

THE GREAT MADNESS

A Victory for the American Plutocracy

By SCOTT NEARING

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A Victory for the American Plutocracy

By

SCOTT NEARING

Author of "Income," "Wages in the United States,"
"Anthracite," "Poverty and Riches," etc.

"Paradise is under the shadow of swords."

—Mahomet.

"I know what war means. I have been with the armies of all the belligerents except one, and I have seen men die, and go mad, and lie in hospitals suffering hell; but there is a worse thing than that. War means ugly mob-madness, crucifying the truth-tellers, choking the artists, side-tracking reforms, revolutions and the working of social forces."

—John Reed in the *Masses*, April, 1917.

"Whose war is this? Not mine. I know that hundreds of thousands of American workingmen employed by our great financial 'patriots' are not paid a living wage. I have seen poor men sent to jail for long terms without trial, and even without any charge. Peaceful strikers, and their wives and children, have been shot to death, burned to death, by private detectives and militiamen. The rich has steadily become richer, and the cost of living higher, and the workers proportionally poorer. These toilers don't want war—not even civil war. But the speculators, the employers, the plutocracy—they want it, just as they did in Germany and in England; and with lies and sophistries they will whip up our blood until we are savage—and then we'll fight and die for them."

—John Reed in the *Masses*, April, 1917.

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THE FIVE SOULS

I was a peasant of the Polish plain,
I left my plough because the message ran—
Russia in danger, needed every man,
To save her from the Teuton—and was slain.
I gave my life for freedom, this I know,
For those who bade me fight had told me so.

I was a Tyrolese, a mountaineer,
I gladly left my mountain home to fight
Against the brutal, treacherous Muscovite—
And died in Poland on a Cossack spear.
I gave my life for freedom, this I know,
For those who bade me fight had told me so.

I worked in Lyons at my weaver's loom,
When suddenly the Prussian despot hurled
His felon blow at France, and at the world;
Then I went forth to Belgium—and my doom.
I gave my life for freedom, this I know,
For those who bade me fight had told me so.

I owned a vineyard by the wooded Main,
Until the Fatherland, begirt by foes,
Lusting her downfall, called me, and I rose
Swift to the call—and died in fair Lorraine.
I gave my life for freedom, this I know,
For those who bade me fight had told me so.

I labored in a shipyard by the Clyde;
There came a sudden word of war's declared,
Of Belgium peaceful, helpless, unprepared,
Asking our aid, I joined the ranks—and died.
I gave my life for freedom, this I know,
For those who bade me fight had told me so.

The Nation (London, England).

W. N. EWER.

1. "GIVE THE POOR TRUSTS A CHANCE"

The entrance of the United States into the world war on April 6, 1917, was the greatest victory that the American plutocracy has won over the American democracy since the declaration of war with Spain in 1898. The American plutocracy urged the war; shouted for it; demanded it; insisted upon it, and finally got it.

The plutocracy welcomed the war—not because it was a war, but because it meant a chance to get a stronger grip on the United States. The two per cent of the people (one person in each fifty) who own sixty per cent of the wealth of the United States are no different from the other people of the country,—they are no more selfish, greedy or ferocious. They realize that war is barbarous, and they would avoid it if they possibly could. They also believe that there are some things worse than war,—the confiscation of special privileges; the abolition of unearned income; the overthrow of the economic parasitism; the establishment of industrial democracy. The plutocrats would welcome a war that promised salvation from any such calamities; they would also welcome a war that promised greater foreign markets, the destruction of foreign competition, more security for property rights and a longer lease on life for plutocratic despotism.

The plutocrats, or wealth lords, are not savages, ogres or devils. They are men and women whose economic and social position makes them feel the "cohesion of wealth." Engaged in a common enterprise—the maintenance of a social system that enables them to live upon the labor of the masses—they will do anything and everything that will safeguard and protect that system.

The plutocrats were for the war from the beginning. They urged preparedness; they demanded national defense;

they cried aloud for reprisals upon Germany because the whole thing "looked good" to them. Why? Because it gave them a chance to deliver a knock-out blow to the American democracy.

Big business was in public disfavor. Advertisements, "boiler-plate," news stories, press agents and blatant philanthropies had little effect. The people would not forget the "public be damned" days of the business buccaneers. They had learned about the rebates, the unfair rates, the debauchery of public officials and the criminal practices by which many of the most successful of the big business men had climbed into power. The people were "wise" to big business, and they were getting wiser every day.

The immense success of the parcels post sounded an ominous warning to special privilege. There was general talk that the telephone and telegraph industry would be nationalized next, and that the railroads would follow suit at an early date. If this socializing of industry was once begun, where was it to end?

The public had been educated, through many years, by progressive and radical political leaders, newspaper men, and social workers. There was the labor movement in its various phases—unions, socialism, I. W. W. The people were learning the lesson rapidly. Laws were passed; commissions were appointed; regulations were imposed. Most of the laws were violated; most of the commissions were captured by the plutocrats and most of the regulations were evaded. Still public opposition rose stubbornly and surely.

The plutocracy wanted a free hand. Since the Spanish War the United States had been a lending nation. The wealth of the country in 1900 was 87 billions; in 1912, 187 billions; in 1917, 250 billions. There were 120 persons, who admitted, in 1916, that they had incomes of over a million dollars a year. The wealth of the country was vast—enough to feed, clothe, house and educate every boy and girl; enough to give all of the necessities and most of the simple comforts of life to every family. The plutocrats were not

interested in these matters, however. They wanted security for investments at home and abroad.

Things at home were in bad shape and promising to get worse. Millions of people were sore on the system which fed the owner and starved the worker; millions of casual laborers—men and women—wandered from job to job; from city to city, discouraged, homeless, indifferent. The revolutionary fury that was passing through the country broke out menacingly in Colorado, West Virginia, Lawrence, Paterson, Bayonne and New York. People no longer asked, "Will there be a revolution?" but, "When will the revolution come?"

The plutocrats had lost public confidence. They realized that if they were to hold their position public confidence must be regained.

The control by the vested interests of natural resources, banks, railroads, mines, factories, political parties, public offices, courts and court decisions, the school system, the press, the pulpit, the movie business, the magazines—all of this power amounted to nothing in a community that believed itself a democracy, unless public opinion was behind it.

How could the plutocracy—the discredited, villified plutocracy—get public opinion? There was only one way—it must line up with some cause that would command public confidence. The cause that it chose was the "defense of the United States."

2. THE "DEFENSE OF THE UNITED STATES"

The plutocracy, with a united front, "went in" for the "defense of the United States." Instead of opposing and antagonizing the people, before picking their pockets, the business interests attacked them on the side of their greatest weakness—playing upon the primitive emotions of fear and

hate. With the immense power of the public press at their disposal; possessing unlimited means; united on a common policy, they spread terror over the land.

The campaign was intense and dramatic. Japanese invasions, Mexican inroads, and a world conquest by Germany were featured in the daily press, in the magazines, on the movie screens and in public addresses. Depredations, murder and rapine were to be the lot of the American people unless they built battleships and organized armies.

The campaign to arouse the American people against the Mexicans was so raw that President Wilson felt called upon to make a public statement (March 26, 1916), in which he charged that "there are persons all along the border who are actively engaged in originating and giving as wide currency as they can to rumors of the most sensational and disturbing sort which are wholly unjustified by the facts. The object of this traffic in falsehood is obvious. It is to create intolerable friction between the government of the United States and the de facto government of Mexico for the purpose of bringing about intervention in the interests of certain American owners of Mexican properties."

Still the campaign was continued and when the unwillingness of the Mexicans to fight made the manufacture of jingoistic propaganda impossible in that quarter, the advocates of "national defense" turned to Germany as offering the greatest opportunities.

The preparedness campaign was a marvel of efficient business organization. Its promoters made use of every device known to the advertising profession. The best brains were employed and the country was literally blanketed with preparedness propaganda.

Allan L. Benson began an article in "Pearson's" (April, 1916) headed "The Indecent Preparedness Campaign," with these words, "The process of outraging public decency and calling it a campaign for preparedness goes merrily on in these United States. Perhaps never before were more lies

told, more truths suppressed, more insincerity shown or more politics played." This was one of a series of brilliant, thoughtful stories, in which Benson took the words of the preparedness crowd from their own mouths and showed the reasons that lay behind their activities.

Officers of the army and navy were frank in insisting that the defense of the United States was adequately provided for. General Miles¹ said: "Having had much to do with the placing and construction of our fortifications and inspecting every one along the Atlantic, Pacific and Gulf Coasts, as well as having had an opportunity to see all the great armies of the world and many of their coast fortifications, including the Dardanelles, I am prepared to say that our coasts are as well defended as the coast of any country with the same class of guns, and heavy projectiles, and I have no sympathy with the misrepresentations that have been made in the attempt to mislead the public."

Still the preparedness campaign continued with redoubled vigor. Congressman Clyde H. Tavenner in his speech, "The Navy League Unmasked," showed why. He gave facts like those appearing in George R. Kirkpatrick's book, "War, What For"; and in F. C. Howe's "Why War," showing that in the words of an English authority "Patriotism at from 10 to 15 per cent is a temptation for the best citizens." Tavenner stated that four firms "constituting the war trust have received army and navy contracts aggregating 175 million dollars." He contended that "army and navy officials have generously paid the war trust from 20 to 60 per cent more than the same supplies could have been manufactured for in government arsenals." He showed that the present "Chief of Ordnance was formerly in partnership with the Bethlehem Company, one of the war trust firms," and that the "powder trust was represented in Washington by an ex-army official and an ex-member of Congress." He then showed the connection that existed between the pre-

¹ Congressional Record, February 3, 1916, page 2265.

paredness campaign and those who were making profits out of the war business, the nickel business, the copper business, and the steel business, interlocked through interlocking directorates; then he established the connection between the Navy League and the firm of J. P. Morgan & Company, 23 Wall Street, New York. Regarding this connection, Congressman Tavenner says: "The Navy League upon close examination would appear to be little more than a branch office of the house of J. P. Morgan & Company, and a general sales promotion bureau for the various armor and munition makers and the steel, nickel, copper and zinc interests. At least, they are all represented among the directors, officers, founders or life members of or contributors to the Navy League. Especially are all firms of big business represented, and big business invariably heads in at 23 Wall Street, New York."¹

Tavenner concludes: "It is not a crime but a fact that the munition patriots founded the Navy League. * * * The armor plate makers are the most patriotic patriots on earth." "There are but three firms in the United States who manufacture armor plate—Midvale, Bethlehem and Carnegie companies—each of them is represented in the list of 19 men who, according to the official journal of the Navy League, were founders of the organization. * * * Is it not a rather peculiar coincidence that among these 19 directors who stepped forth from all the millions of the American citizens to save the Republic by advocating larger appropriations for battleships every armor making concern in the United States should be represented?"

Congressman Tavenner's recital of facts differs little from that which is abroad in every other great nation of the western world that has been the victim of the kind of preparedness agitation that swept over the United States during the three years preceding the war. "Self-defense" was the theme.

¹ "The Navy League Unmasked" speech of December 15, 1915, page 13.

"Defenseless America" the refrain. "Preparedness" was an argument in itself and every channel of publicity in the United States devoted a major share of attention to this argument.

Aggressive Germany was the danger mark. It was against her infamous desire to impose Kultur upon the world that America was urged to prepare herself. It was for this purpose that the President signed a bill during the summer of 1916 appropriating 662 million dollars for the army and navy, a sum larger than had ever before been appropriated for war purposes by any nation in times of peace. Well might LaFollette exclaim, in his speech (July 19-20, 1916) opposing this appropriation,—"I object, Mr. President, to a game, a plan, a conspiracy to force upon this country a big army and a big navy, to use the Treasury of the country, and if need be the lives of its people, to make good the foreign speculation of a few unscrupulous masters of finance."

The preparedness movement came from the business interests. It was fostered and financed by the plutocracy. It was their first successful effort at winning public confidence, and so well was it managed that millions of Americans fell into line, fired by the love of the flag and the world-old devotion to family and fireside; millions more trembled with the fear of the frightful war that was coming, and other millions were gripped by the hate and the war lust that inspire war madness.

3. THE "PATRIOTS"

From preparedness to patriotism was a short step. The preparedness advocates had used the flag freely. They had played national airs, evoked the spirit of the founders of American democracy and worked upon the emotions of the people until it was generally understood that those who favored preparedness were patriots.

Patriotism ran high. Enthusiasm for the flag increased. Patriotic committees were organized, but when the names of the patriots appeared in the newspapers they were distinguished by one outstanding fact,—the vast majority of them were the successful business and professional men who were the center and forefront of the patriotic movement just as they had been the center and forefront of the preparedness movement.

The price of flags rose rapidly—the flag manufacturers took this opportunity to get their share of the good things that were “going round”—nevertheless, the workers by the hundreds of thousands “contributed” to provide flags for the establishments in which they were employed. Men were discharged when they refused to make such “contributions.”

The business interests were in clover. After years of unpopularity, after being forced to endure investigation, criticism, and antagonistic legislation, after being condemned by even the conservative element in public life as a menace to American progress and well-being, the business interests suddenly found themselves in a movement that was carrying the people, and they worked it for all it was worth.

“Patriotism” was the refrain of every speech and every article—a patriotism of their own particular brand.

The plutocratic brand of patriotism won the endorsement of the press, the pulpit, the college, and every other important channel of public information in the United States. The “educated,” “cultured,” “refined,” “high-principled” editors, ministers, professors and lawyers accepted it and proclaimed it as though it were their own. Turning their backs upon principle, throwing morals and ideals to the winds, they tumbled over one another in a wild scramble to be the first to join the chorus of plutocratic patriotism.

Randolph Bourne, in a brilliant article (*Seven Arts*, July, 1917) reminds his readers of “the virtuous horror and stupefaction of our college professors when they read the

manifesto of their ninety-three German colleagues in defense of the war. To the American academic mind of 1914 defense of war was inconceivable. From Bernhardt it recoiled as from a blasphemy, little dreaming that two years later would find it creating its own cleanly reasons for imposing military service on the country and for talking of the rough rude currents of health and regeneration that war would send through the American body politic. They would have thought anyone mad who talked of shipping American men by the hundreds of thousands—conscripts—to die on the fields of France. * * * The war sentiments, begun so gradually but so perseveringly by the preparedness advocates who came from the ranks of big business, caught hold of one after another of the intellectual groups. * * * It must never be forgotten that in every community it was the least liberal and least democratic elements among whom the preparedness and later the war element were found. The farmers were apathetic, the small business men and working men are still apathetic toward the war. The election was a vote of confidence in a President who would keep the faith of neutrality. The intellectuals, in other words, have identified themselves with the least democratic forces in American life."

The American plutocracy was magnified, deified, and consecrated to the task of making the world safe for democracy. The brigands had turned saints and were conducting a campaign to raise \$100,000,000 for the Red Cross.¹ The malefactors of great wealth, the predatory business forces, the special privileged few who had milked the American people for generations became the prophets and the crusaders, the keepers of the ark of the covenant of American democracy.

¹ This campaign was directed by H. P. Davison, one of the leading members of the firm of J. P. Morgan & Co.

4. ARMED NEUTRALITY

Throughout the war, the United States had been referred to as the "great neutral." At the very beginning of the contest President Wilson had urged the people to be neutral in thought as well as in act. Meanwhile¹ the British fleet blockaded Germany, closed the North Sea, sowed it with mines, and refused to permit American manufacturers to sell goods to the Central Powers. This constituted a brazen violation of international law. By accepting this blockade the United States became the armorer and the provisioner of the Allied countries. Whatever the Allies wanted was manufactured by the United States and shipped to them, contraband and non-contraband alike. The statement was repeatedly made that we were willing to sell to the Central Powers on the same terms, but the fact that the Central Powers could not possibly buy from us rendered any talk of neutrality the thinnest kind of a sham.

England confiscated cargoes in violation of international law. Her mines sunk American ships and destroyed American lives.² Being mistress of the sea she held up mails, despite American protests. The German submarines sank American boats also in violation of international law. The protests against England's depredations were feeble, those against Germany were uproarious. American sentiment was being shaped deliberately in favor of the Allies from whom American bankers, manufacturers and traders were making a billion dollars a year of war profits. Driven by this economic pressure, the country ceased to talk of neutrality, and became frankly pro-Ally, in utterances as well as in business transactions. When Germany announced a blockade of England by her submarines as complete as the blockade which England has established over Germany and

¹ For an excellent summary write to Senator LaFollette for a copy of his speech in the Senate, April 4, 1917.

² On this point get Congressman Lundeen's speech, April 5, 1917.

warned American shipping away from the waters surrounding the British Isles in the same way that England has warned American shipping away from the waters surrounding Germany, the American business interests put up a bitter cry of protest.

The situation was critical. American business stood to lose billions.

The President hurried to the rescue with his preposterous phrase "armed neutrality," and asked Congress for permission to place guns and gunners on American merchantmen. While the President asked for this authority as a peace measure, it was pretty clear that armed neutrality would mean war the first time that an armed merchantman met a submarine.

The President's request for authority to arm American merchant vessels was made in an address to Congress, February 26, 1917, in which he said,—“I am not now proposing or contemplating war or any steps that need lead to it. * * * I request that you authorize me to supply our merchant ships with defensive arms, should that become necessary, and with the means of using them.”

A bill authorizing the President to arm merchant vessels was introduced. The newspapers of the country backed it eagerly. The administration pushed it vigorously, but the bill went down to defeat because of a filibuster by a little group of senators of whom LaFollette was the leading figure.

Senator LaFollette, who made a thorough study of the question, opposed the bill on the ground that it must lead inevitably to war. “I became convinced,” he said, “that arming our merchant ships was wholly futile and its only purpose and effect would be to lure our merchantmen to danger, and probably result in the destruction of the vessels and in the loss of the lives of those on board.”¹

¹ Speech in the Senate, April 4, 1917, page 4.

* * * "This bill was not only unconstitutional; it was, in my judgment, foolish and inadequate. There was no evidence before Congress that would warrant the conclusion that the arming of these ships would afford protection:

"The available evidence points to the futility of such armament. * * * The merchant ships of the Allies are armed. Their great loss of tonnage is conclusive evidence that guns planted on merchant ships are ineffectual in warding off submarine attack.¹

But why the eagerness to arm merchant vessels? Whence the agitation? Who was it that wanted American ships to carry guns? The ship owners, of course, and the British ship owners at that.

Senator LaFollette takes up that issue in his illuminating way. He says,² "The demand came chiefly from the American Line, whose tonnage is less than five per cent of the total tonnage of the United States engaged in foreign trade. The American Line is a subsidiary of the International Mercantile Marine Company, which in December, 1916, had 102 vessels flying the British flag, two flying the Belgian flag and eight flying the United States flag. The control of the International Mercantile Marine Company, prior to the war, was in England. Whether the stock control is now English, or Morgan, is immaterial. J. P. Morgan is the fiscal head in the United States to-day, and he is the official financial agent of Great Britain in all her dealing with the people of this country." * * * "When one of the American Line ships, armed with United States guns, sails out to sea the orders to fire will be given by Mr. Franklin's master of the ship, not by the United States gunner. The English owners give orders to Franklin. The English owners take their orders from the British Admiralty. Hence, we, professing to be a neutral nation, are placing American guns and American gunners practically under the orders of the British Admiralty. * * *

¹ "America's War Madness," *Pearson's*, May, 1917, pages 453-4.

² *Ibid.*

"The armed ship bill commanded overwhelming support, not only of the party in power, whipped into line to railroad through the Senate an Administration measure, but also of all those sinister influences which have been clamoring for war—the munition makers, the gamblers in war stocks and war contracts and the financial interests who have loaned vast sums to one set of belligerents.

"Against these plotters, against the enemies of our democracy I take my stand with an abiding faith in the justice, the ultimate understanding and the judgment of the American people."

These brave words could not stay the tide of plutocratic patriotism that was sweeping the country into war. They did, however, voice the feelings of tens of millions of Americans, who, lacking any means of self-expression, were nevertheless convinced that "armed neutrality," like many another diplomatic phrase, was a convenient peg on which to hang a fresh installment of the war-madness propaganda.

5. THE "TRAITORS"

The armed ship bill failed to pass because a handful of senators refused to have it rushed through during the closing hours of the session. The result was electric. The President denounced them as "a little group of willful men." The papers cartooned them and villified them in the most shameless manner. They were called "German agents" and scores of newspapers presented them with the Iron Cross. Among those senatorial "traitors" were the few senators who had stood for the common people against the vested interests. LaFollette had fought special privilege consistently for a generation. For twenty years he had won his battles. Now it was the turn of the business oligarchy which he had opposed and they went after him savagely. Perhaps no American since Lincoln's time has been so

shamelessly abused by the public prints as was LaFollette because of his stand on the war.

If the American democracy wins its fight with the plutocracy, future generations of school children will be taught to revere as patriots and heroes the little group who defied the plutocracy and opposed militarism. Senator LaFollette, in his magnificent protest against the declaration of war (April 4, 1917) said,—“We need not disturb ourselves because of what a minority may do. There is always lodged, and always will be, thank God above us, power in the people supreme. * * * It may be suppressed for a time, it may be misled, befooled, silenced. I think, Mr. President, that it is being denied expression now. I think there will come a day when it will have expression. * * * It will be as certain and as inevitable as the return of the tides, and as resistless, too.” He is right. History will say so, and the American people, to-day, know so.

The patriots of plutocracy did not confine their attention to Congressmen. The term “traitor” was flung in the teeth of anyone who opposed the seven league steps that the administration was taking toward war. Radicals who had always opposed war; ministers who had spent their lives in preaching peace on earth; scientists whose work had brought them into contact with the peoples of the whole world; public men who believed that the United States could do greater and better work for democracy by staying out of the war were persecuted as zealously as though they had sided with Protestantism in Catholic Spain under the Inquisition. The plutocracy had declared for war, and woe betide the heedless or willful one who still insisted upon urging the gospel of peace.

The liberal and radical forces of American life—the men and women who had sacrificed, suffered, labored and struggled to make America safe for democracy, were brushed aside by the triumphant patriotic plutocracy. The great plutocrats—Morgan, Rockefeller, Guggenheim, Willard,

Gary, Schwab, Stotesbury,—were the great patriots. All who opposed them were traitors. The plutocracy had always stood and still stands for special privilege in its most vicious form. By a clever move, the plutocrats, wrapped in the flag and proclaiming a crusade to inaugurate democracy in Germany, rallied to their support the professional classes of the United States and millions of the common people.

6. THE SECOND OF APRIL

The “patriots” wanted to ship goods to the Allied governments. Armed neutrality for them meant business opportunity. The “traitors” were those who opposed foreign entanglements and alliances and who used every effort to keep the United States out of the war.

No one knows just how serious was the predicament of the Allies in the spring of 1917. After three years of war, during which they had made the most stupendous preparations and spent unheard of wealth and energy they had proved themselves incapable of driving the Germans out of France and Belgium, and were, in reality, still fighting a defensive war. Their credit was strained to the breaking point, and their resources were at a very low ebb. The food situation in the British Isles was serious. The Russians were temporarily out of the fight. Meanwhile, the submarines were playing havoc with Allied shipping.

The economic position of the United States was also serious. Our export trade which had jumped from two billions in 1913 to seven billions in 1917 was threatened with demolition. The large manufacturing establishments which had been erected for the purpose of supplying munitions to the Allied governments had delivered most of their contracts and were waiting for additional war orders. The banking interests, led by the Morgan firm, had backed the Allies financially. Allied failure, therefore, meant disaster

to American finance. For three years the American plutocracy had enjoyed the benefits of war business, without paying any of the penalties which war entails. These vast profits would cease if the submarine blockade succeeded.

The "great neutral" faced the test of possible commercial disaster. A hundred millions of people in the balance counted as nothing against the menace of economic losses. The President without any authority from Congress armed the merchant ships¹ and gave Bernstorff his papers. The business interests went wild with joy.²

Armed neutrality had proved to be exactly what LaFollette had predicted—a calamitous failure. The President said as much to Congress on the second of April. "Armed neutrality is ineffectual enough at best; * * * it is likely only to produce what it was meant to prevent; it is practically certain to draw us into the war without either the right or the effectiveness of belligerents." The "little group of willful men" had been right and the President wrong, yet in the same speech (April 2) the President insisted that Congress follow him still further and declare the existence of a state of war with Germany.

The Administration, backed almost solidly by the press (which saw within easy reach the war for which it had labored so faithfully) demanded that all members of Congress "stand behind the President." Again a little group of men refused to yield their convictions.

Champ Clark, of Missouri, said on April 25th, "I have made it a rule to always support the President—any Presi-

¹ "The liner *St. Louis*, with two guns forward and one aft, was the first American merchant vessel to carry arms through the "barred" submarine zone; she sailed March 17, 1917." *Current History*, May, 1917, page 221. (N. Y. Times Pub. Co.)

² When the news of the break with Germany was flashed to Wall Street every banking house hung out its flag and "in twenty minutes Wall Street from Trinity Church to South Street was bedecked like a holiday."—*Finance and Commerce*, February 7, 1917.

dent—when I believe he is right, and on doubtful questions give him the benefit of the doubt. Further than that I will not go, so help me Almighty God! Further than that I cannot go and make good the oath that I took when I was sworn into this House."

General Isaac R. Sherwood, a veteran of the Civil War, made a final appeal to Congress on the 5th of April in which he reviewed the history of England's attack upon the United States during the Civil War, warned the American people that they were going to war "as an Ally of the only nation in Europe that has always been our enemy and against the nation that has always been our friend." The President "in the presence of both Houses of Congress, and the Cabinet, and the Supreme Court, and the bespangled Diplomatic Corps, in a spectacular and elaborately staged event wrote a message to Congress and the country, declaring his purpose to enter the world wide conflict in the interests of a world wide democracy. * * * At the distance of 3,500 miles the undesirable and dangerous German Kaiser looks the same to me as the great-grandson of George Third; in fact, all kings look alike to me. I am not willing to vote to send the gallant young manhood of America across the Atlantic Ocean to fight for either. * * * I regard war as the greatest crime of the human race. * * * My experience in the Civil War has saddened all my life. * * * As I love my country, I feel it my sacred duty to keep the stalwart young men of to-day out of a barbarous war 3,500 miles away, in which we have no vital interest."

There was other opposition equally vigorous and equally well spoken which called down upon the heads of those who uttered it a torrent of the most barbarous abuse from the press, the pulpit, and public men in every walk of life.

On April 6th, with the passage of the resolution declaring the existence of a state of war, the American people found themselves in war, after returning a party to power only five months before because it had "kept us out of war."

The people were not consulted, their wishes were not considered.¹

No popular referendum on the war was even proposed by the administration. Like the people in the king-ridden countries of Europe, the American people, without any say in the matter were plunged into the conflict.²

Then the leading business men from all parts of the country were brought in to take charge of the government. Some idea of the extent to which the business interests have been placed in control of the United States since the beginning of the war may be gained by an examination of the personnel of the "Council of National Defense" and its advisory committees. The Council consists of six members of the President's Cabinet, assisted by an Advisory Commission and numerous sub-committees. The "Advisory Commission" of the Council (evidently the real working body) consists of four business men,—an educator, a labor leader and a medical man. The four business men, constituting the majority, will have practical charge of directing the expenditure of the billions of dollars that the American people will put into this war.

¹ A number of incomplete referendums were taken. Congressman Lundeen (Minneapolis) sent a referendum card to every one of his constituents. Of the 8,800 who had replied on April 5th, 800 favored a declaration of war and 8,000 opposed it. Partial referendums in other states showed immense majorities against a declaration of war. (See Appendix to Congressman Lundeen's speech, April 5, 1917). It was this situation that led Senator LaFollette to declare (April 4, 1917): "Submit the question (of a declaration of a state of war) to the people, you who support it. You who support it, dare not do it, for you know that by a vote of more than ten to one the American people as a body would register their declaration against it."

² Note that the President said to Congress on April 2nd that the European conflict "was a war determined upon as wars used to be in the old, unhappy days when peoples were nowhere consulted by their rulers and wars were provoked and waged in the interest of dynasties or of like groups of ambitious men who were accustomed to use their fellow-men as pawns and tools."

Each member of the Advisory Commission has a group of persons co-operating with him. The make-up of these various committees is astounding. Among 706 persons listed, 404 were business men, 200 were professional men, 59 were labor men, 23 were public officials and 20 were miscellaneous. This count, however, includes educational work under Mr. Godfrey, labor standards under Mr. Gompers and medical work under Dr. Martin. The four business men alone are assisted by 312 business men, 4 professional men, 3 public officials and 9 miscellaneous. Not a single labor man appears in this group. Indeed, it is only in Mr. Gompers' group that labor has any representation, and even there, out of 138 persons, only 59 are workers or officials of unions. Thirty-four are business men and 33 professional men, so that even among Mr. Gompers' assistants the business and professional men combined, considerably outnumber the labor men.

The make-up of some of the sub-committees reveals the method by which war expenditures will be controlled. Thus, Mr. Willard's sub-committee on "Express" consists of four vice-presidents, one from the American, one from the Wells-Fargo, one from the Southern and one from the Adams Express Company. His committee on "Locomotives" consists of the vice-president of the Baldwin Locomotive Works, a vice-president of the Porter Locomotive Company, the president of the American Locomotive Company, and the Chairman of the Lima Locomotive Corporation.

Mr. Rosenwald's committee on "Shoe and Leather Industries" consists of eight persons, all of them representing shoe or leather companies. His committee on "Woolen Manufactures" consists of eight representatives of the woolen industry, and his committee on "Supplies" consists of a retired business man, and one representative each from Sears, Roebuck & Company, the Quaker Oats Company and Libby, McNeil & Libby (meat packers).

The same business control appears in Mr. Baruch's com-

mittees. His committee on "Cement" consists of the presidents of four of the leading cement companies, the vice-president of a fifth cement company, and a representative of the Bureau of Standards of Washington. His committee on "Copper" has the names of the presidents of the Anaconda Copper Company, the Calumet & Hecla Mining Company, the United Verde Copper Company and the Utah Copper Company. Mr. Murray M. Guggenheim is a member of the same committee. His committee on "Steel and Steel Products" consists of Elbert H. Gary, chairman of the United States Steel Corporation, Charles M. Schwab, of the Bethlehem Steel Company, A. C. Dinkey, vice-president of the Midvale Steel Company, W. L. King, vice-president of Jones & Loughlin Steel Company and J. A. Burden, president of the Burden Iron Company. The other four members of the committee represent the Republic Iron & Steel Company, the Lackawanna Steel Company, the American Iron & Steel Institute and the Picklands, Mather Company, of Cleveland. Perhaps the most astounding of all the committees is that on "Oil." The Chairman is the President of the Standard Oil Company, and the Secretary of the Committee gives his address as "26 Broadway," the address of the Standard Oil Company. The other nine members of the committee are oil men from various parts of the country. What thinking American would have even suggested, three years ago, that the Standard Oil Company would be officially directing a part of the work of the Federal Government?

Comment is superfluous. Every great industrial enterprise of the United States has secured representation on the committees of business men that have openly taken charge of the United States.

The business interests had played for a great stake. They had played against the well being of the American democracy. The prize they sought was a billion dollars a year in profits. Wrapped in the folds of the flag and uttering resounding declarations of patriotism, on April sixth the

business interests won a victory of terrible import to the American democracy.

7. THE LIBERTY LOAN

As soon as war was declared, the administration undertook to secure,—money, conscription, and censorship. The first and most important of these was money. Congress passed almost immediately the bill authorizing a bond issue of seven billions of dollars.

The Liberty Loan was important to the American bankers who had financed the Allies, because it guaranteed Allied credit. There were other things about it, however, that were even more significant than its assistance in international business. It gave the local business men a chance to do a piece of work of the utmost importance to their own security.

Everybody who was in touch with American public opinion on the sixth of April knew that the war was not popular. People were apathetic, indifferent or actively hostile. There was little display of enthusiasm except among the business men and their immediate adherents. The Liberty Loan gave plutocracy a chance to put in every American home an economic argument (a bond paying $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent) in favor of standing behind the government.

There was another argument in favor of selling the bonds to the people. Now that the plutocracy were the messengers of democracy in Germany and the incarnation of patriotism in the United States, to gainsay or to question their position was to be a traitor to the Stars and Stripes, which they had taken over as completely as they had previously taken over the steel, coal, iron, wheat, cotton, water power, franchises, banks, railroads and the like. Hence, any employee could be asked by an employer in the name of liberty and democracy to buy a bond.

Some day, when all of the facts are collected, the story of the sale of the Liberty Loan will be told and it will be as hateful, as barbarous, and as brutal as any event since the war contracts of the Spanish American War.

Reflect for a moment upon the situation which the Liberty Loan, handled, as it was, by the business interests created. The owners and managers of stores, banks, manufacturing establishments and other business houses had their subordinates sell bonds to their clerks and wage-earners. Firms subscribed in bulk and then peddled the bonds to their employees, thus getting the credit for buying the bonds without having to pay for them. Employees bought whether they liked it or not. One girl, working as an expert at \$100 a month was approached with the proposition that she buy \$100 worth of bonds. The manager hinted to her that her refusal might cost her job. Being of an independent nature and knowing that the kind of help that she was rendering was scarce at the time, she told her manager frankly that if her job was the price of her subscription to the Liberty Loan he might have her job then and there. Nothing more was said to her on the subject.

Another girl, however, who was working in a department store for \$7 a week "arranged" with her manager to contribute \$2 a week for 25 weeks in order to purchase a Liberty Bond. When the Red Cross campaign was on, a friend found this girl crying and upon inquiring was informed that that week the \$5 which remained of her wage had been "contributed" to the Red Cross fund. She was wondering how she could get to the next week and pay her board and food bills.

A man with a family, sick for three months, had contracted several doctor's bills and was in financial straits. He was advised that it would be wise for him to buy a Liberty Bond. Like the cash girl, he was not in a position where he could talk back. He therefore went farther into debt in order to comply with the "suggestion" of his superior.

The Liberty Loan was probably more effective than any other single weapon in the hands of the business world as a club with which to coerce the workers. Heretofore the employer had run his own business as he pleased, now he was able to go further and tell his workers how they might spend their income.

The plutocracy saw the advantage which would accrue to them from the Liberty Loan. They did not subscribe themselves in any large degree, but they did use every effort to cajole and coerce the common people of the United States into subscribing. The business interests of the United States stood together and worked together more solidly on the Liberty Loan than on any other measure within the memory of the present generation. It was a business proposition and the business crowd put it over.

The Liberty Loan was a signal victory for the plutocracy, and an equally signal defeat for the democracy. It did more to bulwark the position of the plutocratic despots of the United States than it will ever do for liberty in Europe.

The President's speech on April 2nd, and the "war-vote" of Congress on April 6th, plunged the American people into the war. The Liberty Loan saddled the immediate payment for the war upon millions of unwilling common people and yoked up the next generation to a war debt over which they had no control. The war-madness was beginning to yield its bitter fruit.

8. CONSCRIPTION

The second measure of importance to the business world was conscription. The labor problem in America was giving the plutocracy a great deal of trouble. The shortage of workers during the years of war-contract activity had put the laboring people in a position of great strategic advantage which they had used on many occasions to advance wages

and shorten hours. The workers were relatively prosperous and unusually confident. The success of the railway brotherhoods in procuring the Adamson Law had added tone to the labor movement all over the United States. This labor solidarity was dangerous to plutocracy. Conscription would do much to hamper or destroy it.

Conscription possessed another advantage of supreme importance. Experience had shown that great armies and navies could not be raised by the volunteer system in a democracy. If the plutocracy was to put over its plan for a great army and navy behind its aggressive economic campaign into Mexico, Central America and South America, it must have conscription in order to provide the men for the military and naval forces.

When the Conscription Bill was introduced into Congress there was a general feeling through the country that it could not pass. Even the press hesitated, so un-American was this Bill, which clearly violated the spirit of the constitution and the traditions of American life.¹

Then courage was supplied to the press from somewhere, and the newspapers and magazines of the country went to work with a will. They apologized, explained and insisted. Six weeks after war was declared the bill had passed Congress. Within two months, more than nine million young men had been "selected for service."

The Conscription Bill paved the way for a military system exactly like that which had been so savagely denounced in Germany. It gave the American plutocracy the beginnings of a big, cheap army. It disposed of the uncertainties of

¹ Daniel Webster said in the House of Representatives, December 9, 1814,—“If the Secretary of War has proved the right of Congress to enact a law enforcing a draft of men out of the militia into the regular army, he will at the same time be able to prove quite as clearly that Congress has power to create a dictator. The arguments which have helped him in one case will equally help him in the other.”

volunteering and provided the possibility of military education for every young American. At the same time the way was opened for the imposition of universal service, which was all that Prussia has ever demanded in the balmy days of her militarism. Then, too, a beginning was made toward industrial conscription, and the possibility was opened for the importation of coolie and peon labor,¹ things which were not even thinkable in peace days. America, after two months of war, had inaugurated what some one has called "the golden age of the drill sergeant," and fastened upon the United States the rudiments of European militarism in its most barbarous aspects.

Business rejoiced again. The *Chicago Tribune* on June 6th (the day following registration), headed one of its market reports,—“Draft Success Puts New Life in New York Market. Industrial Leaders in Upward Trend. Year’s Best Prices Reached.” The plutocracy had scored another victory which was immediately recorded in the climbing prices of stocks and bonds—and ten million young men were in the grip of American militarism.

The fruits of the war-madness were ripening. The plutocracy trembled with joy. The people shrank back—surprised, terrified.

9. CENSORSHIP

“The United States has been suffering from an over-dose of democracy” insists one ardent supporter of the plutocracy. The censorship bill was designed to remedy this deplorable situation by sweeping aside personal liberty. The declaration of war was a slap in the face of democracy,—the cen-

¹ The Committee on Public Information (Censorship Committee) issued a statement (May 28, 1917) in which they listed as “Dangerous Matter” (page 11) “news of possible or obscured movements of alien labor through the territory of the U. S. or their arrival at or embarkation from any of our ports.”

sorship bill bandaged its eyes, plugged its ears and gagged its mouth.

The censorship bill, in its original form, was so drastic and far-reaching that even the newspapers denounced it. So general was the opposition that after weeks of fighting, the bill was approved by the President on June 15th in such a modified form that there was no direct reference to freedom of speech and of the press. But tucked away in an obscure corner of Section 481½ was an amendment to the Postal Laws which reads,—“Every letter, writing, circular, postal card, picture, print, engraving, photograph, newspaper, pamphlet, book, or other publication, matter or thing of any kind containing any matter which is intended to obstruct the recruiting or enlistment service of the United States is hereby declared to be non-mailable.”

Under this section each one of the 123,387 United States postmasters is made a censor with authority (subject to the reversal of his superiors) to exclude from the mails anything that in his judgment will “obstruct the recruiting or enlistment service.” The Federal authorities were not slow in availing themselves of this immense power. The Cleveland (Ohio) *Socialist*, the Detroit (Mich.) *Socialist*, the *Rebel* of Texas, the *International Socialist Review*, the *American Socialist*, the *Masses* and other radical publications were promptly denied the use of the mails. The *American Socialist* (Chicago) had planned a “Liberty Edition” for June 30th. The entire edition and two other editions were held up by the Chicago postmaster acting under instructions from Washington. Other papers were temporarily suspended.

A storm of protest broke over the country. Within the memory of the oldest inhabitant there had been no such deliberate violation of the freedom of the press which is guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution. The Federal Administration had not shot its bolt, however. These suppressed papers had not appeared “regularly” and

they had contained "non-mailable" matter—both violations of the postal laws. The editors of the papers were, therefore, cited to appear at Washington (July 23, 1917) and show cause why their papers should not be denied second class mailing privileges—which mean denial of the use of the mails. What more complete power was ever lodged in the hands of a European despot and when was it more scandalously exercised?

The *Texas Rebel*, an organ of the Farmers and Laborers Protective Association, was held up by the following order to the local postmaster, from W. H. Lamar, Solicitor General of the Postal Department at Washington,—“submit to this office further copies of *The Rebel*, published at your place, for instructions, before accepting for mailing.”

The *Public* (New York) remarked in this connection,—“This is even worse than the late Russian Censorship. The Russian Censor would but black out the passage in the paper to which he took exception and let the rest go. But the postal censorship would hold up a whole issue.”

If any further evidence is necessary to prove the deliberate intent of the Federal Administration to throttle American liberty, it will be found in the refusal of passports to the three Socialist delegates to the Stockholm Conference, and by the treatment given to the suffragists in Washington during June and July, 1917.

While the Federal authorities were engaged in this vigorous campaign to throttle American liberty, local and state officials were equally busy denying the right of free speech and free assemblage. Halls were closed, street speaking was prohibited, the headquarters of socialist and I. W. W. locals were raided by the soldiers and police. Those who criticised the authorities were denounced as traitors. The mere mention of “peace” was infamous.

The President, early in May, declared emphatically for

the maintenance of civil liberties. He said,¹—"The letter signed by yourself and others under date of April 16 has, of course, chimed in with my own feelings and sentiments. I do not know what steps it will be practicable to take in the immediate future to safeguard the things which, I agree with you in thinking, ought in any circumstances be safeguarded, but you may be sure I have the matter in mind and will act, I hope, at the right time in the spirit of suggestion."

The letter to which the President made his reply, had stated, in part,—“Even by this time we have seen evidence of the breaking down of immemorial rights and privileges. Halls have been refused for public discussion; meetings have been broken up; speakers have been arrested and censorship exercised, not to prevent the transmission of information to enemy countries, but to prevent the free discussion by American citizens of our own problems and policies. As we go on, the inevitable psychology of war will manifest itself with increasing danger, not only to individuals, but to our cherished institutions.

“What we ask of you, Mr. President, * * * is to make an impressive statement that will reach not only the officials of the federal government scattered throughout the union, but the officials of the several states and of the cities, towns and villages of the country, reminding them of the peculiar obligation devolving upon all Americans in this war to uphold in every way our constitutional rights and liberties. * * * Such a statement sent throughout the country would reinforce your declaration that this is a war for democracy and liberty.”

These letters were written *early in May*, but throughout that month and through the succeeding months the denial of free speech and free assemblage continued; the postal censorship laid its heavy fist on the free press; and sailors and

¹ *The Survey*, May 12, 1917, page 144.

soldiers wearing the uniform of the United States were permitted and in some cases encouraged to disturb and break up meetings of a radical character. During all of that time there was no official utterance from the President on the subject.

The first outrage by men in uniform was committed in Baltimore, when they broke up a peaceable assemblage. Their activities were given full vent in New York where the citizens finally succeeded in securing from the Police Commissioner a promise of protection against the soldiers.

The conduct of the men in uniform went to such lengths that the *New York Evening Post* characterized it as a scandal in an editorial of June 16th,—“Last night soldiers raided several perfectly lawful and law-abiding meetings. For instance, the *Tribune* reports that ‘bayonets were brought into play by members of the Eighth Coast Defence command who mounted guard at a meeting of the People’s Council, held in Arlington Hall, St. Mark’s Place, New York. The speeches at this meeting were mild and inoffensive, the hall was draped with American flags, and many in the audience wore tri-colors in their lapels.’ Yet without warrant of law these soldiers took charge of the meeting, arrested twenty-five men whom they claimed as violators of the Registration Law, and generally ran things to suit themselves. This is nothing short of a scandal.”

The most flagrant invasion of civil liberty was staged in Boston on Sunday, July 1st. The workers had decided to hold a parade, followed by a mass-meeting on Boston Common. Permits were secured for both events. The incidents of the afternoon are thus described by the *New York Times* (July 2nd):

“Half a hundred men in the uniform of Naval Reservists, National Guardsmen, Marines and Canadian ‘Kilties’ who had watched the formation of the parade, marched across the common in a double column and intercepted the

procession at the corner of West and Tremont Streets, and again at the corner of Winter and Tremont Streets. In both instances the contact resulted in a street fight. Blows were exchanged, and flags were snatched from the hands of the marchers, while women in the line screamed in fright.

"At Scolley Square there was a similar scene. The American flag at the head of the line was seized by the attacking party, and the band, which had been playing "The Marseillaise" with some interruption, was forced to play "The Star Spangled Banner," while cheers were given for the flag.

"The police had just succeeded in quieting this disturbance when the reserves were called out to quell a near riot at the meeting place on the Common. The first of the peace speakers had barely begun his remarks when the reserves arrived. They formed a circle in the crowd, with the police wagon as a center, in front of the speakers' stand, but in spite of their presence there were scores of individual fights in the big gathering. To restore quiet Supt. Crowley, as Acting Police Commissioner, revoked the permit for the speaking and the meeting was called off.

"Meanwhile the Socialist headquarters in Park Square had been ransacked, and its contents destroyed in a bonfire. The American flag taken from the paraders was placed over a statue of 'Lincoln the Emancipator' near the scene of the bonfire."

The plutocracy had been trying, for years, to hush up agitation and to suppress radicalism. Muck-rakers, the "labor agitator," socialists, the I. W. W.'s, "anarchists," and other opponents of things as they are were denounced, clubbed, jailed and shot, but the agitation grew through persecution. Despite the ownership of the jobs and the control of the government, despite company stores and company guards, despite its grip on the press, the pulpit and the school, the plutocracy was unable to prevent this agitation.

There were Colorado and Paterson, speaking the unmistakable language of a coming revolution.

The war brought the harvest time. Radicals of every stamp who opposed it—and practically all radicals did oppose and denounce it—were “traitors” against whom the fury of the war-madness might legitimately be directed.

10. SPREADING AMERICANISM WITH THE SWORD

A short two years sufficed to enable the business interests of the United States to take charge of the country. They had previously secured the natural resources, the manufacturing industries, the credit machinery, the public utilities and the merchandising establishments. This economic power, together with the control of the channels of public opinion and of the machinery of politics enabled them overnight, in the history of American affairs, to put across their program and prepare to “crush Germany.”

President Wilson said very frankly that it was not the German people against whom we were making war. He insisted that our purpose was to overthrow the German autocracy.

The British capitalists had been franker. They had talked openly about the “war after the war.” They had even gone so far as to hold a conference at Paris, in which they had discussed the best methods of overthrowing German industry. As Frank Harris puts it in his book, “England or Germany” (page 21), “Great Britain had taken up arms to crush a successful trade rival, and for no other reason. As soon as war was declared, *The Times* and *Daily Mail* and many other London papers threw off the mask and published column after column showing how this, that and the other department of trade could now be taken from the Germans.”

Why did the American plutocracy desire to crush Germany? Was it to destroy despotism there? The idea is preposterous. The despotism in any bank, factory or railroad of the United States is more complete than that of the Kaiser. The American plutocracy has fattened on despotism for generations.

The American plutocracy was no more interested in establishing democracy in Germany than they were in establishing democracy in the United States. They did want to see German industry crushed, however, and since the Kaiser and his group represented German business in its most highly developed form, the Kaiser was the object of their wrath.

The President stated the issue in quite another form, but no matter what he may say, he cannot escape the fact that the plutocracy of the United States was behind him in a body. The plutocrats are no man's fools. They know what they want and they are after it, hot-foot.

The President decided that the best way to "make the world safe for democracy" was to abandon America's traditional policy of isolation; to form an alliance with six democracies and seven monarchies; to mobilize the resources of the country, and to enter the world war as an active belligerent.

"Our object is to vindicate the principles of peace and justice in the life of the world as against selfish and autocratic power. * * * We have no quarrel with the German people. We have no feeling toward them but one of sympathy and friendship. It was not upon their impulse that their government acted in entering the war. * * * It was a war determined upon as wars used to be determined upon in the old, unhappy days when people were nowhere consulted by their rulers. * * * The world must be made safe for democracy," said President Wilson to Congress on April 2, 1917. Thereupon, without consulting the American

people, or Congress either,¹ the President pushed the United States into war in an alliance with three of the leading monarchies, including one of the most complete autocracies (Japan) of the world.

"We now chart a new national course," said Congressman Ernest Lundeen (April 5, 1917). "In terms of autocracy we declare our intention to bestride the world with democracy. Our fixed determination is to thrust democracy with loving bayonets down the throats of unwilling peoples.

"Let us look at the company we will keep in performing this benevolent function. We will be marching side by side with the King of Serbia; the King of Italy is our boon companion; the King of Belgium is there; so also the King of Roumania; the Emperor of India and the King of England, our stalwart brother; not to mention the King of Montenegro and various other principalities and rulers, as well as chaotic Russia—only France is a Republic—and last but not least we are to be brothers in blood with our dear friend the Emperor of Japan. And this our Chief Executive proposes as our 'league of honor.'"

The forefront of this alliance to make the world safe for democracy is England—"a hereditary monarchy, with a hereditary ruler, with a hereditary House of Lords, with a hereditary landed system, with a limited and restricted suffrage for one class and a multiple suffrage power for another, and with grinding industrial conditions for all the wage earners,"²—England, in which "there will never be the ghost of freedom till there is a social revolution,"³—England, "the real enemy of civilization, for more than a

¹ Later in the same speech, assuming that the war he was asking for was as good as declared, the President said,—“We enter this war only where we are clearly forced into it because there are no other means of defending our rights.”

² Senator LaFollette in the Senate, April 4, 1917.

³ “England or Germany,” Frank Harris, page 56.

hundred years now the chief obstacle to the humanization of man."¹

Do you now understand why Senator LaFollette uttered his indignant question,—“Shall we wind up our future with foreign powers, and hazard the peace of this nation for all time, by linking the destiny of the American democracy with the ever-menacing antagonism of foreign monarchies?”²

Remember the words of David Lloyd George, Prime Minister of England,—“Peace before a victory would be the greatest disaster in the history of mankind. * * * America had always been freedom’s mainstay. She has never made war except for freedom. Now she is sending her valiant soldiers to the battle field to fight around liberty’s standard.” Then these astounding words,—“Britannia will rule the waves after the war.”³ America will fight for liberty and when the fight is won,—“Britannia will rule!”

The tradition of American statesmanship had been a mind-your-own-business policy. Washington, after a bitter war with England,—the war for American Independence, wrote in his farewell address: “Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence I conjure you, to believe me, fellow citizens, the jealousies of a free people ought to be constantly awake, since history and experience prove that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of republican government.” To-day the United States is united hand and glove with the very monarchy against which Washington and those who stood with him waged their war of Independence. We are pledged to supply them with “the most liberal financial credit,” to “help them in every other way” and if necessary to “spend the whole force of the nation” (quoted from the President’s Address to Congress, April 2, 1917). And to what end? David Lloyd George has answered,—“Britannia will rule the waves after the war.”

¹ “England or Germany,” Frank Harris, page 98.

² “America’s War-Madness,” *Pearson’s*, May, 1917, page 454.

³ Press reports of a speech in Glasgow, June 29, 1917.

The American people, whose chief objection to Germany in 1914 was that she might try to impose her civilization upon the United States with the sword, is busy organizing, expending fabulous sums of money, training soldiers, constructing ships, with the avowed intention of attacking Germany in order to impose their civilization with the sword. There was some excuse for Germany. She was in the grip of despotism and despotism may be propagated by the sword. Indeed, a despot has no other weapon. The American people, however, had boasted that they possessed a democracy, which is built upon the idea of universal brotherhood,—a democracy which they now proposed to shoot into the Central Monarchies.

By July, 1917, the billboard enlistment campaign was couched in such words as "The regulars are in France, join them now." "Enlist immediately so as to fight on German and not on United States soil." The German autocracy was on the defensive; the American plutocracy had become the aggressor. The regular army had already been transported four thousand miles and a conscript army of a million men was in process of formation to wage an aggressive war in the interests of the British ruling classes.¹

Step by step the plutocracy advanced. Point by point they established their position—war bonds, conscription, censorship and a war to crush German industry. Meanwhile they were able to come out into the open and take possession of the government through the subcommittees of the Council of National Defense.

And the American people stood for it. Emotionalized, dazed, stupefied, and blinded by the great madness that

¹ This in the face of overwhelming evidence of its unconstitutionality. See the excellent speech on the subject by Congressman Wm. E. Mason, July 19, 1917, in which he said,—“Under our Constitution Congress has no power to call the militia of the United States or the militia of its several states by conscription or otherwise and order them into service outside the United States.”

possessed their souls, nearly a hundred millions of people cast aside their most cherished principles, sacrificed their hard-won liberties, and began spreading brotherhood and democracy with the sword.

11. ROOT AND BALFOUR

When it was all over they got together and told one another about it—the tories from Lombard Street and from Wall Street, the representatives of the great vested special privileges of England and the United States. Arthur J. Balfour headed the mission from the Court of St. James to Washington. Arthur J. Balfour, who as Secretary for Ireland had ridden the Irish people like a nightmare, restricting their liberties and denying them justice in his best diplomatic style. Arthur J. Balfour, who had waged the iniquitous war which the business men of England directed against the little Boer republics of South Africa. Arthur J. Balfour, the tory, and Lord Northcliffe, “the most powerful man in England,” and the representative of the most powerful business group in England, brought the message from English monarchy to American plutocracy, while we sent Elihu Root as our emissary to the newly constituted democracy of Russia.

Elihu Root for a generation had been regarded as the arch-tory of the United States,—a man well-trained in diplomacy, with a long experience in governmental affairs, a lawyer of the highest repute whose whole professional talent had been put at the disposal of the great industrial enterprises with their activities centered in Wall Street,—Elihu Root, who had fought against woman suffrage, who had opposed the Oklahoma Constitution because it was too democratic, who had tried to return political prisoners to the Russian Czar, who had drafted a constitution for the state of New York and seen it rejected by a popular majority of over half a million,—Elihu Root was sent to the

democracy of Russia to warn them not to go too far in the direction of their democratic ambitions and ideals!

Nowhere in the long series of events which led America into the world conflict did the forces appear so clearly on the surface. Arthur J. Balfour, Lord Northcliffe, and Elihu Root,—Monarchical England and plutocratic America, fraternizing to make the world safe and sure for the business oligarchy!

12. THE PEOPLE AWAKE!

The plutocracy had won everything for which it had been fighting—immunity, power, wealth. The people were war-mad,—at least, there was enough of the war madness in the country to enable the vested interests to put across anything that they wanted.

Three years of ceaseless effort on the part of the press, the pulpit, the school, the screen and the stage had sufficed to infuse millions of Americans with the mob fear and mob hate that are the warp and woof of war-madness. The carefully planned, brilliantly executed scheme of advertising preparedness, patriotism and war, had left a great section of the American people incapable of reasoning or understanding. On April 2nd there were millions who had been worried, harried, and emotionalized through the successive stages of fear, resentfulness, bitterness, hatred and frenzy until they were sufficiently ferocious to be willing to use the knife.

The plutocrats won immunity, power and wealth, measured in seven figures. They won more. First, they secured the big navy and army for which they had worked so faithfully,—an army to menace neighbors and to preserve peace at home during the deluge of misery that will follow the bursting cloud of war-values and war-prices; a navy to

guard the hundreds of millions that they have invested in "undeveloped" countries; and seven billions of dollars to be spent at once—much of it on war contracts, which afford proverbially fat pickings.

Again they had won conscription—the right to send a million Americans into the trenches of France to fight for the poor Belgians, for Lombard Street, Wall Street and King George of England.

They had established a spirit that permitted children to go back into factories from which years of incessant labor had rescued them; women to take men's jobs at a fraction of the wage, and the standards surrounding the labor of men to be lowered.

The plutocrats won another point—a point desired by every despot—they won the right to impose restrictions upon the freedom of speech, of press and assemblage, which are the foundation of democracy. The plutocracy bought the press, subsidized the pulpit, placed their representatives in control of the schools, and by the use of the police and postal censorship they restricted individual liberty.

Beside and beyond this economic, political and social power, the plutocracy had millions of deluded people in its grip—incapable of thinking because of the fearful war madness that possessed their souls.

Business had won!

Special Privilege had taken every trick in this frightful war-game.

The plutocracy had made its point and lost its life.

They are knowing—these mighty ones—in the affairs of the world, but in the things of the spirit they are like children. Knowledge they possess, but little wisdom. They do not understand the human soul. They underestimate the power of the ideal. They overlook the great longing—the terrible yearning—of the human heart, for truth and jus-

tice, liberty and joy and peace. Like all despots they imagine that they can settle matters with the policeman's club, the jail and the bayonet.

The absurdity of it! The monstrous presumption!

They tore up the Declaration of Independence under the noses of the people, and threw the fragments of the Constitution into their faces, imagining, meanwhile, that because nothing happened at once, they had got away with it. The ignorant ones! They believed that when the press sung "all is well" that the people would take up the refrain, "all is well!"

They aroused the people, agitating and irritating them, until they were frantic, repeating, meanwhile, the blatant lie that the real enemy of American liberty lived in Berlin. Then they stung them with high prices, filched their liberty, plunged them into war, took a million of their brothers and husbands and sons to wage a war of aggression on the battlefields of king-ridden Europe, and because nothing happened at once, they believe that they had won. They had won—victory and death.

The plutocracy and the democracy cannot exist side by side. If the plutocracy wins, dollars rule; if the democracy wins, people rule. There can be no alternative and no compromise. During the past three years of struggle, the democracy has lost every move. The power of the plutocracy has been strengthened immeasurably.

The people of the United States woke up in 1917 to find themselves at war; subject to conscription; their liberties gone, and the business interests in control. At first they were puzzled—almost frightened. Then they began to understand.

To-day, in all parts of the United States, they are banding themselves together, politically and industrially. They are organizing. They propose to make the world safe for democracy.

Their struggle must begin in the United States. No part of the world is in greater need of their effort.

The work of the people is cut out for them—cut out in all its stupendous importance. They must:—

1. Continue to meet regularly and systematically for the discussion of vital questions.
2. Publish a paper in every city that will be owned by the people and will represent them.
3. Capture the schools. The school system is the greatest single asset now in the hands of the plutocracy.
4. Establish industrial and political solidarity.
5. Educate! Educate!! Everywhere and upon every possible occasion in home, shop, street car, meeting hall.
6. Take all profit out of industry.
7. Guarantee and maintain equal opportunity and justice for all.

Those steps taken, this end achieved, and a beginning will have been made for a safe democracy in the United States and an example of immense importance will have been set for the world.

The people are learning. The events of the past few months are teaching them with lightning-like rapidity. They are filled with the bitterness and hate which the press and the pulpit has planted there; it is only a question of time before they discover their real enemies in New York and Washington—and then the “victory” of the American plutocracy will be turned into a sweeping triumph for the common people of the United States.

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