

dangerous in being an even temporary departure from a policy of political isolation. The general apprehension was expressed most compactly by Mr. Stafford: "I hope that the term of these bonds will be but for a few years. The severance of financial ties between our government and the European Powers can come none too quickly at the close of the war, so that our government will be free to follow untrammelled its historic course of aloofness from European entanglements." Throughout all of the debate this position was taken as an axiom and not a point of argument. It was the premise of most discussions, and uncontested by the recognized administration leaders. If these men even imperfectly understand what the President meant when he said "Neutrality is no longer feasible or desirable where the peace of the world is involved," they will not in future debates permit the impression to grow that after this war is over the United States is to draw back and boast an indifference to disturbances which, though originating in other parts of the world, may again affect the life of its people.

Aside from the question of the bond issue there is one other tendency in the matter of war finance which has had little attention. This is the way in which individual congressmen are seeking to contribute to the strategy of national defense. Since the declaration of war, appropriation bills have been introduced at a rate that would rapidly consume a considerable part of the bond issue in expenditures largely of a local character. Senator Phelan, for instance, has drawn one bill for a ten million dollar naval and aviation school "on the Pacific coast," and another for a half-million dollar munitions factory at Benicia, California. Mr. Taylor has asked for a million dollars to build a munitions plant—at no particular point, provided it "be located in the fourth congressional district of Colorado." Mr. Curry wants a million dollar factory in California; Mr. Shafroth, a ten million dollar plant at Pueblo; Mr. Austin, a five million dollar plant at Knoxville; and Mr. Smoot both a factory and a service school, costing three and a quarter millions, to be constructed anywhere within the border lines of Utah. Military roads, too, are being planned for. Mr. Lobeck has brought in a bill for a paved army boulevard through eastern Nebraska; Mr. Vinson wants two million dollars for a military road in Georgia; and Mr. Raker, three and a half millions for a highway from Los Angeles north. Mr. Lobeck also has a plan for "increasing the efficiency of the United States Military and Naval Academies"—by building a two million dollar training school in the second congressional district, Nebraska.

It needs no special military knowledge to realize that with an army to be created, equipment purchased, ships to be built, and a supply of food assured, there is no possibility of a two million dollar school, or a three million dollar road in California, being completed in time to be of service in the present war. If these bills were not introduced on the familiar congressional principle that when money is to flow freely as much as possible ought to return to the fountainhead, they at least suggest what may happen throughout the war if a close watch is not kept. There is no reason to indict Congress because a number of its members are making political capital, incidentally or by design, out of a national crisis. But it is just as well to point out that the many objections which will be raised in the future against "giving the Executive too free a hand," will be mainly the protests of an outraged district consciousness.

C. M.

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## CORRESPONDENCE

### The Challenge to Pacifists

SIR: "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. But the right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things we have always carried nearest our hearts—for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world at last free." Only the pacifist who is absolutely non-resistant can fail to respond to such a call as our President has voiced for the American people, and even the non-resistant might be reminded of Bertrand Russell's one condition for the justification of the use of force: "The use of force," he says, "is justifiable when it is ordered in accordance with law by a neutral authority in the general interest." If ever, this declaration of war has been made under such conditions; and that pacifists should stand by such a noble aspiration and help to maintain such a conception of world service as President Wilson has expressed seems, to one who claims to belong to such an outcast group, a challenge too imperative to miss. How can any one but those whose daily lives have won the justification of non-resistance refuse now to bear the personal sacrifice of war? Those who have won the crown of non-resistance, for it is a crown to be won, not a declaration to be made, are

those who have not strengthened in daily living the forces of hatred, of misunderstanding, of greed and treachery; such rare personalities led by the Christ, and including in their numbers past and present such valiant souls as St. Francis, Tolstoy, Jane Addams and others, white raimented through sacrificial consecration to Brotherhood.

But the rest of us responsible in greater or less degree for the selfishness of mankind must bear the burden, the accusation, the indictment of war. For war, even this war as President Wilson has interpreted it, for us, is not noble. H. G. Wells has said in his *Italy, France and Britain at War*: "I avow myself an extreme pacifist! I do not merely want to end this war, I want to nail down war in its coffin. Modern war is an intolerable thing. . . . It is disaster. It may be a necessary disaster, . . . but for all that I insist it remains waste, disorder, disaster." It is in hearty accord with the spirit of this statement of Wells that some pacifists enter this war, not exultant, buoyantly shouting for our country's flag, but soberly, consecrated to a magnificent charge, but nevertheless humiliated, because war has come only as an accusation, a great indictment against us all, and America especially, that would-be Republic of Man, because we have not made manifest quickly enough our high destiny among the nations, have not realized to the limit even of to-day's human capacity the possibilities of our consecrated democracy. We must see these forces we have denounced but never wholly denied, those fears and hatreds and treacheries we have cried out against but not exorcised from our own spirits, we must see these dominant and uncovered in our midst, and we must take up the sword and perish by the sword with our wayward brothers. The old prophecy of the Christ sounds relentlessly out of the past as he cried out to Jerusalem, "If thou hadst known, even thou in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."

The challenge thus for us pacifists, without the justification of non-resistance, is to discern quickly and grasp tenaciously the impulses of service and self-sacrifice awakened by the dramatic appeal of war, and to develop, crystallize them so that they may be maintained forever in the life of our communities. To many who have struggled to inspire true national service in the hearts and heads of American citizens, who have discerned already "the moral equivalent for war," this intense general enthusiasm for "national preparedness" brings a sting of bitterness. But it is only the keen edge of the sword of accusation against us all, and in it the pacifist must find the constructive path of duty. We must take these new forces in our midst working at last for school and city gardens, because of food preparedness in war time, for military training in our public schools, for home making taught to our girls because of need of economy in the nation, in its time of stress, new impulse for baby welfare work because our sons are to die in battle, these forces that will consider, may be, great researchers in our university centers as to industrial fatigue, because of the need of conservation of the workers in munition factories—yes and also the outraged human cry against the sinking of the *Lusitania*, and destruction of other American non-combatants—we must take all these forces awakened to national service, and translate them into permanent habits of mind, of energy, of consecration, so that never again can our men and women stand aside when our public schools are endangered, our school gardens and playgrounds ignored, our babies ill born and forgotten, our men and women sacrificed through industrial fatigue daily, our children lost in numbers, comparable many times

over, to those sunk on the *Lusitania*, in child-laboring industries within our own land. Let us not be satisfied merely with propaganda and platforms of peace, let us not be too saddened by the bitter truth that the dramatic appeal of war is bringing reforms we could have had in peace, but let us learn how to dramatize for the future days the daily services of humanity, so as to maintain these awakened forces of citizenship. Romain Rolland calls to us in *Au dessus de la mêlée*: "Un grand peuple assailli par la guerre n'a pas seulement ses frontières à défendre; il a aussi sa raison. Il lui faut la sauver des hallucinations, des injustices, des sottises, que le fléau déchaîne. . . . S'il faut dans la paix préparer la guerre, comme dit sagesse des nations, il faut aussi dans la guerre préparer la paix."

Let us rise to meet this challenge, let us aid in defense of our hard-won spiritual frontiers of civilization, let us be aggressive in that part of the program of war preparedness which is peace preparedness, and which may endure through these dramatic national crises and be reinterpreted as consecrated services of the democracy of the future.

ISABEL KIMBALL WHITING.

## A German-American View

SIR: We are Americans of German parentage and, believing our case to be more or less typical, wish to express our attitude on the present momentous and soul-searching crisis.

Heretofore there have been many issues involved in the present war and our natural sympathies have predetermined our judgments. In the cause of the war we saw diplomatic entanglement; in the invasion of Belgium—military necessity; in the sinking of the *Lusitania*—a horrible mistake, and yet, she carried munitions; in the submarine blockade—it seemed as legal, or as right, as England's blockade. Every angle of vision showed the whole messy thing in a different light.

We read the clearest exponent of the whole situation—Bernard Shaw—and found comfort in his viewpoint. We realized that in these many-faceted questions there was much right and much wrong on each side. Our feelings decided the logical deadlock. There was no ultimate criterion whereby we could judge.

Now, however, with wonderful eloquence, President Wilson has definitely established one issue—democracy versus autocracy. Even though, perhaps, the first part of the war held no such issue, the trend of circumstances has latterly developed it. Cruel though it may be to the German people, arbitrary as its election may seem to them, accidental as the circumstances may have been which made its adoption possible, still, it *is*, it *exists*. It is now for us Americans the *sole* standard whereby we may judge.

We are convinced that as soon as those of us with German sympathies realize (and no doubt many of us have) the compulsion for decision on the basis promulgated by the President, we will give but one answer and give it with good heart, though sadly. Since this issue has been officially made it is impossible for us to have Germany win the war; there is now no alternative. And we thus earnestly support the new internationalization—and the consequently deeper nationalization—of our country with most fervent hope and growing faith that our accomplishments, measured by our declared aspirations, shall make worth while the necessary terrible sacrifice on the altar of ideals.





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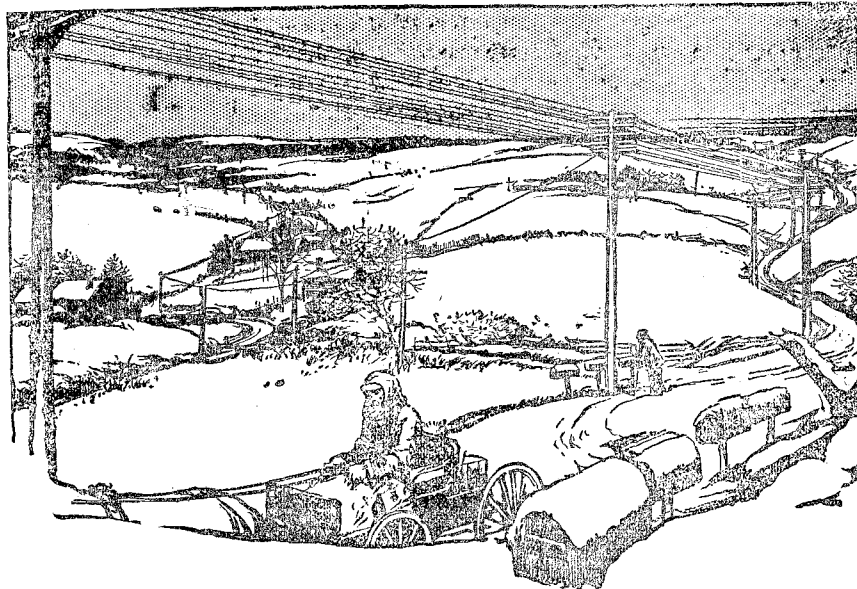
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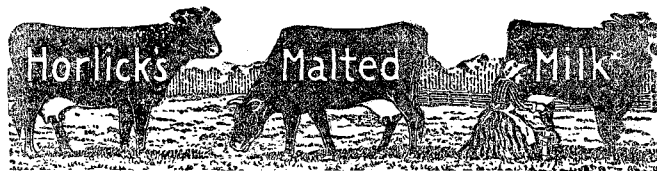
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Moreover, may it happen that the constant mouthing of such phrases as "the moral issue," will develop a deeper understanding of the great words so that we may get eyes to see further moral issues in other relations, with the growing consciousness of our social responsibilities.

For out of the dung-heap springs that most unearthly thing—a flower.

THEODORE F. MUELLER.

MARIE MUELLER.

JOHANNA MUELLER.

Jersey City, New Jersey.

LOUIS H. MUELLER.

White Plains, New York.

## A Contradictory Socialist

**SIR:** Will you permit an unknown Socialist to express what he conceives to be the convictions of the great majority of American Socialists, as opposed to the "statement from a group of prominent American Socialists."

First. The majority of American Socialists would deny the statement that "there is a difference even from the point of view of revolutionary socialism between democratic and autocratic government." To the eight signers of the statement there is a difference, but to the mass of the American people, to the sixty-seven per cent who have no property, whose lives consist of a never-ceasing, life-destroying struggle to exist, who have no thoughts except how to obtain the necessities of life—to them there is no difference. Theoretically and intellectually there is a difference, but worked out in practice there is no difference. When a man's family is starving he is not concerned whether President Wilson or Kaiser Wilhelm rules over him.

Second. The rank and file of American Socialists would deny the statement of our "intellectuals," that "it is impossible for democratic nations to disarm in the presence of autocratic nations." Had Belgium folded her arms and refused to resist, had Great Britain and France said, "we shall not fight," and "it takes two to make a quarrel," it is inconceivable that the mass of the German people, permeated, as they were and are, with ideas of internationalism, would have supported the German ruling military class in a policy of military force and aggression against the mass of the French and English people. The difficulty is that our "intellectuals" do not trust the democratic masses anywhere. They believe that the only hope of the masses is in the leadership of superior intellects like themselves. But the "democratic mass" moves aright, though it is not trusted. Witness Russia.

Third. The "democratic mass" of the Socialist party would deny, that "the proper aim of Socialist world politics, at the present time, is an alliance of the politically advanced nations for the defense of the democratic principle throughout the world." The democratic principle needs no defense by Socialists. Capitalistic self-interest is compelled to defend it. The proper aim of Socialist world politics at the present time is to define ever more and more clearly the battle line between the possessing, exploiting and the non-possessing, exploited classes, not of nations, but of all the world—to leap over all racial, social and national lines, to get beyond "democratic and autocratic" forms of government, to the fundamental international struggle between the exploiters and the exploited.

ARTHUR M. ALLEN.

Troy, New York.

## Defense by a Dramatist

**SIR:** May I comment briefly—but solemnly—on a few of the points raised by "F. H." in his review of the first performance of my Plays for Negroes, now being played at the Garrick Theater? In discussing Simon the Cyrenian the reviewer observes: "Why Procula should have pleaded so hard for Jesus was not easy to grasp." Easy enough, surely, for a reader of Matthew XXVII, 19: "When he" (Pilate) "was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him"—a verse charged with dramatic significance. Again, the reviewer asks: "And is it not possible that Simon was a poor, trembling, intimidated man, on whom the soldiers laid brutal hands?" Entirely possible. Indeed, this is probably the obvious, if not the most plausible, interpretation of the gospels' brief allusion to the man of Cyrene. But because the historical material is so excessively meager, a dramatist is forced to create his own Simon; and my interpretation is, I submit (still solemnly), not only rather more legitimate than the obvious one, but of far greater dramatic value. Finally, Madison Sparrow, in *The Rider of Dreams*, is less a moralist than a poet, but as the text of the play clearly shows, he is no sense a criminal. It is a misconstruction of the individual character and of the type to assume, as does this review, that he is "light-fingered."

RIDGELY TORRENCE.

New York City.

## Praise for British Land Policy

**SIR:** News comes that the English government is asserting its right to evict farmers who will not cultivate their land to its full capacity, and to substitute others who will cultivate. Title to land is made to depend upon the use of the land for the public good. This is a splendid forward step. Deplorable beyond measure, however, is the fact that the needs and claims of the public to be fed become a paramount consideration only under pressure of war. Many traditions, many institutions are being tested and purged in this crisis. Our selfish and dishonest system of land tenure may not survive it long.

MALCOLM C. BURKE.

Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

## Contributors

to this issue

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# The New REPUBLIC

## Spring Literary Review

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### The Bondage of Shaw

JUST as Synge makes the ordinary run of contemporary plays sound poor in speech, as Chékhov makes them look too tidily arranged, as Hauptmann shows up their author's failure to compose them with anything deeper than ingenuity, so Shaw makes them appear unintelligent, the work of specialists in theatricals, of men without ideas.

At the theatre, watching a farce, one often guesses that its point of departure was found by answering a question like this: In precisely what circumstances would an almost normal person refrain from telling something which even an idiot, were the circumstances ever so little different, would have stopped the play by telling at once?

Mr. Shaw needs none of these doctored situations to start his farces with. They get under way as simply as his comedies, move at the same pace, and pursue the same end. You cannot, in fact, divide his plays into comedy and farce. All of them, one with a thicker and another with a thinner veil over its serious purpose, seek to destroy illusion.

Of course all comedies try more or less to do this, and the better they succeed the better they satisfy the classic idea of comedy. But the scope of comedy is so wide that the illusions may be anything you please. In Miss Austen, for example, they are Emma's illusions as to the feeling of one individual towards another. The mistakes corrected by Molière are graver, more anti-social, matter more to the community. Yet Molière keeps always a faith in the old wisdom of the world. The self-deceptions he exposes are tried before judges assumed to be competent, before a society whose general good sense is taken for granted. Mr. Shaw denies the existence of any such common sense. He is forever telling contemporary society the bad news that illusion is part of its structure. The self-deceiver he assaults and exposes is society itself.

No wonder such a radical fighter puzzled us all at first. His appearance in our meaningless theatre was more surprising than the first appearance, about eighteen-eighty-something, of grape fruit on our tables, many sizes larger than our familiar breakfast dishes, and how much more pungent. Nowadays all grape fruit tastes alike. So with Mr. Shaw's plays. They are as pungent as ever, they are larger than of old, but they are no longer new. His late plays are not newer than his earliest. His originality is not a plant of slow growth. Seldom has an artist-philosopher, coming so early into his fortune of convictions, reached the age of sixty with fewer losses of conviction, fewer gains, so little change in the nature of his investments. He believes what he believed and feels what he felt. Hence his uniformity. None of his plays differs from another in tone so widely as *The Master Builder*

differs from *An Enemy of Society*, or in doctrine so widely as *Une Visite de Noces* differs from *La Femme de Claude*. Shaw's is the work of a witty and pugnacious demonstrator, never depressed by the brutality and injustice all about him, always impatient of the lying done in their defense, enjoying mightily his attacks on these lies.

Dumas fils had an even greater talent than Mr. Shaw's for preaching from the stage, but his propaganda was immensely less important. In *Une Visite de Noces*, and everywhere else, his attention is fixed upon some variety of love. Mr. Shaw looks further afield, knows ever so much more, thinks ever so much more, pays attention to more parts of life. He has examined war, property, education, marriage, home life, romantic love, as they exist in the British world, and he sees that they are bad. His method of proceeding against them is not to turn a full stream of anger directly upon these institutions themselves. His weapon is not anger against things and facts. It is impatience with the romantic idealism which keeps evil alive by seeing things and facts as they are not and by telling lies about them. War, for example, is hateful to Mr. Shaw, but his way of getting rid of it is by exposing and ridiculing the stuff and nonsense talked about military glory. So strong is his preference for taking this way that sometimes one suspects him of detesting conventional notions of military glory more cordially than he detests the realities of war.

Pestilent archaic institutions are the objects of his attack, but its method is such that he seems to be giving most of his attention to the flattering reflection of these institutions in the conventional idealizing mind. He is much less a realistic describer and exhibitor than a preacher of the realistic habit. Learn to see things realistically, great things and small, and the future will be better than the present. Once the tribe of romantic liars has been exterminated there will be no war in the world, no profiteering, no parasites living in idleness. Home life will be better and there will be less of it.

Shaw the propagandist, the physician to an ailing society, is so effectively in earnest that everybody who can take his medicine at all comes sooner or later to take it seriously. Most of us pass through several stages. At first we are puzzled and amused by these plays, in which the speeches glitter like razors after a cakewalk, and the mots d'auteur are brilliant as poppies in the wheat. Then it disconcerts us to discover that this paradoxist means bodily harm to the existing order. Next we are exhilarated and stimulated and compelled almost to think for ourselves by his doctrine, so lucid and emphatic and cocksure. It is at a later stage, when we are trying to escape from the prison of Mr. Shaw's common sense, that we take him most seriously.