

AMERICANS, BE ON GUARD!

THE country has been carefully groomed to applaud Mr. Bryan's note to Germany as a masterpiece. As a matter of fact it is not a masterpiece but the most serious blunder of shirt-sleeve diplomacy. On top it is all velvet, but it is cast iron underneath, and we are afraid that the cast iron is poisoned. Mr. Bryan has not only spoiled the American case by overstating it, but he has brought the country face to face with civic discord and foreign war. We hear that this is the time when we must all "get behind" the President. It is on the contrary the time when all patriotic Americans must voice emphatically their disapproval of his policy, if they think that his policy is wrong. If, by our silence now, we permit the country to drift into war it will be too late to protest.

We pride ourselves upon being a democracy, yet we permit the President to seclude himself for several days and then, without consulting with the people, take a step which brings us at once before the greatest danger—both external and internal—that the Republic has ever confronted. If we enter the war, we shall break forever with our ancient policy of avoiding entangling alliances. We shall be drawn into the whirlpool of European politics against the wishes of the vast majority of Americans. If the country were in imminent danger of a foreign attack criticism of the act of the Administration would not be desirable. But there is no danger of the German Army leaving its trenches and marching across the ocean to invade the United States. It is equally unlikely that the American Navy will succeed where the British Navy has failed. We have the right to insist upon discussion before an irreparable breach has been made.

Many Americans have not condemned Mr. Bryan's note because they read it with the impression of the President's fine Philadelphia speech fresh in their minds. A careful analysis will reveal the wide discrepancy between the President's speech and Mr. Bryan's note. The sober second thought of the people will confirm the opinion that in our protest to Germany we have far exceeded our rights. Mr. Bryan has not merely stated our claims based on the loss of the *Gulflight* and the *Lusitania* but he has taken upon himself to deny to Germany the only weapon that she can wield on the sea. If we have no right to deprive England of the advantage she derives from her dominion over the sea, we have no right to impair Germany's superiority

under the sea. England's oversea fleet blockades at a long distance the harbors of Germany. Germany's undersea fleet blockades, also at a long distance, the harbors of England. Every ship that attempts to run the oversea or the undersea blockade with contraband of war must bear the risk attaching from time immemorial to such an enterprise.

The official announcement of the German Admiralty makes it clear that it was not foreseen that the *Lusitania* would sink so quickly. In fact, the *Lusitania* would not have gone down so quickly but for the explosion of the munitions of war in her hold. If we permit American passengers to embark on floating arsenals in spite of the German warning we have no right to blame Germany for our criminal negligence.

Our appeal to humanity must read like a travesty to those Germans whose brothers and sons have been slain or maimed by American bullets. Recently the *American Machinist* printed an advertisement of a new machine for the production of shrapnel. In the advertisement it was stated that the shrapnel in question bursts into smaller particles than any other kind of shrapnel, and that the fragments are poisonous. The advertisers boasted that there was no antidote in existence, and that the soldiers wounded by even the smallest splinter would die in great agony within a few hours. Did the *Lusitania* carry such shrapnel? We do not know. But can we blame Germany if she sinks every boat carrying to her enemies such hellish devices? Would the United States permit such traffic to go on against herself if it could possibly help it? What right have we to prate of humanity while we gain sordid profit from instruments of torture and murder?

Mr. Bryan claims that he was not officially apprised of Germany's warning. Mr. Bryan's memory must be very short, if he has already forgotten the formal note of the German Government delivered in February in which Germany's intentions with regard to the war zone were clearly set forth.

There is no question that Germany is willing to meet us halfway. She will undoubtedly promise safe conduct to any American passenger ship bearing a certificate from the United States Government or from the German Consul-General that she carries no munitions of war. Germany cannot desist from her submarine warfare so long as England keeps up her illegal blockade and her attempt to starve Germany's women and

children. Germany's infraction of what was once international law is merely a retaliatory measure.

We have not taken any action against England's lawlessness. We cannot therefore rightfully protest against Germany's measure of defense. If we do, and if we refuse to accept a reasonable compromise, we are irresistibly led to the conclusion that the Administration is a tacit ally of Great Britain. If Mr. Bryan had simultaneously dispatched a note to Great Britain protesting against her violations of International Law we would still think that he had exceeded the limits of moderation in his note to Germany, but we should have no reason to doubt his sincerity.

All patriotic Americans, irrespective of descent, owe

unflinching loyalty to their country, but they do not thereby forfeit the right of free speech. We shall not permit Mr. Bryan's blunders and the hurrahs of dangerous demagogues of the Roosevelt type to drag our country into war against our will and our better judgment.

War would lead perhaps not to a revolution but it would create a rift in the heart of our citizenship. It would take centuries to bury the memories of such a conflict. We feel sure that Germany will make every possible concession to avoid a conflict. If a conflict should arise nevertheless, the blame will rest on Washington, not on Berlin.

GEORGE SYLVESTER VIERECK.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE NEUTRALS

IN his speech before the Senate announcing the severance of diplomatic relations with Germany, the President expressed the hope that all neutrals would follow the example of the United States. The President plainly appealed to the one remaining impartial forum of public opinion: he deliberately sought the judgment of the neutrals. Now the neutrals have spoken, and their verdict is evidently against us.

All neutrals protest, in terms more or less emphatic, against Germany's violation of their rights. They could do no less. The same neutrals protested with equal vigor against the violations of their rights by Great Britain. They have not broken with Great Britain. They are equally unwilling to break with Germany.

The United States addressed a lackadaisical protest to Great Britain, while protesting in the most drastic language known to diplomacy against Germany's measures, although Germany's acts in defiance of international law were provoked entirely by the previous acts of Great Britain. The United States could have maintained the freedom of the seas by observing the same impartial attitude toward both groups of belligerents. We have chosen instead to break with Germany. The result, unless Germany's submarine campaign is successful, will be to strengthen the stranglehold of Great Britain upon the high roads of the sea.

China alone of all neutrals is said to threaten with a rupture of diplomatic relations. The same press dispatch which informs us of this threat also tells us that the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people is pro-German. It is evident, therefore, that if China should actually take such a step, she will not be a free agent. She will be merely another helpless country dragooned into the war by the Allies. So far China has not recalled her minister from Berlin. All other neutrals have rejected our offer in the plainest language compatible with the etiquette of diplomacy.

Our precipitate rupture with Germany, far from strengthening our bonds with South America, has actually wrecked the understanding existing between us and the A B C powers. Carranza, judging by his ap-

peal for an embargo, likewise adopts a view of neutrality at variance with the views adopted by Mr. Lansing. It may be urged that the powers contiguous to Germany are swayed by the fear of sharing the fate of Roumania, Serbia, Montenegro and Belgium. This cannot be true of our South American sister republics. However, we are not of the opinion that either Sweden or Holland is actuated by cowardice. Swiss courage is proverbial. Yet Switzerland refused to break. Holland, throughout her history, has never failed to protect her rights. Sweden has not been afraid to take vigorous action against the British paper blockade, whereas the United States was content with a paper protest.

In the Second Chamber of Parliament, the Dutch Premier Vandenlinden declared: "There is now no more reason for the Government to change its international policy than on the occasion of previous violations of international law. *The Government remains resolutely attached to the policy of strict impartiality, and maintains its resolve to offer armed resistance to any violations of our territory or sovereign rights by any power whatsoever.* The Government hopes by determination and tact to overcome the difficulties resulting from the international situation."

This speech was loudly cheered. Holland refuses to break with Germany, as a matter of elemental justice. Having failed to take action against previous breaches of international law by the Allies, she cannot throw down the gauntlet to Germany now. Holland knows that, in spite of the losses inflicted upon her by German submarines, the German Empire is fighting for the freedom of the seas. The defeat of Germany means the end of maritime freedom for all nations, large or small.

Sweden, even more courageous than the cautious statesmen of Holland, sternly rebukes the United States for its partisanship on behalf of one group of belligerents. The Swedish Foreign Minister K. A. Wallenberg, delivered the following note to the American Minister, Ira Nelson Morris. Sweden speaks not merely for herself, but for the three Scandinavian countries:

"The policy followed by the Royal Government during the war has been one of *strictly impartial neutrality*. The Royal Government has done everything in its power faithfully to fulfill all the duties which this policy imposes upon it, and at the same time it has rendered effective as far as possible the rights derived therefrom.

"With a view to obtaining a practical result in upholding the principles of international law, the Royal Government has several times addressed itself to neutral powers in order to effect cooperation, with the aforesaid object in view. *Above all, the Royal Government has not failed to submit to the Government of the United States a proposal to this effect.*

"*The Royal Government has observed with great regret that the interests of the United States have not permitted it to accept these proposals.* The steps thus taken by the Royal Government have led to the taking of common measures among Sweden, Denmark, and Norway with regard to the two belligerent groups.

"In the policy followed by the Royal Government in order to maintain its neutrality and to safeguard the legitimate rights of the country, the Royal Government, alive to the indescribable sufferings which from day to day more cruelly oppress all humanity, is ready to seize every opportunity which offers itself to contribute to the realization of a near and durable peace. Consequently it hastened to associate itself with the noble initiative taken by the President, with a view to examining the possibility of instituting negotiations between the belligerents.

"The proposal, which forms the subject of the present correspondence has as its aim the shortening of the evils of the war, but *the Government of the United States has chosen as a means of arriving at this end a method absolutely contrary to the principles which have guided the policy of the Royal Government up to the present hour.*

"The Royal Government, supported by public opinion, confirmed by the unanimous solicitations of the country's representatives, intends to follow in the future, as in the past, a *policy of neutrality and impartiality towards both belligerent groups.*"

When Sweden and other neutral governments appealed to the United States for joint action against the violations of neutral rights by both groups of belligerents, the Government of the United States coldly refused its cooperation. How, then, can we expect Sweden or any honest neutral to join a neutral league formed exclusively against Germany? The American Government, through a series of deplorable blunders, permitted itself to be maneuvered into a position where a severance of diplomatic relations with Germany was almost inevitable. It would be madness for others, who have not shared in our blunders, to follow us to the edge of the precipice. We have failed to champion their rights. Why should they carry the burden of our error?

The neutrals have decided against war with the Central Powers. Their judgment coincides with the verdict of the American people. The President has branded the British long-distance blockade as "illegal, ineffective and indefensible." He should have been satisfied to designate in similar manner the German blockade of Great Britain. The pro-Ally argument that Great Britain violates our property rights whereas Germany jeopardizes the lives of our citizens is dishonest. British mine fields are as much of a menace to American lives as German torpedoes. In fact they are a greater menace because the torpedo can see, whereas the mine is blind.

If American ships had invaded the prohibited mine-fields of Great Britain, American lives would have been forfeited. No American lives were lost because we obeyed the British orders in council. If we observe the German regulations as faithfully as we observe the regulations imposed upon us by Great Britain, the German submarine campaign will not entail the loss of a single American life. It is now proposed to arm or convoy American merchantmen. This measure is directed solely against the Germans. If we insist upon our right to pass through the restricted British area, past English squadrons, into neutral harbors, if we use our guns "for defensive purposes only"—against British warships, our vessels will be blown to pieces and American lives will be lost. We prefer to obey British orders with servile docility. How then, in the name of neutrality or justice, can we arm our ships against the Germans?

If we had taken energetic measures against Great Britain in the first instance, the British Blockade would have been broken. There would have been no need of retaliation. If our ships are now doubly barred and if we must submit to a double invasion of our rights or participate in a disastrous war we have no one to blame but ourselves. If the Government had convoyed our ships carrying non-contraband cargoes and mails through the British blockade, we would be justified in convoying our ships through the encircling line of Germany's submarines. We deny to Germany a weapon that we grant to Great Britain. It is now proposed to use against Germany a weapon that we refuse to employ against England. Unfairness could go no further.

If we can reconcile it with our honor to permit our ships to be searched in Halifax or Falmouth, we can hardly debase ourselves by marking our ships in such manner as Germany prescribes in order to insure their safe passage through the restricted area. This is the situation in a nutshell. This is how the matter appears to Congress. This is how it is viewed by the American people.

The Central Powers and the American Government can still arrive at a satisfactory agreement. The President cannot have forgotten his magnificent vision of peace. We cannot believe that he is ready to sacrifice this vision. The neutral nations have shown the way. Words, Mr. President, are the only barrier between our present predicament and a peaceful solution. Heed the voice of justice, not the sinister rumbling of Wall Street. Dismiss your lawyers, and consult the common sense of the people. Distrust the British-owned newspapers; if you doubt the overwhelming demand for peace, let the country decide by a referendum the issue of peace or war.

GEORGE SYLVESTER VIREECK.

Why We Change Our Name Again

Viereck's (1917-1920); Feb 28, 1917; 6, 4; American Periodicals
pg. 52

Why We Change Our Name Again

RECENTLY THE FATHERLAND changed its name to THE NEW WORLD in order to emphasize its Americanism. Inquiry revealed that no publication under that name was registered at the Patent Office. An inquiry at the New York Post Office yielded the same result. It now appears, however, that a Catholic periodical by that name is published under the auspices of the Diocese of Chicago. We therefore modified our name by adding the word VIERECK'S to NEW WORLD in order to differentiate our periodical from our ecclesiastic contemporary. The publishers of the Chicago weekly nevertheless feel that we are infringing upon their interests. We could no doubt sustain our legal right to use the name as modified by us, but our conception of the ethics of journalism compels us to yield gracefully to the claims of the publishers of our Chicago namesake. Henceforth our publication will be known as,

VIERECK'S—The American Weekly

Though we may change our names our convictions remain unaltered. The words of Carl Schurz: "My country, right or wrong: if right, to be kept right; if wrong, to be set right," will continue to inspire us in the future as in the past. We shall stand like rock against the sinister cabal exposed by Senator Stone to plunge our country into England's war. We shall attempt to provide unfailingly our weekly antidote against the poison surreptitiously deposited by Sir Gilbert Parker's young men in the wells of public opinion. The name adopted by us denotes both our determination to continue the battle for genuine Americanism and our keen sense of personal responsibility to our readers and our country.

GEORGE SYLVESTER VIERECK.

America First and America Only

AT this writing, the scales of fate incline to war. The United States will join the hideous carnival of slaughter. With Bryan, Hearst, La Follette, Stone and Hitchcock, we demanded that the agony of war be spared us. If Congress, however, decides otherwise, there is no appeal from its verdict, save to the tribunal of history. We shall only register a dissenting opinion, and then prepare ourselves to serve our country to the best of our ability, hoping that the course of events will justify its decision. We pray that in any struggle between Germany and the United States the contention of our Government for American rights will be victoriously vindicated, but we are under no obligation to include the Allies in our prayers.

If we enter the war, we must fight for American principles solely. We refuse to be drawn into the Cecil Rhodes conspiracy for the reunion of the English-speaking world under the Union Jack. If we fight, we must define our aims. When we have achieved our ends, we must cease fighting. We refuse to fight for England. We refuse to fight for Japan. We refuse to fight for France, Italy, Belgium, Serbia, China, or Montenegro. Let us not risk our battleships to safeguard British commerce when England keeps her ships in English harbors, protected by nets and mines. Let us not pit our raw troops against the veterans of three years' warfare. We are ready to fight for our country, not for foreign kings or foreign traders. Our watchword must be: America First and America Only.

It is possible that Germany, taking a leaf from the book of President Wilson, may be too proud to fight a new foe. Contenting with a world in arms, she may deliberately ignore us. The war in Europe will presumably end before we can bring our weight to bear in the conflict. Germany has made many miscalculations in the past, but it is unlikely that she has miscalculated the effectiveness of subsea warfare. So sane and cautious a man as Bethmann-Hollweg would not have staked the future of the German Empire upon so frail a weapon as the submarine, unless he was absolutely convinced that it was the symbol of victory. We must trust to the wisdom of our statesmen to see to it that we are not left to hold the bag for the Allies.

There is, of course, the danger of being left the only belligerent in the field against Germany. There is an even greater danger threatening us in the Pacific. The importance of the Japanese menace is indicated by the following figures: Within a year the shipping of the United States in the Pacific dropped from 25 per cent. to 2 per cent., while Japan's rose from 24 per cent. to 65 per cent. Nor must we forget that even if Germany is defeated, the freedom of the seas cannot be ours, while England rules the waves. If we enter the arena of world politics, we must be prepared for all consequences.

We must introduce some form of universal service, choosing, if possible, Switzerland as our model. For, if we adopt the Swiss system, it may be possible to have military training without militarism. We must also build a navy able to dominate both the Atlantic and the Pacific. Those who advise us to have a navy second to that of Great Britain, have already betrayed their country in their hearts. Great Britain was never our friend. She is not our friend to-day. But even if she were, a great nation must stand on its own feet. It cannot lean upon others.

Unless we can have a navy equal to that of Great Britain, it were better to dismantle our ships altogether. The present war has revealed that the second greatest navy is of no use at all. Germany's navy is second only to that of Great Britain. Nevertheless she owes her successes, not to her landlocked battleships, but to her submarines. Germany, moreover, is safe from attack, owing to the narrowness of her coastline. We are imperilled on every side. If we choose to participate in the world's quarrels, we must be equipped on land and sea to defend our sacred soil against all comers. The man who is content with the second-best navy is, spiritually at least, a subject of Great Britain. This is the touchstone of American patriotism.

We urge a powerful navy and a powerful army, not for aggression, but for defense. We regard war as a relic of barbarism, but we realize that civilization is bankrupt. Until all nations are ready to disarm we, too, must be armed to the teeth, fully realizing the psychological truth that he who rattles with the sword is apt to unsheath it. We must ever scan the horizon for a glimpse of the little white wings of the dove of peace. We must follow the example of men like Ramsey MacDonald and other English patriots who, without weakening for an instant in their loyalty to their country, insist upon the speedy cessation of warfare upon terms honorable to all.

More regrettable than war abroad, is dissension at home. There is no reason to believe the absurd rumors that the Government intends to treat German-Americans with suspicion. Mr. Wilson has made this clear. The demand of the metropolitan press for the suppression of the German language newspapers will be wrecked against the rock of the constitution. We would not suppress all newspapers printed in the English language in case of war with England. Why should we suppress papers printed in the German language in case of war with Germany?

Most of these disquieting rumors are disseminated by British agents in order to sow the seed of distrust in the minds of German-Americans and to incite deeds of violence against them. Great Britain fears the influence of America, with its strong Germanic element, in the Peace Conference. She would

like to eliminate the Germanic element from the councils of our nation, because she knows that we shall contend for justice and fair play. Let us not walk into this British trap. Let us preserve our calm even in the face of extreme provocation. Let us calmly insist upon our constitutional rights. Let us exercise free speech, but tempered with moderation. If others are tactless, we must not deviate from the paths of courtesy and tolerance.

There is every intention on the part of the Government to treat even German subjects with generosity. Americans of German descent, however, ask for no special consideration. The same duties and the same rights are the common heritage of all American citizens. There may be some German-Americans who, in the face of injustice or slander, are likely to lose

their temper. Let those men remember that by doing so they serve neither the land of their children nor the land of their fathers. They merely serve to accentuate the wave of race hatred artificially stimulated by the Roosevelts, the Choates, and other agents provocateurs.

If we think that our public servants have not served us well, we can have a reckoning with them at the polls. Let the Roosevelts, let the Wisers, abuse the President. Let us shame these men by our loyalty. If we disagree with the Government, let us voice our disagreement with dignity and reserve. With the nauseating example of the Tories before us, let us remember our watchword, let us remember that we are Americans first and Americans only.

GEORGE SYLVESTER VIERECK.