

Economic Causes of War.

Article No. 9.

THE United States entered the war to save the world for democracy. President Wilson was re-elected because he had kept his country out of the war, and when he did allow the United States to fight, it must have been for a very worthy and righteous cause.

America had never entered world politics to the same extent as the European Powers, because she has room for expansion within her own boundaries. She had, however, taken a part in opening up world markets as far back as 1858. In Thorpe's "History of Japan," pages 173 and 193, I find this: "In July, 1858, not only American but Russian men-of-war arrived at Yokohama, to be speedily followed by the English and French, all intent on forcing the proud Japanese to concede treaties of commerce; and if these treaties could not be obtained peaceably, they should be extorted by force of arms." . . . "Not satisfied with their work of destruction, the envoys of the four belligerent nations demanded of the puzzled and distressed Japanese an indemnity of three million dollars, of which amount America took seven hundred and eighty-five thousand, although the cost of their war demonstration was only twenty-five thousand dollars."

The United States made a great display of neutrality when the war was in its first stages. It was to her economic interests to do so. She was supplying a vast trade to both sides of the fight, and mostly to the Allies after the Central Powers were blockaded. When trade with the Allies was endangered by the German submarine campaign and the Atlantic ports were stocked full with commodities as a consequence, then the United States discovered that it was a war for the freedom of small nations and for democracy. As a matter of fact, it was a spiritual interpretation to the economic factor, that if the commercial interests could not deliver the goods because of the submarine warfare, the easiest way to dispose of the surplus was to enter the war themselves on the side of the Allies.

Roland G. Usher, in his "Pan Germanism," 1913, page 139, says: "An understanding was reached that in case of a war begun by Germany or Austria for the purpose of executing Pan-Germanism, the United States would promptly declare in favor of England and France, and would do her utmost to assist them. The mere fact that no open acknowledgment of this agreement was then made need not lessen its importance and significance. The alliance, for it was nothing less, was based upon infinitely firmer ground than written words and sheets of parchment. . . . it found its efficient cause as well as its efficient reason for its continuance in the situation, geographical, economic and political, of the contracting nations with such an agreement mutually advantageous to them all." On page 144, after giving a detail of conflicting interests of the Powers in Europe, he says: "In all this the United States has unquestionably no part. Not her strategic position, not her military strength, but her economic position makes her an ally particularly indispensable to England and France." Page 145: "Allied with her (U. S. A.) they could not be starved into submission nor bankrupted by lack of materials to keep their looms running." Page 147: "Fortunately for England and France the United States, whose economic assistance is positively imperative for them, finds their assistance equally imperative. In the first place the United States depends upon the English merchant marine to carry her huge volume of exports, and should she not be able to use it would suffer seriously. . . . Again, a market as certain and as large as that of England and France for raw material and foodstuffs is absolutely essential to her, and the outbreak of the war which might close

those markets to her, would precipitate unquestionably a financial crisis. . . . Furthermore, she needs a market in England and France for her own manufactured goods. . . . She cannot afford to take any chances of losing her markets in those two countries, nor has she ceased to hope for privileges of some sort in English and French dependencies which other nations do not have and which, if worse should come to the worst, she could undoubtedly obtain from them as the price of her continued assistance."

When Usher deals with the States taking Cuba, he points out that that island possessed not only a commercial but a strategic importance. The Philippines, owned by a weak nation like Spain, were ideally suitable for a German base of operations in the Far East, and the Allies could not allow such places to fall into the hands of Germany. The general European situation and the position of Spain in the Mediterranean made it impossible for England or France to undertake a war with Spain, and Usher says: "The colonial aspirations of the United States, her anxiety to share in the opening of China to European enterprise, her traditional hope of securing Cuba, all pointed to her as the natural guardian of the interests of the coalition in the Gulf of Mexico and the Far East." All this manoeuvring and concentration resulted in the withdrawal by France and England of their objection to the States building the Panama Canal. The United States built a naval base in the Philippines of sufficient size and importance to permit the maintenance of a fleet large enough to be a factor in the Pacific. England and France could not spare the ships and Japan would not tolerate a Russian fleet in those waters, so the United States was the only power which could represent the coalition there consistent with her own safety.

The United States strengthened her position by annexing the islands between her shores and Asia for coaling stations. The war with Spain over Cuba was placarded as of a liberating nature, but Frederick Emory, chief of the U. S. Bureau of Foreign Commerce, says in "World's Work," January, 1902: "Cuba was in fact a stumbling block, a constant menace to the southern movement of our trade. To free her from the Spanish incubus was therefore a commercial necessity to us, and as we became more clearly alive to the importance of extending our commerce, the impatience of our business interests at such obstruction was waxing so strong, that even had there been no justifying cause of an emotional kind, such as the alleged enormities of the Spanish rule or the destruction of the Maine, we would doubtless have taken steps in the end to abate with a strong hand what was seen to be an economic nuisance."

When the Senate discussed the Philippines question, some said they could not admit semi-civilized people into citizenship, and that permanent military rule would be violating the spirit of the American Republic and also a serious danger of getting into war with European powers over questions arising about the islands. But the majority held that the Philippines would be safer if they became a part of the United States, "as the war (Spanish-American War) has made us a world power, and our trade interests in China and the Far East demand that we should own the whole Philippine group."

The Japs are blaming the Americans for the anti-Japanese agitations in Korea and China, and their newspapers say the object is to offset their rivals in trade and get control of Chinese markets and construct the Hai Lan railway. America is also largely interested in the exploitation of Outer Mongolia.

President Wilson's fourteen points were not well received in Paris. He said the day of secret cov-

enants was past, yet he accepted quite a few of them. He said: "Victory would force a peace that would leave a sting," also "that equal right of freedom and security and self-government and to the participation upon fair terms in the economic opportunities of the world, the German people of course included if they will accept equality and not seek domination." These quotations are from a reply to the Pope, August 27th, 1917. This is the same Wilson who, while making such public utterances, was secretly negotiating the transfer of the Danish West Indies behind the backs of the people of Denmark and the United States, and also without giving the people of the Danish colonies the opportunity to express whether they desired to be brought under a new sovereignty. He was snowed under in Paris by adepts in the game of diplomacy who kept company with Winston Churchill, who, a speaker in Glasgow said, was the most persistent, insistent and consistent liar in the British Cabinet. I suggest that President Wilson read that part of his election address of 1912 wherein he says: "The masters of the government of the United States are the combined capitalists and manufacturers of the United States. It is written over every intimate page of the records of Congress; it is written all through the history of the conferences at the White House."

PETER T. LECKIE.

SINN FEIN SITUATION.

(Continued from page 2.)

merely a mass of meaningless, nebulous phrases, asking the support of Divine Providence and guaranteeing religious and civil rights, and other pile of a similar kind.

To the Socialist, then, there is nothing in the Sinn Fein programme to warrant our support. We are not concerned at this date with the factional squabbles of the ruling class. The Socialists of the world have today but one platform upon which they stand; but one programme they wish to complete; and this means nothing less than the overthrow of class society in every section of the globe. Where workers of any nation decide to pit their strength against that of their masters, our sympathy and support are with them; our interests are identical wherever we are.

Social ownership is our goal.

J. A. McD.

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