

monwealth develops a strong tendency towards consolidation, it could, considering the present distribution of Sea Power, only mean that it was drawing together either to attack the United States or to defend itself against the United States. But if it moves in the direction of disunity and towards the granting to the self-governing dominions of an increasing autonomy even in matters of foreign policy, it must mean that they have confidence in the United States and do not fear the growth of the Sea Power of this country. The American government should encourage the dominions to act independently in matters of foreign policy, not because it will reap any advantage from provoking dissensions in the counsels of the British Empire, but because it can adjust its own interests with less friction to those of a loosely organized British commonwealth than to those of an indivisible Empire. It should particularly encourage Canada to act independently of Downing Street and to send, as the Canadian government has already decided to send, her own diplomatic representatives to Washington. For a semi-independent Canada can serve as an invaluable intermediary and adjuster of difficulties between Washington and London. The Canadian nation is both American and British. It is resolved to remain both American and British. This resolution is honorable to the Canadian people and should be respected and encouraged by the peoples both of the United States and the United Kingdom.

Applied Violence

THE destructive tendencies at work in society can be estimated by the extent to which violence has come to be considered a part of the normal process of civil life. One community after another yields to the temptation—yesterday it was Tulsa, Oklahoma, today it is Barnstable, Massachusetts—and each becomes a centre of dissolution which is threatening the whole social fabric. Where these centres are multiplying rapidly, as in Texas, the effect upon the social order becomes cumulative. In a list of thirty cases of mob action in Texas in the past year it is easy to trace geographically the connection between one outbreak and another, the example of one community working on its neighbors; and the fact that half the items on the list occurred in the past two months shows a dangerous rate of acceleration. When violence becomes recognized, officially or unofficially, as the characteristic method of procedure of such national organizations as the American Legion and the Ku Klux Klan the centres of dis-

solution multiply still more rapidly and the disease ceases to be a local phenomenon. One of the most alarming aspects of the situation is the ease with which public opinion has accustomed itself to violence as a mode of life. A recent observer in Italy noted the indifference of Florence or Rome to the fact that Communists and Fascisti were fighting a battle within their limits, in which perhaps a score of men would die. This disinterestedness can not yet be paralleled in America, but when we contrast the public concern with the massacre at Ludlow in 1913 and the eager efforts at extenuation put forward by those responsible for it, with the indifference of the public to the same situation in West Virginia, we realize that industrial partisan warfare has become old stuff. The Senate Committee investigating West Virginia is a monument of this cynical nonchalance; and it is reported that not an eyelid was batted at the news of the assassination of Sid Hatfield.

It is easy to explain this epidemic of violence as the result of methods employed and advocated during the war by the zealous defenders of the faith that their country can do no wrong. Even before the United States entered the war, it became a matter of patriotism to attack meetings and speakers who were averse to this adventure; and such attacks passed in general unrebuked by police and judicial authorities. Habits both of violence and of espionage were inculcated as measures necessary to win the war, and it is difficult to break them now that the excuse for them has gone. Patriotic violence was easily turned to account in industrial warfare; and it became a natural mode of reprisal to interpret the industrial program of the I. W. W. as aid and comfort to the enemy, whence the riot and bloodshed that surrounded that organization as a cloud. The war has doubtless led also to an intensification of violence between races. The fact of the Negroes' bearing arms has made more acute the hostility on the part of Whites and rendered less patient the endurance of such hostility on the part of the Blacks. But violence in industrial and racial quarrels, deplorable as it is, is an evil recognized, condemned, investigated and guarded against. The violence invoked as an ordinary method of procedure in our political and social life, which is accepted as a matter of course like the ballot box, or the Court of Domestic Relations, is infinitely the more threatening sign of the danger to the foundations of society.

It is from this point of view that the record of violence in Texas during the past few weeks attracts persistent notice. We read in the bulletins of the American Civil Liberties Union that:

"Fifteen masked men took Dr. J. S. Paul from his home at Beaumont on May 8th, drove him into the woods and tarred and feathered him. The mobbists, said to be members of the Ku Klux Klan, charged Dr. Paul with malpractice."

"Ed Enger of Dallas was whipped by a group of masked men on June 16th because of alleged cruelty to his wife."

"A mob of masked men at Dallas on May 24th kidnapped and whipped John T. Moore, out on bond on a charge of enticing a twelve-year old girl to his room."

"The Goose Creek Ku Klux Klan tarred and feathered B. L. Bloodsworth and Olin Jones, 'reputed bad characters,' on June 19th, and deported them from town."

"Mrs. Beulah Johnson, out on bond on a bigamy charge, was taken from the porch of a hotel by unidentified men at Tenaha and tarred and feathered."

This record might be interpreted as the effort of several communities, doubtless directed by the best people, to purge and uplift themselves. It might be excused as a reversion to the methods of the vigilantes, resulting from loss of faith in the efficiency of ordinary legal procedure. It is to be feared that such comments would be merely naive. The organization of the Ku Klux Klan, to which either directly or by imitation such outrages are generally due, shows that violence is rather the end than the means; that the primary impulse is one of restless desire to inflict physical punishment; and only in the second place to find a victim.

The reappearance of the Ku Klux Klan on the American scene in the wake of the war, disheartening as it is with its memories of another period of reconstruction, is far less significant than the emergence of the American Legion. The latter, in spite of the suspicious circumstances surrounding its origin and initial campaign, and the interested character of its leadership, is at present the chief organization of men who fought the war. Unless a great and unexpected spiritual change should come over the country it is likely to remain so, by virtue of the prestige of supporters, its recognition by other national bodies like the N. E. A., and the inertia of its constituents. Its influence on its members, and through them on the youth of the land, is certain to be very great. By its charter it is devoted to sustaining and renewing that idealism which is a commonplace in American social and national character; to promoting American unity and preserving American institutions. Its record during the past two years is appalling. Its members have entered into every phase of division among its fellow-countrymen, political, social, industrial, racial, and everywhere have left behind them a sinister trail of violence, wounds and death. Recently the Willard Straight Post, in view of the wide-spread charges against the Legion and the

proved character of many of them, brought before the Committee of the American Legion of New York County a resolution that

"the American Legion of New York County indignantly repudiates this charge of lawlessness, and standing adamant for law and order and for justice under the law, and believing that men are free to think as they will, to speak as they will, to write as they will provided thereby they do not trespass on the like privileges or do injury to others, wishes to record itself as condemning any activities in the direction of suppressing that rich inheritance from our fathers, the most cherished of all rights guaranteed by the Constitution,—the lawful exercise of freedom of speech, freedom of the press and freedom of public meetings."

Incredible as it may be this resolution was voted down by a majority of two or three to one. A supporter of the resolution analyzes the hostility which resulted in its rejection as

"a combination of the unwillingness of the great majority of delegates to take any action which would seem to imply a recognition of previous lawlessness and more particularly a deep seated belief in the function and divine right of the American Legion to police the political morals of the community including the right to use violence and intimidation where it seemed advisable."

In other words, in the opinion of this observer, the Legion exhibits first that peculiar intellectual cowardice characteristic of the American public which prevents it from facing facts and acknowledging the truth when it is unpleasant, and second that political self-righteousness which sets itself in judgment and in action above the rights of others as defined by law. From the point of view of American democracy this action of the Legion comes very near to being a formal assertion of the Satanic principle: "Evil, be thou my good."

Unemployment

IT is an interesting commentary on the insight and understanding of those responsible for formulating the economic policies of this country that the outstanding economic problem of the past two years has received practically no consideration and has originated no constructive measures either of relief or of inquiry. Only this week Secretary of Labor Davis appeared before the Senate, in response to a Senate Resolution, and reported the unemployment of almost 6,000,000 people in this country; more than three millions and a half in manufacturing industries, 800,000 in transportation, and 250,000 in the mines. The number, moreover, has been steadily increasing and prom-

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