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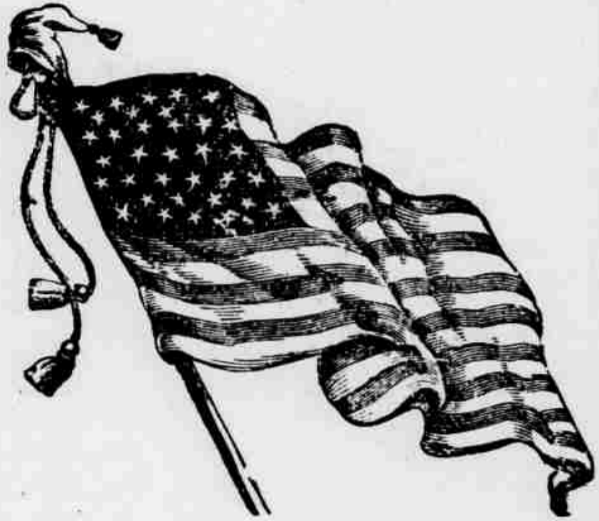
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Tuesday ----- July 3, 1917



HOW THE WAR CAME TO AMERICA.

The outbreak of war in 1914 caught this nation by surprise. The peoples of Europe had had at least some warnings of the coming storm, but to us such a blind, savage onslaught on the ideals of civilization had appeared impossible.

The war was incomprehensible. Either side was championed here by millions living among us who were of European birth. Their contradictory accusation threw our thoughts into disarray, and in the first chaotic days we could see no clear issue, that affected our national policy.

But in the very first days of the war our government foresaw that complications on the seas might put us in grave risk of being drawn into the conflict. No neutral nation could foretell what violations of its vital interests at sea might be attempted by the belligerents.

For any discussions that might arise, no arbitration treaty existed between the United States and the German government. This was from no fault of ours. We had tried to establish with Germany the same treaty relations we had with Great Britain and 19 other nations. But these overtures had been rejected. And this action on the part of the Imperial German government was only one example of its whole system of diplomacy.

In the first year of the war the government of Germany stirred up among its people a feeling of resentment against the United States on account of our insistence upon our right as a neutral nation to trade in munitions with the belligerent powers.

Their appeals to us in the present war were not to observe international law, but to revise it in their interest.

To write into international law that neutrals should not trade in munitions would be to hand over the world to the rule of the nation with the largest armament factories. Such a policy the United States of America could not accept.

But our principal controversy with the German government, and the one which rendered the situation at once acute, rose out of their announcement of a sea zone where their submarines would operate in violation of all accepted principles of international law. Our indignation at such a threat was soon rendered passionate by the sinking of the Lusitania. This attack upon our rights was not only grossly illegal; it defied the fundamental concepts of humanity.

Evidence of the bad faith of the Imperial German government soon piled up on every hand. Country official agents of the Central Powers—protected from criminal prosecution by diplomatic immunity—conspired against our internal peace, placed spies and agents provocateurs throughout the length and breadth of our land, and even in high positions of trust in departments of our government. While expressing a cordial friendship for the people of the United States, the government of Germany had its agents at work both in Latin America and Japan.

They were inciting to insurrection in Cuba, in Haiti, and in Santo Domingo; their hostile hand was stretched out to take the Danish Islands; and everywhere in South America they were abroad sowing the seeds of dissension, trying to stir up one nation against another and all against the United States.

Recall of the Austro-Hungarian ambassador and of the German military and naval attaches was demanded. Proof of their criminal violations of our hospitality was presented to their governments. But these governments in reply offered no apologies nor did they issue reprimands. It became clear that such intrigue was their settled policy.

In the meantime the attacks of the German submarines upon the lives and property of American citizens had gone on; the protests of our government were now sharp and ominous; and this nation was rapidly being drawn into a state of war.

The break would have come sooner if our government had not been restrained by the hope that saner counsels might still prevail in Germany. For it was well known to us that the German people had to a very large extent been kept in ignorance of many of the secret crimes of their government against us.

The peace move of the German government—an identical note on behalf of the German Empire, Austria-Hungaria, Bulgaria, and Turkey, sent through neutral powers on December 12, 1916, to the governments of the allies proposing negotiations for peace; and from a thousand sources, official and unofficial, the word came to Washington that unless the neutrals used their influence to bring the war to an end on terms dictated from Berlin, Germany and her allies would consider themselves henceforth free from any obligations to respect the rights of neutrals. The Kaiser ordered the neutrals to exert pressure on the entente to bring the war to an abrupt end, or to beware of the consequences.

On January 16, 1917, unknown to the people of Germany, Herr Zimmerman, their Secretary of Foreign Affairs, had secretly dispatched a note to their minister in Mexico, informing him of the German intention to repudiate the Sussex pledge and instructing him to offer to the Mexican government New Mexico and Arizona if Mexico would join with Japan in attacking the United States.

On the last day of January, 1917, Count Bernstorff handed to Mr. Lansing a note in which his government announced its purpose to intensify and render more ruthless the operations of their submarines at sea, in a manner against which our government had protested from the beginning. The German Chancellor also stated before the Imperial Diet that the reason this ruthless policy had not been earlier employed was simply because the Imperial government had not then been ready to act. In brief, under the guise of friendship and the cloak of false promises, it had been preparing this attack.

No "overt" act, however, was ordered by our government until

Count Bernstorff had reached Berlin and Mr. Gerard was in Washington.

And so, having exhausted every resource of patience, our government on the 12th of March finally issued orders to place armed guards on our merchant ships.

Judging the German government now in the light of our own experience through the long and patient years of our honest attempt to keep the peace, we could see the Great Autocracy and read her record through the war.

With a fanatical faith in the destiny of German kultur as the system that must rule the world, the Imperial Government actions have through years of boasting, double dealing, and deceit tended toward aggression upon the rights of others. And if there still be any doubt as to which nation began this war, there can no uncertainty as to which one was most prepared, most exultant at the chance, and ready instantly to march upon other nations—even those who had given no offense.

All this we know from our own experience with the Imperial Government. As they have dealt with Europe, so they have dealt with us and with all mankind. And so out of these years the conviction has grown that until the German Nation is divested of such rulers democracy cannot be safe.

On the 2nd of April, 1917, the president read to the new congress his message, in which he asked the representatives of the nation to declare the existence of a state of war, and in the early hours of the 6th of April the house by an overwhelming vote accepted the joint resolution which had already passed the senate:

"Whereas the Imperial German government has committed repeated acts of war against the government and the people of the United States of America: Therefore be it

"Resolved by the senate and house of Representatives of the

United States of America in assembled, that the state of war between the United States and the Imperial German Government which has thus been thrust upon the United States is hereby formally declared; and that President be, and he is hereby, authorized and directed to employ the entire naval and military forces of the United States and the resources of the government to carry on war against the Imperial German Government; and to bring the conflict to a successful termination all the resources of the country are hereby pledged by the congress of the United States."

Neutrality was a thing of the past. The time had come when the President's proud prophecy was fulfilled:

"There will come that day when the world will say, 'This America that we thought was full of a multitude of contrary counsels now speaks with the Great volume of the heart's accord, and that great heart of America has behind it the supreme moral force of righteousness and hope and the liberty of mankind.'"

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