

important privilege, the right to take an active part in the great industrial and political struggles that will break out in this country in the near future.

But it may also be the means of arousing the American working class from its attitude of mental blindness and political indifference.

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AMERICA IN THE WAR—THE REASON WHY

The entry of the United States into the World War is such a simple business proposition that it would seem quite impossible to make any mistake as to reasons why. The facts are so plain and unmistakable that it would seem even the blind could not help seeing—the glare they throw is so striking that you might almost touch it with your fingers.

But, truly, none are so blind as those that will not see. And so we are treated to interminable discussions as to the reasons why the United States which has kept out of the slaughterhouse for over two and a half years should have entered it just now—and the longer the discussion the less satisfactory the result.

That is to say, as far as throwing any real light on the subject is concerned. For, as far as *finding* a cause is concerned, there is no real difficulty: *this result* precedes the discussion, and is naturally found at its end. We are in this war in order to preserve democracy against the onslaughts of German Militarism, to protect the international order and sanctity of treaty obligations, etc.; or, we are in it because capitalism means war, capitalists always want war, the capitalists of this country have wanted war from the first day. The capitalists of this country are bound hand and foot to international capitalism—which means, of course, Great Britain—and we have therefore been pro-ally all along, etc. We all know the rest on both sides—whether it is dished up to us in its more vulgar forms from the soap boxers on both sides, or in pseudo-scientific form from editorial sanctums or other “high quarters” on either side of the house.

There is no difficulty there: you can always “find” a result that you have had in your pocket all along—it is much akin to the “finding” of an answer to a mathematical problem propounded

in a text-book, after you have looked it up at the back of the book. The real difficulty of those who attempt to explain our entry into the war at this time is not in finding the answer, but in getting at it—just as the pupil who found his answer at the back of the text-book encounters his real difficulty when it comes to showing the operations by which he arrived at it. And when it comes at “arriving” at the reason for our entry into the war—that is show a *consistent course of action* which *kept us out of the war* for over two and a half years and *brought us into it now*—there is a touching unanimity of confusion among the advocates of the war as well as its official opponents. And no wonder—there is enough in the situation to make any good orthodox formula-repeating citizen on either side go mad with vexation.

Here is a great country watching and looking on at the greatest world cataclysm that history has recorded without apparently taking any interest in it, and then suddenly it plunges right in. Here is a president who is so punctiliously neutral and so meticulously innocent of any knowledge of the sins that have beset the old world that he enjoins upon his people the solemn duty of being neutral not only in deed but also in thought; and then suddenly he plunges us right into the abyss of hell. Has the country been sane for two and a half years and then suddenly gone mad; or has it been callously unfaithful in its obligations to right and humanity for that length of time and then been suddenly awakened to its duty? Has the president kept us that long out of a righteous war, or has he now brought us into an unrighteous one? Does the capitalist class make the foreign policy of this country or does it not? If it does why did we stay out of the war so long, and if it doesn't why did we enter it? Is Mr. Woodrow Wilson the man who could have kept the wolf of “Wall Street” from our door for over two and a half years, then where is his strength now? Who was the Delilah that has shorn the locks of this high-minded idealist,” and what were “the little scissors” with which she did it?

Verily, these be great puzzles. No wonder the “defenders of the faith” on both sides find themselves in a quandary—and therefore write long and argue in a circle, if they argue at all.