

The *New Republic* has recently attempted the thankless job of showing "The Evolution of a National Policy in relation to the Great War"—in plain English: an apology for the seemingly inconsistent conduct of Mr. Woodrow Wilson. We recommend the performance to the careful attention of our readers. This journal of high intellectualism occupies with respect to Mr. Wilson the position which Judge Story of the United States Supreme Court occupied with respect to Chief Justice Marshall. Tradition has it, that whenever the great Chief Justice had made up his mind on some political decision he would turn to Judge Story with some such remark as the following: "Story, here is the decision; you can pepper it with authorities." It has been the function of the *New Republic* for some time past to "pepper with authorities"—supply acceptable general principles—for the particular measures taken by Mr. Wilson in the "due course of business" of managing the affairs of these United States for those in whose interests they have been managed by most of his predecessors and in whose interests they will be managed by his successors for some time to come. The "Evolution of a National Policy" was an attempt by the *New Republic* to perform this function in the present instance. And we recommend it to our readers, in order that they may see for themselves the labored attempt and the dismal failure. The failure must not be laid, however, at the door of the editors of the *New Republic*—it was in the nature of the job. No one could find general principles—at least not such that could be avowed by a "high-minded idealist" and his apologists—for a policy which was dictated principally by the exigencies of the business situation. And so we find the poor *New Republic* whining at the end of its great effort at evolving—in this really pitiful wise—in an effort to get the real "administration" of this country that be to do something that will cover its nakedness and permit its apologists to fall back on some kind of general principles:

"Our reading of the neutrality law, ever since the war began, has been partial to England. We have acquiesced in the British blockade; we have evinced a readiness to go all lengths to curb the submarine. We have foregone the right we claimed to send bread to Germany. We have insisted on our right to send muni-

tions to England. *We have made hundreds of millions of war profits by this procedure. Was this our motive?*"

To which the spirits of hell shout the mockingly-responsive echo: "*This our motive.*"

The fact—the only undeniable, outstanding fact—is that "we" have done a wonderful business, made untold millions, by following the "procedure" described by the *New Republic*, and that this result was the *motive* for that procedure. Try what they may, the apologists of the present war cannot get away from this fact, which overshadows all else.

Nor can the opponents of this war get away from this fact try what *they* may—except that it is extremely stupid of them to try. Why resort to alleged eternal principles of capitalist production, when it only befogs an issue so clear, and the clarity of which is so much in our favor? Why assert things that are neither true nor helpful? Neither our capitalist class nor Mr. Wilson were or are either pro-British or pro-Ally as such. Mr. Wilson's only honest and frank statement since the great war broke out was when he asserted to be simply "pro-American." And it is our business to follow him up and show what "pro-American" means in this connection. Only then will we be telling the truth, and telling it to some effect.

When the war broke out, and no one knew who would control the sea, or how far, we were "strictly neutral" as between our prospective customers. Business is business. And it was none of our business to do, say, or think anything against the bad things that we are now to fight or in favor of the good things that we are now to defend. A customer is a customer, and German money is as good as English. We therefore stood aside, ready to serve all comers. Then came the British blockade against Germany, which interfered with our right to sell food to Germany. We protested, for it is a libel upon our government to say that it is concerned only about munition makers. It is the agent of our business interests—all business interests, food as well as munitions, and no invidious distinctions made.

Great Britain did not heed our protest. We did not go to war with her. For, while not heeding our protest, she removed the