

There are others; there will be more. And it is our task, it is the task of the socialists and the workers to get into the fight against reaction, and to defend their own. No faltering! On with the struggle against Capitalism! F.

THE AUTOCRAT IN THE WHITE HOUSE

In view of President Wilson's reference in his war address before Congress to the menace to the peace and freedom of the world which "lies in the existence of autocratic governments," we think it would be of considerable interest for the people of this country to find out how much or how little democracy there is about their own government. We shall not refer here to the autocratic power of the United States Supreme Court in all matters of the internal government of this country, which makes our government a "Government by Judiciary." We shall limit ourselves for the present to foreign affairs and the Executive branch of our government. The enormous power of our President in our foreign relations, which means in the decision of the question of peace and war, has been frequently commented upon by writers on our system of government. We shall not tire our readers, however, by references to these learned discussions. Instead, we shall reproduce here a few pertinent remarks by our distinguished fellow-citizen and former close associate of President Wilson—Col. George Harvey, editor of the *North American Review*. We do so with particular pleasure, since it is but seldom that a radical has a chance to agree with that noted publicist. Says Mr. Harvey, in the February issue of the *North American Review*:

"There is no need to look abroad to the Kaiser or the Czar or to the sovereigns of the Balkan States for examples of autocracy. We have a very complete specimen in Washington in the person of the President of the United States. When we inveigh against 'secret diplomacy' as one of the causes of the European war, let us remember that no diplomacy is so secret as our own. When we talk of the necessity of placing public opinion in control of foreign policy, let us quietly reflect that nowhere is that necessity more potent than in the United States, because nowhere is opinion less informed as to the problems of external relationships or less interested in them or less capable of influencing their solution. When we denounce a dispensation that puts it into the power of one man or a

single class or group to hurl millions into war, we ought first to open our eyes and ascertain whether that is not precisely the system under which the international business of the United States is managed or mismanaged. . . .

"Our machinery for handling international crises are abysmally defective. And they are defective in exactly that characteristic which ought never to infect a democratic polity such as ours. They work in the dark, out of the public view, and to a great extent independent of popular volition; and they throw upon one man not only a load of responsibility that must often of late have seemed unbearable, but a power of making in secret vast decisions, and of committing the nation without debate to momentous policies, that is good neither for him nor for us and that is altogether subversive of the cardinal principles of democracy. . . .

"Alone among the Governments of the world, our government publishes no collection of its diplomatic correspondence. Every other people can discover by reading Blue Books and White Papers or by cross-examining Ministers on the floor of the national legislature how their affairs are being managed and how questions in which they are interested are progressing. We cannot. Our function is merely to close our eyes, open our mouths, and take whatever the President deigns to send us. . . .

"The power which the President possesses of negotiating with foreign Governments behind the backs of his Cabinet and of Congress, his ability to commit the nation to new courses by a mere ipse dixit—just as Mr. Wilson has pledged the American people to support a world-league for the maintenance of peace 'with every influence and resource at their command'—his fixity in office, the difficulty, almost the impossibility of reaching him as the Foreign Ministers of Europe, even of Russia and Germany, can always be reached, his immunity from effective checks—a President bent on war could easily force Congress to do his bidding—the general feeling that obtains among our people that foreign affairs are no concern of theirs and that the President is paid to look after them, and the almost grotesque incompetence which Congress, and especially the Senate, displays whenever it plunges into international problems—all these are elements in a situation full of possible danger to our Republic and singularly ill-adapted to stand the wear and tear of the next few crucial years. B.

THE NATIONAL CONVENTION AND ITS WAR RESOLUTIONS

The story of the Emergency Convention of the Socialist Party held at St. Louis April 7-14 is told with some detail elsewhere in this issue. History will judge of the correctness of the respective positions of the three factions of which it was composed,