

**THE PROMISE OF PEACE**  
(Continued From Page Two)

being equally democratic at bottom, the same popular sentiment doubtless operated to produce a similar result. Masses of British subjects weary of the failures of both parties turned to a new party, a new man, they wanted Europe settled and they felt that the Tory and the Liberal had failed at the job hopelessly.

**The New French Leaders**

Now the French situation is vastly different from the British. France being exposed to land attack can take fewer chances. Any French prime minister will have to give his first concern to French safety—and since the war—his next to the collection from Germany of reparation payments. But while France is always prepared—under national or radical rule to insist upon her claims to reparations by force if necessary, most Frenchmen have come to realize that force will not collect reparations and that, once the claim is established by force, if necessary, the payments will have to be provided by peaceful agreement.

The new men who have come to power in France are not, in the main radical in our Bolshevik sense, nor Socialist in the German sense even, just as the British Labor Party is millions of miles removed from the Russian brand of radicalism. Both parties are essentially nationalistic, as, witness Labor accepting the air program of the Tories and launching a naval program of its own. But both are liberal in the sense of building their policy without intent of aggression. To put it more exactly, in America the majority of British Laborites and French Radicals would be out and out Pacifists and in Europe they travel in this direction as fast as their unfortunate situations permit.

Now obviously between a MacDonald Labor Government in London and a Herriot or Herriot-Painleve-Briand Government in France there can be vastly more co-operation than between a Poincare Ministry and a Lloyd George Ministry or a Poincare Ministry and a MacDonald Ministry for on both sides of the Channel there will be now a clear perception that men of the same general sympathies, beliefs and aspirations, but with different national conditions are, with equal good faith, seeking a solution.

That is the great gain which I see in the French decision. France, the French democracy, has met the British half way, insofar as the choice of men to govern is concerned. MacDonald can talk with Herriot, with Briand or with Painleve as he never could have talked with Poincare. Remember, however, that any one of these three men will have to say to MacDonald much that Poincare would have said, but the difference in personalities is incalculable. A Labor England and a Radical France—Radical in the French sense, not ours—can probably get on together better than any other combination imaginable.

**What of Germany?**

What then of Germany, which has gone in the opposite direction with a resounding bang? In reality nothing much of importance, because whenever Britain and France can agree Germany must accept the terms provided. But there are at least a certain number of Germans as weary of war—of war in peace—as are the majority of Britons and Frenchmen. For them there has been no apparent way out with Poincare in the saddle and France in the Ruhr perhaps immovably. If the Nationalists won a great victory in the recent election they did not gain a majority, moreover they are themselves divided between extremists and moderates.

If Poincare had won the French election the chances are that the moderate parties in Germany, the Center, the Peoples and the Democratic might in despair have joined with the Nationalists in a reactionary government. But the chances are now that they will join with the Socialists in a moderate government. Grant that the German views of Poincare were inexact, even preposterous, the fact remains that these views were held widely and masses of Germans believed Poincare was determined with the backing of the majority of his fellow countrymen to annihilate Germany. Therefore the hopelessness of the situation for these was unmistakable.

Now we have in Europe this situation. Britain has a Labor Government, France will shortly have a Radical-Socialist Government, Germany, despite her recent reaction can have a government made up of Moderates. The fundamental issues have not changed, the basic policies of the three nations remain the same, but the superficial obstacles have been enormously reduced alike because of the change in British and French official personnel and because of the arrival of the Dawes report.

In a sense, then, the French election has pretty largely deprived the German of its worst possibilities. And that German election while it was evil, in its general character, was not an irrevocable step. The new

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Reichstag has still a majority of moderates, it can easily form a government, or even continue the Marx-Strasse Ministry and enter the new negotiations.

To me the defeat of Poincare marks one more and in a sense the longest step yet taken toward European settlement. My readers know I have never shared the British or even the common American view of Poincare. But the fact that he was regarded as an obstacle to settlement, that he had become a symbol of war and not of peace made his removal almost obligatory. His successors are in a far better posture than was he, when he came to power. They are far more likely to modify his manner than abandon his real objectives. General Dawes himself has testified that the occupation of the Ruhr was a necessary step to the appointment of his committee.

Lloyd George believed that France could be forced to abandon her legitimate rights by a process of isolation, his policy was to make a European settlement at the expense of France. This policy wrecked the Entente, brought Poincare to power and led to the fall of Lloyd George. Poincare, on his part, undertook to achieve French ends by an independent policy. He worked to make France strong enough to obtain her rights without any British co-operation, if necessary. But in the end his

countrymen came to the conclusion that while France could not surrender her rights to Britain, she could not realize the irreducible minimum save in the co-operation with her allies of the World War.

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politics will be permitted to interfere with his tenure of office until the opportunity has been grasped or lost. France has followed Britain in the direction of liberalism in the broadest sense, of democracy in the parliamentary sense. Both have rejected the two extremes as represented by Sovietism in Russia and Fascism in Italy. In both countries the war sentiment has given place to a desire for peace, not at any price but at any reasonable price.

Will the double victory have its effect upon Germany? The question of peace or war for Europe for the next generation turns upon this problem. But even here the basis for optimism is reasonably sound. Europe will very shortly now meet in a new conference different in temper from anything since Sir Edward Grey's Conference of London in 1913, called to liquidate the Balkan struggle, the last time the old Europe met in a spirit of compromise.

In all human probability the first of the many conferences which must now take place, culminating in the September session of the League of

Nations, where Germany's admission is sure to be urged and probably realized, will fall in the month which sees the tenth anniversary of the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand at Sarajevo, the occasion of the World War and the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles which marked its official but alas not its actual termination.

And at last, in Britain, in France, all over western Europe, save only in Germany, the promise of the arrival of real peace is unmistakable. At the very least the present moment is the best since the outbreak of the World War itself, the best in the sense that the chances of real adjustment are better than ever before.

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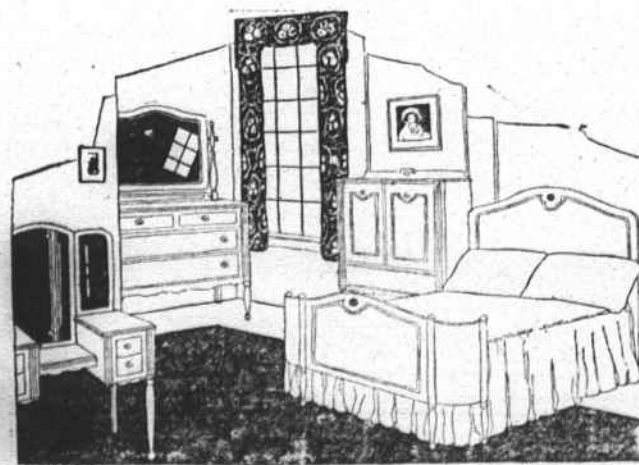
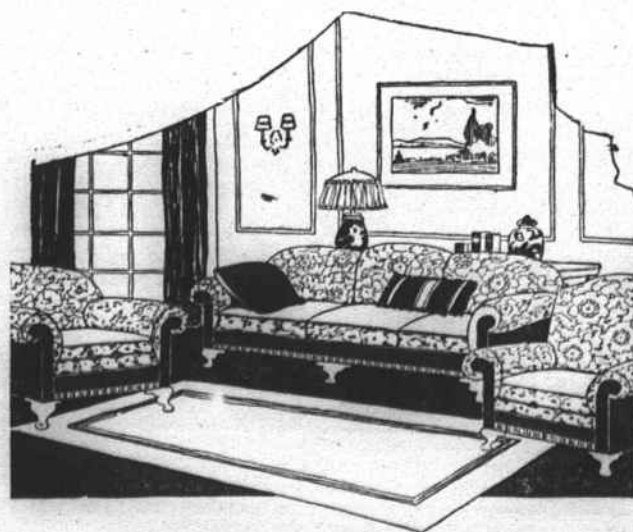
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**J. WALTER HOBBS**

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