

GERMANY'S "TRIUMPH OF DESPAIR"



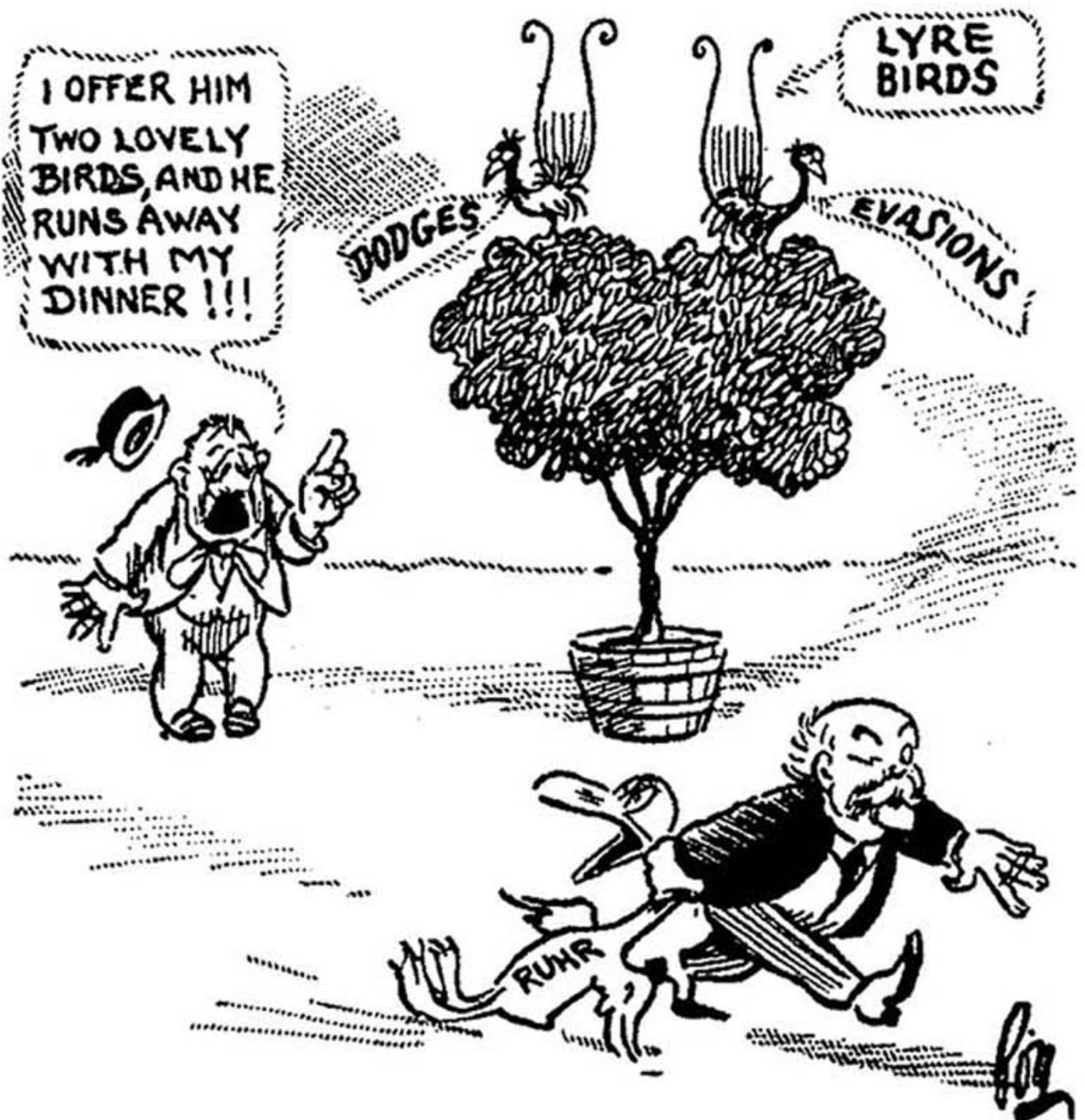
"A MORAL STATE OF WAR."

The advance of French and Belgian troops into the Ruhr valley is considered by the Germans as putting their country in "a moral state of war with France and Belgium," which the Germans will wage with the weapons of "sabotage and inertia."

WE ARE BOUND FOR OBLIVION, and nothing matters any more!" According to Berlin press dispatches this is the chant of the German people, and reflects the nation's reaction to the fastening of France's grip on the Ruhr. At the same time, we read that the "triumph of despair," characteristic of the German mind, shows in their "new determination to go the limit in resisting France," even if such resistance should involve the "smashing of the vast Ruhr industrial machine." The Berlin correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* writes that there are three danger zones on the German horizon, Memel, Bavaria and the Ruhr. The Germans charge French connivance at the Lithuanian irregulars who captured Memel, but as it is at some future date to be a free city under a French commissioner, this informant says "it is difficult to see what interest the French would have in handing it over to Lithuania." The second danger spot, he tells us, is Bavaria, a "hot-bed of German Monarchist reaction" which is in a state of ferment "unparalleled since the Munich Soviet Republic early in 1919." But most perilous of all is the Ruhr, where Germany and France are "entangled in meshes from which no escape is in sight, and the blind struggles of the one, to grasp, and of the officer, to evade, have only entangled both all the more inextricably.

In order that American readers may have their personal impression of the feelings of the German people in this new European crisis, The Literary Digest herewith offers editorial judgments from the German press in Germany. Naturally such comment reflects only Germany's side of the case. But even the French press are curious to discover German reactions to the advance into the Ruhr, as may be judged from the report of a French correspondent at Berlin, which appears at the close of this article. In coming numbers we shall publish comment of the British, the French, the Belgian and the Italian press.

Germany has come back at France very deftly and efficiently, according to some of her industrial leaders, who tell American correspondents at Berlin that the Germans have succeeded in getting off with all the taxes on coal produced in the Ruhr up to the end of January, amounting to millions of marks. The French had announced that they would collect the 40 per cent. tax on all production, which had not been collected in months by the German Government. Now, these correspondents write, the Germans themselves very neatly collected through the Coal Syndicate, which removed to Hamburg out of reach of the French. German business men admit the French will take measures to prevent the continuance of this evasion, but the coal men are said to take great satisfaction in having given the French "considerable trouble in the initial stages of their costly



THE BIRD-CATCHER.

A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

venture." We are told that the Germans are boasting also that thousands of tons of coal which had been piled up near the pit-heads of the Ruhr are now safely in the interior of Germany, and that only small amounts of coal have reached France. Another reported successful reprisal of the Germans was the capture of thirteen of the largest railroad locomotives in the Coblenz district, which had been turned over to the French by the Americans. Yet while there is much cheering about these successful strokes, it appears from some Berlin dispatches that the lack of political unity in Germany, "accompanied by increasingly worse economic conditions, has been rousing both Communist and Nationalist activity, till the country is a veritable Jason's field, sown with dragon's teeth, ready to sprout an army over night." Meanwhile various German editors keep shouting that France's aim is to "annex" the Rhineland, and they say that "the French Cabinet rejected the British proposals because they appeared to give Germany an opportunity of gradual liberation from slavery and . . . in order to pave the way for the French annexation policy." The *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* declares:

"France herself has smashed the dictates of Versailles. But Paris must not think that the German fury is an apparition that belongs to the past so completely as the French imagine, or that it needs guns or bayonets to appear once more on the scene. Any great nation that has been driven to despair has always found the ways and means for its revenge."

The *Frankfurter Zeitung* cries out against France's action as "one of pure violence," which "we must suffer to-day, but we know that sooner or later this violence will be terribly avenged on those who have exercised it and those who have consented to it." This important daily goes on to note with satisfaction the unanimity of the German people in resisting the "invasion" of the Ruhr. It calls attention to the paragraphs in the speech of Chancellor Cuno in which he compared the policy of Premier Poincaré with the policy of Louis XIV. As in the seventeenth century, the King "invoked the vague arrangements of the peace in Westphalia" to spread his domination beyond the boundaries of France, according to Chancellor Cuno, the French Premier to-day tries to justify his imperialist procedure by the Treaty

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CROSSING THE RUHRBICON.

of Versailles. One end, and that the ruin of Germany, was the object of the King and is the object of Mr. Poincaré, according to Mr. Cuno, who charges that the plan is to break Germany up into a number of small states, so that a confederation of the Rhine country may be formed. But the *Frankfurter Zeitung* remarks:

"The situation to-day is not what it was in the time of Louis XIV, and if the French project succeeded in the seventeenth century, that is no ground for believing that it can succeed now. To-day there is no question of conquering fortresses, but of capturing industrial centers which are the bases of Germany's national unity. There is such a unity, and Germany discovered it in her struggles against France. The Constitution of Weimar is the expression of this national unity. Germany is not now, as she was in earlier days, an association of princes directed by a weakling emperor and much inclined to become the instrument of French interests. The feeling of its unity to-day is a profound necessity of the German people. Any one who attacks it, wounds Germany to the quick, and gives it strength to make the gravest of decisions."

It amuses the *Berlin Zeit* not only that the French will not get any reparations coal from Germany, but will not get any coal at all, and it points out that:

"Such is the great importance of the transfer of the Coal Syndicate to Hamburg. This measure has been of great advantage to us, of immeasurably more advantage than armed resistance would have been. The accord concluded between the heads of the French Mission and the owners of the mines concerning coal deliveries against French credits is now annulled by the order of the German Coal Commission. So it happens that the Belgians and the French have accomplished just the opposite effect they hoped to gain by occupation of the Ruhr."

A very unusual German view is that of a German economist, Leopold Schwartz Schild, who writes in the *Zeitung um Acht Uhr Abends* as follows:

"The press is full of statements to the effect that the French advance into the Ruhr works greatly to the prejudice of France from a moral standpoint, and newspapers also inform us that Germany is once again meeting with sympathy in the world. This is a meager consolation, for even tho we observe some favorable sentiment toward Germany, the fact remains that

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Germany is really in great need of many friends. Meanwhile we are proceeding toward an unprecedented economic catastrophe. It is beyond dispute that Germany can not live without the Ruhr. If the products of this region are kept from her, she will be threatened not only in her economic life but also in her civil life. France can erect a blockade between the Germany that is occupied and the Germany that is not occupied.

"On the other hand, we incur an equally grave danger by suppressing the organisms of economic life in the Ruhr. In truth, it is fair to say that the transfer of the Coal Syndicate to Hamburg and all the other measures of passive resistance taken in the Ruhr are actually two-edged weapons. In the final summing up, these resistive acts will cause Germany infinitely greater embarrassment than they can cause France. If we Germans continue to paralyze production in the Ruhr under pretext of meeting the French occupation with sabotage, we shall be in great danger of doing ourselves lasting harm."

With regard to the reiterated assertions and insinuations of German writers that the French have "annexation designs" on the Ruhr Valley, Paris dispatches quote Premier Poincaré as saying that "the French troops will remain in the Ruhr as long as may be necessary to assure the payment of reparations, but not a single day longer." Meanwhile the Berlin correspondent of *The Echo de Paris* advises us that "sabotage and inertia will continue in the Ruhr," and he adds:

"Nevertheless the occupation of the Ruhr will swiftly produce results. A grave economic crisis is inevitable and approaching fast. How will Germany bear itself in this crisis? The economic chaos into which Germany will find itself thrown is not solely the consequence of the occupation of the Ruhr. This crisis has been foreseen for long months as the inescapable sequel of the catastrophic financial policy of the Reich."

THE RUHR. TINY ON THE MAP, PRODUCES 68.9 PER CENT. OF GERMANY'S COAL AND 66 PER CENT. OF GERMANY'S STEEL. HOW THE TINY RUHR REGION IS REALLY TWO-THIRDS OF GERMANY IN TERMS OF COAL AND STEEL.

