Year Just Closing Is Most Significant Since Armistice

Marked By Rise of France, By Decline of British Influence, And By Complete Prostration of Germany, Spells Death To Idealism That Wilson Sought To Impose on World at Paris

By FRANK H. SIMONDS
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Washington, Dec. 31.—The year which is just closing has been marked so far as European affairs are concerned by three closely related major incidents, namely the rise of France, the decline of Britain and the complete prostration of Germany.

To complete the tabulation of great powers one may add that in the same time Russia has been practically quiescent and isolated, while Italy has given not a few indications of a desire to take a more important and profitable role in European councils.

The rise of France has been attended with many significant circumstances. The occupation of the Rhur in the first days of January brought abruptly to an end the more or less imaginary cooperation between France and Brittain in Europe and specifically in the restoration of peace. It supplied decisive proof of the fact, long before becoming apparent, that British and French fundamental interests had become absolutely opposed, at least in the minds of the statemen of the respective countries and of the majorities of the inhabitants.

When France, with Belgian cooperation and Italian assent, moved into the Rhur, the real chance of a peaceful adjustment of the Franco-German phase of after-war problems was practically shattered. When Germany, mistakenly counting upon British disapprobation of French policy to rescue her, resorted to passive resistance, she actually undertook another war, the consequences of which were to be for her more costly than the great conflict of 1914-18 and for Europe hardly less serious.

By this occupation of the Rhur, however, France at once established her position as the supreme power on the Continent. In alliance with Belgium, Poland, the Little Entente, comprising Rumania, Czecho-Slovakia and Jugo-Slavia, she was, so far as German questions were concerned, the leader in a group of nations which counted their standing armies at almost 2,000,000 and their population at more than 115,000,000. All these states were moreover united by a common interest and a common danger to defend the territorial decision of the peace treaties of Paris.

Between January and December two struggles were carried on in Europe. The first between France and Belgium on the one hand and Germany on the other turned about the question of German resistance to Allied occupation of the Rhur. The second, between France and Belgium again united and Great Brittain was waged over the legality of the occupation and its permanence. In a word the Germans resisted the Rhur occupation in the hope of compelling the occupying powers to retire, the British strove by every possible means, both friendly and otherwise, to persuade the French to abandon the ocupation and the purpose which it represented.

French Twice Victors

Both struggles were won by the French. The Germans having resisted until they had entirely wrecked their monetary system and brought the whole nation to the edge of a ruin it is still impossible to say can be prevented, were compelled to surrender unconditionally. The British, despite all their efforts, were confronted by the unequivocal declaration of Poincare at the close of the Rhur War that French occupation would continue until German payment was complete. Indeed, there was the double declaration, namely that France would stay in the Rhur until Germany paid and on the left bank of the Rhine until Germany gave clear proof of her having laid aside all intention to menace French and Belgian security.

We have seen in all this ,then, the logical and the inevitable result of the repudiation by the United States and Great Britain of the bargain made in their names by Mr. Wilson and Mr. Lloyd George. By the terms of that bargain, the two Anglo-Saxon nations in return for French consent to resign her power to take physical guarantees of security, bound themselves to guarantee with their own strength her later safety, while they similarly engaged for further resignations on French part to share with France in the execution of a treaty which meant for France reparations as well as security.

The rejection of this bargain by the American Senate and in practice by the British Government led, after three years of argument and recrimination, to that point where France, resuming her freedom of action and finding she no longer could expect British or American aid, proceeded on her own with Belgian assistance to take those guarantees and sanctions which she had renounced at Paris in 1919 and to act in 1923 as she would have acted in 1919 but for the offers of her partners of the great struggle.

Having refused to march with France and Belgium in January, however, the British found themselves ever after that estopped from any effective intervention. Thus while the French action gave France instantly the dominant position on the Continent, enabled her, in association with her allies to take a position of influence which she had not occupied since the high water mark of the First Empire, the obvious inability of Britain to restrain or even to moderate French policy more and more drew attention to the actual impotence of Britain in a Europe in which she had been, with only brief interruptions, the dominant if not the dominating force since the morrow of Waterloo.

France Must Profit

If France, despite her victory, was not able and is not yet able to harvest material gain from her enormously valuable acquisitions, she has at the very least laid hands upon the richest mineral region of the Continent and holds it to ransom. Germany may choose to work it in cooperation with France and Belgium and to the profit of both, or she may continue to refuse to operate and sink herself into a ruin hardly paralleled in modern history. But if she works, France will profit in reparations; if she refuses to work, France will gain in security.

Moreover as Germany has resisted, and, having lost the Rhur War, has delayed coming to French terms, France has looked with at least benevolent quiescence upon the rise of Separatists movements in the Rhineland and in the Rhur and with equanimity upon the gradual disintegration of the whole edifice of William I and Bismarck.

Germany has tried to save herself by resistence to France and failed. Britain has tried to save Germany from her fate, as sketched by France, and has equally failed. The process in increasing French prestige and power in Europe, has obscured that of Britain and annihilated that of Germany. Today the whole German problem remains battling in the extreme and desperate beyond description,—but the fact that this year has made clear beyond debate is that Germany cannot live save on terms imposed by France. What is now open to question is whether she can still live under any conditions, this side of a supreme catastrophe and a period of unexampled misery and weakness.

In the past twelve months French policy has moved with great directness and unmistakable clarity. Directed by M. Poincare it has hesitated at no obstacle and it has been retarded by no restraint. Moreover, the supreme fact, it has enlisted the united support of the whole nation and at the close of the second year of his occupation of his post, the French premier wields an authority hardly equaled in the peace history of the Third Republic. In hardly more than a year Lloyd George in England has given way to Bonar Law, Bonar Law to Baldwin, and Baldwin is about to surrender to still another, while in Germany Cuno has turned over to Stresemann and Stresemann to Marx, whose ministry lives only for the minute.

Thus, in the larger sense, the history of 1923 is the history of the decision of France to intervene by force to prevent any evasion of the peace terms by Germany, to take such material sanctions, such of assets of Germany as will insure adequate payment of [illegible] of last considerable proportion accompanied by complete prostration of Germany. It also will mean to the [illegible] made. And it has been the fortune [illegible] fulfilment of a French policy of occupation of [illegible] tion of German territory on both sides of the Rhine which may last [illegible] but can only be short-lived [illegible] ended by complete German surrender of a new war of liberation.

German State Threatened

In the same way the year has seen the very existence of the German state a Reich into question. It is the Germans of Bismarck to whom which existed before 1866 and 1870, states whose incoherence and [illegible] chial jealousies assented. French su-

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Legal Notices

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NOTICE.

THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA,
TO DUMPSEY LAMB, HENRIETTA LAMB, ——

LAMB, the son of Charles Pool Lamb, deceased; each and all the other children of next of kin, if any, of Clara Pool Lamb, deceased, David Morris Stone, Millie Evans and husband, Henry Evans, Joshua Lamb, ——, Hodgins (the surviving husband of Martha Lamb Hodgins), Mary Virginia Owens, William Henry Owens, each and all of the next of kin and distributees of Jordan Pool, of Sabra Grandy, of Mary Adams, of Ellen Pool, of Jerry Banks, or of either or any of them, and each and every person having or claiming any interest in or against the estate of Jordan Pool, deceased; and each and every other defendant in the above entitled cause.

You and each of you will take notice that a Special Proceeding entitled as above has been commenced in the Superior Court of Pasquotank County, North Carolina; that the purpose of said action is to determine who are the next of kin and distributees of the estate of Jordan Pool, and who are entitled to an interest in or against said estate, and to share in the distribution thereof, and to determine the extent of each of said interests.

You will further take notice that you are hereby required to be and appear at the office of the undersigned Clerk Superior Court in the Court House in Elizabeth City, North Carolina on the 21st day of January, 1924, at 10 o'clock A. M. then and there to answer or demur to the petition which has been filed in this cause by the petitioner.

You are further notified to be and appear at said Court and establish your claim, if any, and the extent thereof, to the end that an account and settlement of said estate may be had as provided by law, and further that if you fail to appear and answer within the time prescribed by law, the relief prayed for in said petition will be granted.

This 19th day of December, 1923.

ERNEST L. SAWYER—
Clerk Superior Court.

dec.21,24,jan.7,14.

NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION

Having qualified as Administratrix of the late Elizabeth Ann Bright I hereby give notice to all persons indebted to her estate to come forward and make immediate settlement, and those holding claims against the same to present them for payment within months from the date of this notice, or it will be plead in bar of their recovery.

MARY E. BRIGHT,
Administratrix.

December 12, 1923.
dec.15,17,24,jan.7,14, 21.

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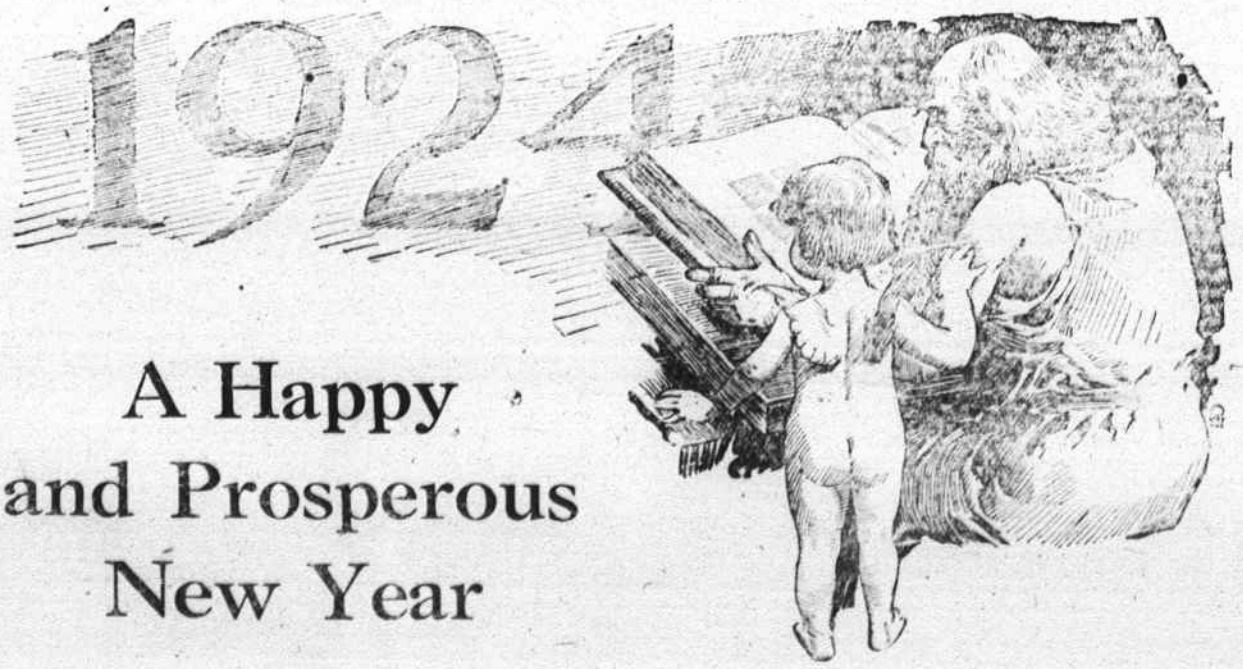

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