenburg says a retreat is a victory the people will take his judgment. But all German leaders know that the time is coming when they will have to show the German people a victory or take the consequences themselves.

Hence it would not be surprising if, after present military operations are concluded, either by an offensive against Russia or by an attack on the western line, the Chancellor again made peace proposals. The Socialists will force the Chancellor to do it sooner or later. They are the real power behind the throne, although they have not enough spunk to try to oust the Kaiser and tell the people to do their own thinking.

How the Allies Can Help

A big Allied military victory would, of course, change everything. Defeat of the German army would mean defeat of Von Hindenburg, the German god. It would put an end to the Kaiser's juggling with his people's nerves. But few people in Germany expect an Entente victory this year, and they believe that if the Allies don't win this year they never will win.

Germany is stronger militarily now than she has been, and Germany will be able for many months to keep many Entente armies occupied. Before the year is passed the Entente may need American troops as badly as France needed English assistance last year. General von Falkenhayn, former chief of the German General Staff, told me about the same thing last December in Rumania:

"In war," he remarked, "nothing is certain except that everything is uncertain; but one thing I know is certain: We will win the war."

America's entrance, however, will have the decisive effect. The Allies, especially the French, appreciate this. As a high French official remarked one day when Ambassador Gerard's party was in Paris:

There have been two great moments in the war for France. The first was when England declared war to support us. The second was the breaking of diplomatic relations between the United States and Germany.

The Germans don't believe this. As General von Stein, Prussian Minister of War, said, Germany doesn't fear the United States. He said that, of course, for its effect upon the German people. The people must be made to believe this or they will not be able to hate America in true German fashion.

America's participation, however, will upset Hindenburg's war plans. American intervention can put a stop to the Kaiser's juggling with his people's minds by helping the Allies defeat Germany. Only a big military defeat will shake the confidence of the Germans in the Kaiser, Hindenburg and their organized might. The people are beginning to think now, but they will do a great deal more thinking if they are beaten.

So the answer to the question, "How long can Germany hold out?" is really answered by saying that Germany can keep on until she is decisively defeated militarily.

(CONTINUED TOMORROW)

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