

**PROBLEMS OF
READJUSTMENT
AFTER THE WAR**

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Problems of readjustment after the war by Various

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JOHN E. BENNETT

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PROBLEMS OF READJUST- MENT AFTER THE WAR

I

THE WAR AND DEMOCRACY

ALBERT BUSHNELL HART

“The proof of democracy,” says an American sage, “is, does it democ?” Just now that question comes home to all civilized mankind. Up to the twenty-third of July, 1914, every significant nation in the world from Montenegro to British Columbia had at least the appearance of the admission of the people to a share in their own government. Democracy was considered the ripest flower of the highest civilization. Out of the nine great powers of the world, three—the United States, France, and China—were republics in form; and in each of the other six—Great Britain, Germany, Austro-Hungary,

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Russia, Italy, and Japan—the representatives of the people had established their right to share the government with the personal sovereign.

Today seven of those nine powers are plunged into the heat of the fray; and in every one democracy seems, for the time being, submerged. In not one of those countries are the people or their representatives now legislating for the crisis or keeping the ministerial executives in control by questions and criticisms upon military affairs. Nor does it appear that the people at large or the voters in any country resent this exclusion from a part in the great decisions that are being made. We hear vaguely of bread riots; but the only constitutional crisis that has come about in the eight months of the war has been the change of foreign minister in Austro-Hungary from an Austrian to an Hungarian. In England a few criticisms of the government are made in the public press; most of which are received by the public as disloyal utterances; none appears in Germany except a rare complaint by Socialist members of the Reichstag. There is no public opinion—or rather public opinion compels every one not only to support the war but to support it

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with vehemence. Unhappy subjects of hostile countries are treated all over Europe as though they were escaped convicts.

In the strongly monarchical countries of Russia, Germany and Austro-Hungary the authority was naturally retained by the emperor and his immediate group of councilors and officers. In all three countries the army and navy are closely centralized, and parliaments have never had much to do with them except to vote upon the terms of service and the money credits. It is only about a year and a half since the German Reichstag by a vote of 293 to 54, expressed its discontent at the ill-treatment of the civilians of Zabern by military officers; nevertheless, Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg refused to resign and allowed the officers to be acquitted by court-martial. In France and England the legislative bodies have for many years been accustomed to take a lively part in government while war was going on. Not even in the Boer War of 1899-1900, nor in the serious likelihood of wars involving France in 1905 and 1911, did those bodies abdicate their functions. They have done so now. For when the representatives of the people are silent, the necessary decisions are not postponed, they are simply made by