

for old, worn out or unattractive war slogans would do credit to an experienced shell game promoter.

Look at Germany, for instance. When the war-fanfare sounded in August, 1914, the German people were called upon the war-path to defend German "Kultur" against Russian barbarism. In order to make the fairy tale a little more realistic, lying reports were spread of invasion by "Russian hordes" into German territory. The lurid picture of the knout-swinging Cossack was held before the eyes of a horror-stricken people. Russian conditions were described in the darkest colors. Until the purpose, the capturing of the Social Democratic Party and the working class in general for the war, had been accomplished. Then, with a suddenness that does credit to the credulity of the German people, Russia vanished behind the scenes and England appeared upon the boards, as the real foe of the German nation. "Perfides Albion" was threatening German greatness, its political and economic independence. Great Britain was the cause and the instigator of the war. And now the whole of Germany, and particularly the middle class, for whose benefit this new bag of tricks was being displayed, damned the perfidy of England as thoroughly as it had cursed Russia a few months before.

But why go so far afield? Have we not witnessed a parallel case right here in our own country? Why did the United States—read: Congress terrorized by the Wilson Administration—sent a declaration of war to Germany? Because—according to the official declaration—the ruthless submarine warfare announced by the German government threatened the life and property of American citizens and the famous national honor of this country. But the people refused to betray the necessary enthusiasm for a war that was begun palpably in the interest of large capitalist profiteers, and quite as evidently for the purpose of protecting the exceedingly lucrative trans-Atlantic trade with the Entente. The present administration, which has always been peculiarly adept in feeling the pulse of public opinion, soon recognized the hopelessness of this appeal and simply changed the watchword. Our national interests were relegated to the background, and the United States forgot its

profits, forgot its trans-Atlantic trade, and proclaimed that henceforward it had but one aim: "To make the world safe for Democracy." It cannot be denied that the professorial schoolmaster in the White House on this occasion once more proved himself to be an exceedingly adroit politician.

At any rate, according to the official version, we are conducting this war in the interest of democracy. The wicked U-Boat Campaign is but rarely mentioned in passing. Wall Street, the Steel, Powder and Copper Trusts, the ammunition industry and the meat packers, the food speculators, down to the meanest corner grocer who thoroughly utilizes the "situation" for his own purposes—they all have but one aim: to make the world safe for Democracy. . . .

Three months have passed since we first went into the war, and have given us an opportunity to examine it a little more closely. But, peculiarly, no matter how carefully we search, this war for and through democracy—at least as far as its effects at home are concerned—looks to us confoundedly like that of the autocracies of Germany and Austria-Hungary and the democracies of Great Britain and France. Reaction here, reaction there; everywhere curtailment and complete annulment of the rights of the people in every belligerent nation. Constitutional guarantees are overthrown, governmental anarchy and despotism reign unchecked, aggravated, in this country, by the arbitrary rulings and acts of subordinate officials and courts.

The first gift that this great war brought us was conscription, selective conscription. The conviction that we expressed in the first number of THE CLASS STRUGGLE, that graft, nepotism and corruption of all kinds would find a fertile field in the proposed conscription act, has already proven to be but too true. Each of the two large parties, wherever it holds the power in the state, has packed the Exemption Boards with its own men, and will see to it, in the words of the Democratic ex-Congressman Palmer of Pennsylvania, that the sons of their political opponents are sent to the front, while their own sons, and those of their party friends, stay at home. That