

Collegians, Protect Your Ideals

To the College Men and Women of the United States:—

We, collegians of America, feel that at this crisis in our national history some statement should be made as to how a possible war would affect the country, and particularly those who are devoting their lives to the advancement of culture and learning.

Over and above the losses of life, limb and wealth, all wars have entailed a definite reversion to primitive standards.

(1) To uphold national "honor" by declaring war, regardless of whether or not human happiness is increased thereby, is treason to the civilization that has made obsolete duelling and the vendetta. Illusions about "loss of honor and prestige" can form, and have formed, a reason for the most senseless of wars. If America now resorts to the sword her recent efforts for peace will appear hypocritical, or due to a priggish "moral superiority" born of inexperience. She will have been shamed into war by just those conventional dogmas which she has pretended to despise.

(2) During the conduct of wars, military necessity has always been made an excuse for restricting individual liberties and for neglecting the wants of the people. Censorship and the suppression of free speech, and trials by arbi-

trary tribunals like courts martial have accompanied war even in the freest of European countries. Also, there has been a conscription of the life and life tools of the poor, with no commensurate conscription of the resources of the wealthy. There has been an undervaluation of life and of human well-being. In the event of war, schools will be skimmed and social reforms all but abandoned, and we shall lose everything on which we have been basing our hopes for a progressive America.

We further maintain

(1) That if we go to war in defense of International Law and the rights of neutrals we shall not succeed in that defense.

It is true that Germany has disregarded International Law and that she has violated neutralities, but it is equally true that International Law has always been disregarded and neutralities have always been violated. Every war in history has brought out these circumstances. Germany's ruthlessness is but one manifestation of the blind brutality of war. To march upon the battlefield because of that one manifestation is to fight the evil with what gives rise to it. If we fight war with war, we help to perpetuate the thing that is responsible for our grievances.

(2) That if we go to war we shall lose our opportunity to bring peace to Europe. President Wilson has said that a lasting peace must be a "peace without victory." Defense of this principle requires an international viewpoint — a viewpoint which we must surrender if we enter the war. Once our armies are in the field they will fight to win, whatever the cost. Not to do so would be to mock our purpose in declaring war.

We propose, therefore, that before war is declared the people of this country be given time and opportunity to think: time in order to recover from the first reaction to sensational newspaper agitation, and opportunity by means of a clear statement from the government under the following heads—this statement to be set against the moral and physical damages of war.

(1) The real causes for war. Are we going to war because of deliberately intended injuries, or merely because we have suffered through the reckless maundering of a nation which is crazed by fear and resolved to risk everything rather than submit to the crushing demands of her enemies? Are we to defend maritime law or are we merely to answer an insult?

(2) The proposed limit to our participation. Shall we stop fighting as soon as Germany ceases her submarine blockade or shall we bind ourselves by oath, as have the other Allies, to spare neither resources nor men and to fight to the bitter end?

(3) The possible alternatives to war. How far could individual Americans be kept out of the danger zone? And how far could controversies affecting America be settled after the conclusion of the present war?

We propose that the opinion thus consciously formed among the people who must bear the burden of war be brought to bear on national policy. We propose that this be effected by means of a referendum vote.

COLLEGIATE ANTI-MILITARISM LEAGUE

Executive Committee

Alumni Advisory Committee

THE COLLEGIATE ANTI-MILITARISM LEAGUE

is a no-war organization springing directly from American students and educators. The league conducts mass meetings, sends delegates to government hearings, publishes a magazine and endeavors through various other mediums to voice the student protest.

The league maintains a central office at Sub-Station 84, New York City, and is actively represented at the following colleges and universities: Columbia, Barnard, Cornell, Yale, Harvard, Syracuse, Amherst, Vassar, Michigan, Minnesota, C. C. N. Y., Trinity, Kansas, Iowa, Indiana, Adelphi, Goucher and Berkeley.

If you are interested, write the central office for particulars.