

THE WORLD PERIL

AMERICA'S INTEREST IN THE WAR

BY
MEMBERS OF THE FACULTY OF
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INTRODUCTION

The Department of History and Politics of Princeton University offers the articles of this volume as an especial contribution to the more accurate understanding of the reasons for the entry of the United States into the European War, and to the more vivid appreciation of all that is involved in the outcome of this conflict. There is an imperative need today that every American citizen should clearly discern the full significance of a Teutonic victory. This volume will greatly aid in illuminating the understanding of any who may still be unable or unwilling to appreciate the bearing of the issues of this war upon their own country and the world. It is well from time to time as occasion offers to refresh our memory and fortify our resolution by a frank rehearsal from a new point of view of the proved facts of German political policy and ambition.

To establish a Germanic world empire, to realize her arrogant pretensions that the Germans are a superior race and destined by divine decree to subdue all peoples to an unquestioning obedience to her autocratic sway, with an insolent insistence that all means are justified

by the sacred end of the German will to rule—broken treaties, the ingenuity of scientific savagery, campaigns of frightfulness, wanton cruelty, mocking the restraints of moral law, the dictates of mercy, the demands of decency and the promptings of chivalry—this is the Teutonic program. Americans should not allow themselves to forget this or to minimize its import.

A nation that has been inhuman in war will be merciless in victory. Within the last few days Count Zu Reventlow has been quoted in the press as saying that the moral law is binding as between Germans, but not as between Germans and other nations. If this is an ethical creed obtaining in war, it will not be set aside by a nation flushed with victory and glutted with the spoils and indemnities of war. Our pacifist friends whose well meaning utterances in this present crisis are nothing more or less than treason should consider the inevitable tendency of their peace propaganda. It means either a direct and immediate surrender to German demands and the consummation of a German victory, or an inconclusive outcome of the present war, affording to Germany the opportunity and the means to reconstruct her war machine and precipitate within the next generation another world conflict and agony.

We dare not pay the price of a premature peace. Rather let us be willing to undergo any sacrifice, to suffer, to endure to the end all the miserable woe and sorrow of a protracted war.

If Germany has been misrepresented and is fighting a fair war in a fair way with the legitimate purpose solely to defend her own land and her own people, then this war should end at once and an equitable compromise be sought and secured. If, however, one is constrained to believe that the success of Germany will prove the scourge of the world, then there is no escape from the grim conclusion that this war must be fought to a finish, whatever may be the accumulated misery for us and our children.

JOHN GRIER HIBBEN.

Princeton, N. J.,
August 27, 1917.

CHAPTER I

AMERICAN RIGHTS IMPERILLED

Conscientious Objectors of the Fourth of July Type¹

HON. HENRY VAN DYKE, D.C.L. (Oxon.)

The Fourth of July is a good day for setting forth the case and maintaining the cause of true Conscientious Objectors, like the men who signed the Declaration of Independence in 1776. This is what I propose to do.

The name "conscientious objector" has suffered much from its modern appropriation by people whose conscience centres in the idea of non-resistance. They think it always wrong to fight, even for the protection of justice and humanity. They object to the use of force even to defend the right against the force which is used to inflict wrong. Persons who have had that particular kind of conscience long enough to make sure that it is not a cloak for cowardice or sedition, should be allowed to obey it. If a man cannot fight for his country, let him work. If he will not work, neither let him eat.

But let him not dare to claim that he is the real or the only "conscientious objector." He

¹ Address at Madison Barracks, July 4, 1917.

belongs to a small and narrow class. There are millions of men who have a larger and more heroic conscience. They object to the tyranny of unrighteousness even more than they object to fighting. And they have not been afraid to risk everything in the defense of justice, liberty, and human rights.

The English men who met at Runnymede in 1215 to force the Magna Carta of English liberties from their base King John were conscientious objectors to a rotten regal autocracy.

William the Silent, who raised the banner of freedom in the Netherlands in the sixteenth century, was a conscientious objector to the brutal tyranny of Philip II of Spain. He wrote in 1568: "We are unable, by reason of our loyal service due to his Majesty, and of our true compassion for the faithful lieges, to look with tranquillity any longer at such murders, robberies, outrages and agony. We take up arms therefore to oppose the violent tyranny of the Spaniards, by the help of the merciful God, who is the enemy of all bloodthirstiness."

Hampden, Pym, and Cromwell were conscientious objectors in the seventeenth century when they resisted the claim of King Charles I to the divine right of a monarch to impose a people's wrong. They fought him and they beat him.

The signers of the American Declaration of Independence were conscientious objectors in 1776, when they drew up their famous protest against the attempt of the German King of England George III, and his fat-witted minis-

ter Lord North, to enslave and oppress the American colonists by military force. Read the history of the American Revolution carefully, and you will see that it was not a Rebellion: it was a Resistance against an illegal assertion of power by an autocrat. It was a repetition of the lessons which Great Britain herself had taught us in her great objection to the Stuart tyranny. It was a prophecy of the causes which have brought us to her side today. The reasons which forced us to fight against George III in 1776 are precisely the same as those which bring us to take part with Great Britain, and with our old and true friend France, in resistance to this last unjust and violent assertion by a German monarchy, that it has a right to rule the world by military might.

Abraham Lincoln was a conscientious objector when he wrote to the men who were trying to destroy the United States in 1861, "In every event, to the extent of my ability, I shall repel force by force".

Woodrow Wilson was a conscientious objector when he sent his great message to the United States Congress on April 2, 1917, declaring that the present, avowed, ruthless "German submarine warfare against commerce is a warfare against mankind". He continued: "I advise that the Congress declare the recent course of the Imperial German Government to be in fact nothing less than war against the Government and people of the United States, that it formally accept the status of belligerent which has thus

been thrust upon it; and that it take immediate steps not only to put the country in a more thorough state of defense, but also to exert all its power and employ all its resources to bring the German Government to terms, and end the war”.

That is a magnificent, measured, sane statement of the position of true conscientious objectors today. It sets forth the aim which they have at heart: “to end the war”. It states the only way by which that end can be achieved, by a victory which shall “bring the German Government to terms”. Let me sum up briefly the nature of our objections to Germany’s war.

I. *We object to the existence of this war.* It is a needless, wasteful, horrible conflict which should never have been begun. The offense of choosing, forcing and beginning it lies on Germany’s head.

By the head of Germany I mean whatever power has actually controlled that country in her recent policy and action.

Some say it is the Kaiser, and many of his own remarks seem to indicate that he himself is under that impression.

Others say that he is little more than an imposing figure-head, and that the real power lies with a group of men who surround him, his counsellors, the great manufacturers, shipping-merchants, heads of corporations and Junker land-owners.

Others say that the ruling class in Germany is the military and naval clique which had built up an enormous instrument of war, fitted with all modern devices for destroying life and property, and which could not be content until they had a chance to use their new machine. That sounds childish, but it is none the less likely to be true.

However that may be, the power, or the combination of powers in Germany and Austria, which sent the armies into the field and keeps them there, is the criminal guilty of the existence of the bloody and unnecessary world war of the twentieth century.

Understand I do not now profess to speak of the causes, of the conflicting national interests, which lie behind this great conflict. They reach back to the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453, and perhaps even farther. It is not to be supposed that in those multitudinous international disputes, differences and strifes, the right was all on the side of one nation, or of any one group of nations. Indeed the groups have formed and reformed themselves so frequently, and with so many changes, that it is almost impossible to trace the heredity of great alliances today.

But our point is this: Whatever may have been the condition of the international questions of Europe and of the so-called balance of power in 1914, there was absolutely no reason and no justification for choosing and forcing war as a method of attempting to settle those difficulties.

Take the Austro-Servian quarrel, which was made the nominal root and origin of all the evil that has been brought upon us. An Austrian Archduke and his wife were assassinated on June 28, 1914, on a visit to the capital of the province of Bosnia. The assassins were Austrian subjects, of doubtful character. The Austrian Government despatched an ultimatum on July 23 accusing the Servian Government of complicity in this crime, and demanding by way of punishment conditions which would practically destroy the independence of Servia as a nation. Forty-eight hours were given as the period in which this ultimatum must be absolutely accepted in all its terms. The Servian Government replied by practically accepting all of the terms but one, and by stating that it did not understand that term, and that it would be willing to refer the matter for peaceable solution to the decision of the International Court at The Hague, or to the decision of the Great Powers who signed the Declaration of 1909. Now it is impossible to imagine either that Germany did not know the terms of the Austrian ultimatum before it was sent to Servia, or that she was ignorant of the tenor of Servia's submissive and peaceful answer, or that she was unaware of the grave danger which would arise on the side of Russia if the independence of the Servian nation should be overridden by Austria.

During this time the British Government made earnest efforts to avert the storm of war which Germany determined to let loose. It was

proposed by the British Foreign Minister that the French, Italian and German Ambassadors should meet him in conference immediately, to discover an issue which would preserve peace. He also suggested that these four Powers,—two from the Triple Alliance and two from the Entente, Germany and Italy, and Great Britain and France,—should mediate between Austria, Servia and Russia either at Vienna or at St. Petersburg. France and Italy on July 27 accepted Great Britain's proposal for this conference. On the same day the German Secretary of State refused it. Direct conversations were begun between Vienna and St. Petersburg. That afternoon the Kaiser, who had been yachting at Kiel, returned to Potsdam!

On the next day, July 28, Austria declared war on Servia, and on the following day Russia began to mobilize her armies in the districts bordering upon Servia and Austria. On this same day the late Czar of Russia telegraphed to the Emperor William as follows: "Thanks for your telegram, which is conciliatory and friendly, whereas the official message presented today by your Ambassador to my Minister was conveyed in a very different tone. I beg you to explain this divergency. It would be right to give over the Austro-Servian problem to The Hague Tribunal. I trust in your wisdom and friendship". On July 30 the Austrians began to bombard Belgrade. On the 31st, in answer to a question from Great Britain, France promised to respect the neutrality of Belgium;—Ger-

many refused to answer the question, and presented an ultimatum to Russia and to France. On August 1 Germany declared war on Russia. On August 2 she violated the neutrality of Luxemburg, entered the territory of France, and presented an ultimatum to Belgium demanding that she should betray her own neutrality. On August 3 Germany declared war on France. On August 4 Germany invaded Belgium, and Great Britain presented an ultimatum to Germany; on the 5th the British Ambassador left Berlin, and on the 6th the Prime Minister announced a state of war.

There we have in outline the whole shameful story of Germany's betrayal of the peace of Europe. She refused every proposition of arbitration. She declined to have anything to do with a conference of the four Powers, in which a peaceful solution of the question between Austria and Servia might have been obtained. She played fast and loose with her own promises, and made disgraceful propositions to Great Britain to betray her obligations to France, and to Belgium to allow herself to be shamefully used in an attack upon the flank of France. She drew the bloody sword apparently without hesitation and without remorse. She professed to be forced into a war of self-defence; *but she has never to this day been willing to state what it was that she was defending, or what was the cause for which she was determined to fight, but which she was not willing to submit to an impartial court of arbitration, or even to a con-*

ference of her sister nations. She wanted war, and she got it!

Doubtless she had no dream of the full flood of blood and horror and grief which she was letting loose upon Europe. Doubtless she thought the war would be a short and comparatively easy one. But even if in her pride she thought that, it was no excuse. If the war had only lasted three months, it would still have been a terrible crime. Now that it has lasted nearly three years it has become a gigantic sin against humanity, of which Germany must bear the guilt. We conscientious objectors make our first objection to the very existence of this war, and we propose to help our allies in pursuing the only way which now remains to end it, namely, to bring the German Government "to terms".

II. *We object also in the name of conscience to the manner in which Germany has conducted this war.* It has been an astounding exhibition not only of disregard for solemn treaties, but also of contempt for the accepted rules of international law and the plain instincts of humanity. Begin where you like in the record. You will find that everywhere Germany has led the way. I do not say that she has been altogether alone in practices which are abhorrent, and from which we hoped that the common principles of civilization had delivered every beligerent nation. But I do say, and I say it

without hesitation, after careful study, that in every case Germany has been the first to violate the rule of law and the instinct of humanity. Take the unannounced dropping of aerial bombs on the sleeping city of Antwerp on August 24, 1914. It is true that Antwerp was a fortified city. But that fact did not cancel the rule of international law, that the bombardment of even a fortified city must be announced, in order that the lives of non-combatants may be spared. This shocking Zeppelin raid, however, which, from the course taken by the airship, was evidently carefully designed to destroy the palace in which the King and Queen of Belgium were sleeping with their children, and the hotels in which the members of the Belgian Cabinet were lodged, as a matter of fact succeeded only in destroying some sixty peaceful houses and injuring hundreds of others, and in killing by way of playful experiment scores of helpless women and children. It was the keynote of the horrors which were committed by the Germans after that in Belgium and elsewhere. Louvain and Dinant were burned, and hundreds of their people were massacred. Scores of old cities in Flanders and northern France were ruined without any military excuse. The cathedral of Rheims has been slowly and systematically reduced to a ghastly ruin, for no reason other than the pure lust of destruction. The abominable use of poison gas in warfare, with all the cruelty that it involves, was begun by the Germans in the trenches before Ypres on April 22,

1915. Summer resorts, peaceful villages and coast towns of England, whether fortified or not, were raided from the air. The laboring populations of invaded Belgium and northern France were deported with circumstances of incredible brutality and taken to Germany, where they were made to work at tasks which were unquestionably hostile to their own countries. And the German submarines began their career of destruction against peaceful ships of all nations, including the nations with whom they were in friendship, as well as those with whom they were at war.

Try to understand the submarine. Germany claimed that it was such a wonderful, delicate and scientific instrument of destruction, that the old-accepted rule of international law, which obliged a naval commander before sinking a merchant ship to give warning and to make provision for the safety of the passengers and the crew, could not any longer be regarded as binding. The exquisite and triumphant submarine, fragile as it was, could not afford to take any such humane precautions. It must be allowed to sink any vessel that it chose to sink, and leave the people on board of it, men, women and children, to perish in the waves. This argument, if once admitted, would justify any assassin in killing anybody, provided the instrument with which he committed his crime was sufficiently delicate to be in danger of being broken in case of a conflict.

The German idea of *Kultur* in war has culmi-

nated in the practice of torpedoing hospital ships with wounded men and Red Cross nurses on board, many of whom are necessarily lost. This is certainly the extreme limit of scientific barbarism. Taken in connection with the long list of preceding cruelties and atrocities it fully justifies the conscientious objectors in saying that they object with amazement and horror to Germany's conduct of this war, and that they propose, with the help of God, to put an end to it by whatever means are needful and possible.

III. *In the third place we conscientious objectors in America object to the way in which the German Government has forced this war upon our peace-loving country.* The record is a long list of shameless injuries and provocations to the United States, borne with an extreme patience and forbearance,—yea, to the utmost limit of more than seventy times seven.

While we were still at peace with the Germanic Powers they established a base system of espionage and an impudent propaganda in our country. These enjoyed the aid and comfort of diplomatic representatives, whose very office bound them to honorable conduct. We sent the Austrian Ambassador home for promoting sedition and privy conspiracy here. The German Embassy continued his shameless work. Officials of that Embassy less clever than their chief, Count Bernstorff, were caught black-handed and sent home. Still German agents

conspired against our neutrality and honor. They used our land to plot outrages in Canada. They set flame to our factories and our wharves. They made the German ships to which we had given asylum in our harbors an assassins' cave, for the manufacture of bombs to be hidden in our own ships and in those of friendly nations. Filled with the madness of destruction, they cared not whom they maimed or slew. At last the German Government sent a secret message to Mexico, proposing an alliance in case of war, offering to give her two or three of our states as a reward, and even urging her to persuade Japan into that unholy league. Such is the record of the German Government and its agents on land,—a record of contempt, injustice and treachery toward our country.

Now turn to the record on the sea. The story of the attack of the German submarines upon American interests, rights and lives, is one of the most shocking pages of human history. The *Lusitania* was torpedoed without warning on May 7, 1915. There were 114 American men, women and children on board who were thus murdered,—drowned without an effort of the submarine to help them,—“Butchered to make a German holiday”. The holiday was celebrated; and I have one of the infamous medals which were struck in Germany to commemorate it.

Within the next three months three indignant notes of protest and warning against this outrage of law and humanity were sent to Germany. Her answer was to sink the *Arabic*, on

August 19, and murder three more Americans. After this the correspondence dragged along until the attack on the Sussex, March, 1916. Then a practical ultimatum was sent by the President, warning Germany that diplomatic relations would be broken off, unless she abandoned her illegal and inhuman submarine policy. She promised to abandon it. On January 31, 1917, she withdrew that promise and announced that she would carry on an unrestricted submarine war, sinking merchant and passenger ships at sight. The President kept his word, and broke off relations. Promptly thereafter the Germans torpedoed eight American merchant vessels in succession, and murdered forty more Americans.

The die was cast. Our country could no longer restrain her conscientious objections to the existence, the conduct and the animus of this war against freedom, justice and democracy. Germany compelled us either to take up arms to end it, or to submit to its threat against the world's liberties and our own life.

We are in the war now,—in it with our conscience and our honor. Let us make ourselves count in it for all we are worth,—heart and head and hand, purse and property and prowess. We pledge our best aid to our brave Allies in order to get the war over as soon as possible. We will unite every counsel, every will, every effort to serve the good cause. We are resolved not to cease until the menace of an all-powerful, ruthless, military autocracy shall perish from the face of the earth.

their relations to their neighbors, it would be excessively difficult for them to enjoy absolute independence. But the guarantee of the fullest degree of autonomy in affairs of a domestic, internal character would be the most essential right of democratic free peoples. They may not properly claim—any more than individuals—absolute freedom of action in their external relations. For the sake of compensating advantages in protection and general welfare, they may well be content to sacrifice a certain amount of freedom. Any other pretensions might lead to anarchy in international affairs as they would within the state.

A further principle which would seem to demand increasing recognition is that of international freedom of intercourse. The nations of the world are growing more and more dependent on each other, not alone for physical necessities, but for intellectual, artistic and moral satisfaction as well. The age of Chinese isolation is past. But so also should it be with economic warfare. Tariff frontiers and the exclusive exploitation of colonial markets do not conduce to world peace.

It is true, unfortunately, that state aid to industries in various guises, or low standards of living, may enable the manufacturers of a given country to flood foreign markets with cheaper goods. This in turn naturally compels other nations to raise protective dykes. This leads inevitably to friction, distrust, hatred and war itself. The end of economic warfare is disaster.