

expected that the Shipping Board will tolerate none of the dilatoriness that usually characterizes official action. If our national interest is placed in jeopardy by needless delay, the Shipping Board will bear the blame, whether it may justly be imposed upon them or not.

**W**HETHER our aid to the Allies is to be effective or not depends in first instance and last upon our ability to supply ourselves with adequate ocean transportation. We speak of extending loans to the Allies: what good will that do unless we can convey across the Atlantic the supplies in which an international loan takes shape? The merchant tonnage of the Allies is fully occupied in taking care of existing business, and the submarines are still reducing such tonnage much faster than the shipyards are increasing it. We speak of sending armies to Europe, if the war lasts long enough to get them ready and if our international interests require such a step. How will such armies strengthen the Allied cause, if their transportation and supply are to be provided out of an ocean shipping service already terribly overburdened? To be effective at all we must do our utmost to increase our volume of ocean shipping. Building ships may be a prosaic enterprise when we are just awakening to the fact of war. It is quite the most important warlike enterprise we can undertake at the present moment.

**T**HEORETICALLY the law provides for the defense of every man accused of crime. The provision is in the form of assigned counsel. This is a voluntary service, undertaken usually by lawyers who work for nothing because they are too unsuccessful to work, except infrequently, for something. One of these practitioners summed up the situation by a frank appeal to the jury: "This man," he urged, "has no lawyer. I am only assigned counsel. I get no pay. My only reward is in heaven, and how can I ever get there?" It is that state of affairs which the Voluntary Defenders Committee is trying to remedy; and their plan is simply to employ, pay and direct the efforts of counsel who will volunteer to take assignments. They will serve on a salary basis and receive no other compensation and do no other work. The enterprise is being financed by relatively few individuals, but the worth of it makes it one which ought to be supported through a wide public interest. When the plan is carried out there will be no further need for assigning incompetent lawyers or professional assignment chasers, and the poor and the rich will be in practice as well as in theory nearer to equality before the law.

**A**N action for separation recently came up in the Supreme Court of New York. It was a very ordinary case. "The defendant husband," quoting from the Law Journal, "earns less than ten dollars per week. The parties have been married seventeen years. The wife, who is a frail woman and suffers from heart trouble, has borne eleven children, and now she is in a painfully apparent condition of anaemia." Finding the conditions unbearable, plaintiff left the defendant. Then it appeared that, although "a violent antipathy seemed to exist between the parties," the defendant wanted the plaintiff back. Eleven children were somewhat of a care, and he contested that it was not humanly possible for him to provide alimony, even though the court shaved it down to \$4 per week. The judge admitted that the case distressed him. But he found it "unthinkable to condemn this woman who is still in poor health to go back and cohabit with the defendant," and the separation was awarded.—A few weeks later Mrs. Ethel Byrne was imprisoned on Blackwell's Island, charged with disseminating birth control information among the poor.

## The Great Decision

"It is a fearful thing to lead this great, peaceful people into war, into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars, civilization itself seeming to be in the balance."

**I**T has not been an easy decision to make, and it is not made easily or gaily or restlessly. It has come after as careful deliberation as human judgment could go through. It is a conclusion reached by the least jingo and most peaceful of American Presidents. We have become the enemies of the German government only after every device of patience and every ingenuity for peace is exhausted. No government ever had fuller opportunity to mend its ways, to show to an anxious world that its crimes were blunders and not the normal expression of its character. What charity could do has been done for the German Empire. After outrage upon outrage, intrigue and assault and cruelty, we have still hoped and prayed that even among the governing classes there was a liberal faction which would lead Germany back among the decent governments. We have endured measureless insult in the belief that there was a civil group who were ready to act with liberals everywhere in the pacification of the world.

They have had their chance. Every encouragement has been extended to them because the American government was eager to be shown the possibility of peace. In December the President gave them an opportunity to say that they renounced

conquest and cared for the organization of a stable international system. They could not accept that offer because they had not renounced conquest. We know now that the official German terms include the subjugation not only of Belgium but of a part of France, that the real intention of that government was to divide the Allies by intrigue and then rob France of her iron mines and Belgium of her freedom. We know those were her terms, and that in order to impose them upon the world she was prepared to destroy the merchant shipping of all nations. That is the revealed plan of Germany's ruling class, be it the party of Bethmann-Hollweg or von Tirpitz.

After that exposure there could be no peace and no mere armed neutrality. In all literalness civilization is hanging in the balance. The success of such a government with such a policy would make the twentieth century a period of profound reaction. It would mean almost certainly the defeat of the Russian Revolution, the absorption of the small nations of Central Europe, the humiliation of France, the monopolization of the road to the East, the disintegration of the British Commonwealth which is to arise out of the Empire, the terrorizing of the Americas, and a fastening upon the whole civilized world of a system of aggressive policies backed by an illiberal collectivism and a thorough conscription of human life. No league of peace could be organized, and for no great nation would fundamental democratic reform be possible. In such a world of terrors only the military virtues could survive.

This is what the President has seen, and this is what has led him to the fearful choice of war. If the European struggle were a war of Tweedledum and Tweedledee he could not have asked for anything more than an attempt to defend American rights as best we could. But after the revolution in Russia the issue is explicit, not merely implicit. There is no longer any doubt that the present German government is the keystone of reaction, that it is the great obstacle to the organization of peace, that it must be resisted and defeated.

The league of peace exists sooner than any of us dared to hope. What was a paper plan and a theoretic vision two years ago is to-day a reality. The liberal peoples of the world are united in a common cause. To be sure they have much to do before their own houses are put in order, and democracy is by no means secure among those who proclaim it. Nevertheless, the nations in which public opinion really counts are all engaged and all on the same side. The cause of the Allies is now unmistakably the cause of liberalism and the hope of an enduring peace. Democracy is infectious—the entrance of the Russian and Ameri-

can democracies is sure to be a stimulus to democrats everywhere, and it is now as certain as anything human can be that the war which started as a clash of empires in the Balkans will dissolve into democratic revolution the world over. A diplomatic tangle over backward territories has unloosed the peoples at home.

For having seen this and said it, for having selected the moment when the issue was so clear, for having done so much through the winter to make the issue clear, our debt and the world's debt to Woodrow Wilson is immeasurable. Any mediocre politician might have gone to war futilely for rights that in themselves cannot be defended by war. Only a statesman who will be called great could have made America's intervention mean so much to the generous forces of the world, could have lifted the inevitable horror of war into a deed so full of meaning. Other men have led nations to war to increase their glory, their wealth, their prestige. No other statesman has ever so clearly identified the glory of his country with the peace and liberty of the world.

Mr. Wilson has created an opportunity which is without parallel. He can mean more to the happiness of mankind than any one who ever addressed the world. Through force of circumstances and through his own genius he has made it a practical possibility that he is to be the first great statesman to begin the better organization of the world. It is a task to which he can give himself without stint or scruple, to which he can subordinate everything else. He can afford to use himself absolutely for this work alone.

The business of mobilizing the nation he can put into expert hands, for it would be a waste if he permitted himself to be swallowed up in the multitude of details which will confront him. In the present temper of the country he need concede nothing to the party machines. He can pick his men without respect to the politicians. He has only to say publicly that the needs of the nation demand the best service available, and public opinion will deal with attempts by Congress or any special interest to clutter up the government and lame it. The President's duty is to free himself from the worries of administrative routine, so that he may be able to devote his entire attention to the great work of shaping the larger outlines of policy.

If that is done there is no need to fear for the future. Mr. Wilson is to-day the most liberal statesman in high office, and before long he is likely to be the most powerful. He represents the best hope in the whole world. He can go ahead exultingly with the blessings of men and women upon him.



## German Political Strategy

**I**F there are any Germans who are still capable of disinterestedly analyzing the moral and practical relationship of Germany to the rest of mankind, what, we wonder, are their honest thoughts about the existing plight of the Fatherland? German political strategy has finally succeeded in uniting practically the whole of the civilized world in opposition to the Central Powers. Do thoughtful Germans really believe that their government has done nothing to deserve this enmity? Do they believe that the union of such a conglomerate mass of peoples and nations against them is a conspiracy of the unscrupulous and the predatory? Can they figure out any possible permanent benefit to their own country from a policy which at best will purchase some small territorial gains with the suspicion and hostility of all the more advanced and progressive nations? If so they must either be verging on madness themselves or they must be the only sane, upright and inoffensive people in a world of crazy cormorants.

The entrance of the United States into the war and the revolution in Russia have little apparent connection one with another, but the two events are not as disconnected as they seem. The American nation is the most populous, pacific and powerful democracy in the world, the democracy which was antecedently most friendly to Germany and which at all times has been most reluctant to join her enemies. The Russian Empire was the most populous, powerful and restless of the European autocracies, the autocracy which many democrats were predisposed to fear and distrust more than they feared and distrusted Germany. After the great war had started, with the Central Powers on one side and France, Great Britain and Russia on the other, the prime object of German political strategy should have been to prevent the two possible alterations in the relation of Germany to the other great nations, either or both of which would have been most harmful to German interests. German statesmen should have labored to keep the United States neutral, because American neutrality, quite apart from the increase in effective power which America could bring to the anti-German alliance, was necessary to Germany's moral case. As long as the United States was not involved, all the democratic nations were not aligned against Germany, and the official theory of an aggressive Einkreisung on the part of her enemies retained some plausibility. For the same reason German strategy should have aimed to keep Russia autocratic, so that the German Empire could reap the moral benefit of having as her chief enemy, and the enemy whose motives and methods at the

outbreak of the war were most questionable, the least democratic and liberal of European nations. In spite, however, of the advantages which Germany would enjoy from the perpetuation both of American neutrality and Russian autocracy, neither has been perpetuated. Russia has become a republic and the United States an anti-German belligerent. German political strategy instead of preventing these results has adopted a course which tended strongly to bring them into existence.

The United States is a geographically isolated country, connected with the rest of the world by maritime lines of communication. Its security could not be threatened, its apprehensions could not be aroused so long as some kind of law and order continued to prevail on the high seas. The issues of the European war were bound to look remote and unreal to the scattered rural communities of the American democracy, unless violent means were taken to force them on American attention. These means German statesmen proceeded to take. They did their best to bring home to the American nation the perils with which the unscrupulous conduct of a general war would threaten their democratic institutions and their safety. They deprived commerce and travel on the marine highway of all its traditional safeguards. They deliberately tried to reproduce on the American continent the European system of aggressive alliances; they deliberately challenged the Monroe Doctrine. Finally, they sought to use the hospitality which a friendly nation offered to their diplomatic agents as an opportunity to plot against that nation's laws and government. They did their best to undermine the loyalty of American citizens to the American nation and to domesticate in a peaceful and trustful community the treachery and barbarism of German military policy and methods. Thus they finally brought home to the American nation the danger to its own traditions and ideals of a world in which the modern German Empire was dominant.

The handling of German relations with Russia was equally maladroit. Of course the two countries were at war, and it was the business of German statesmen as well as the German armies to injure their Russian enemies to the best of their ability. But whatever they did to Russia they should have done nothing to undermine the power of the Russian autocracy and bureaucracy. Russia under the Romanoffs was a useful but not a dangerous enemy to Germany. It was useful because its policy was ambitious and unscrupulous and provided Germany with excuses for raising issues and threatening war. It was not dangerous, because it was corrupt, inefficient, and never certain of the loyalty of its own people. The German armies