

The Atlantic PRESENTS

SPECIAL
COMMEMORATIVE
ISSUE

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100 Dramatic
Images

WORLD WAR I

HOW THE GREAT WAR MADE THE MODERN WORLD



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THE AMERICAN IDEA AT WAR

NEAR THE FULCRUM of World War I (and near the fulcrum of this issue, on page 92), Ellery Sedgwick, then the editor of *The Atlantic*, paused to consider why the United States was about to take up arms. He concluded that, alone among the nations of five continents then in conflict, America would be fighting not for some selfish purpose but “for a world idea.” It would be fighting for a world that could sustain “security, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

There is some deft sleight of hand at work there, in the promotion of the American national idea to a world idea. But as Sedgwick noted, the United States was “a world in miniature where the nations have joined together as a single people in a supreme experiment in the art of living together.” Who better to guide other nations toward an enduring global peace, one based on truths that were, to coin a term, self-evident?

It’s not easy—in fact, it turned out not to be possible—to square Sedgwick’s very American optimism with other ideas put forward in this issue, like those of Kaiser Wilhelm II, the man who took Germany to war. (An American journalist interviewed the kaiser in 1908, but the German

government suppressed his remarks, and *The Atlantic* published them for the first time in 1934.) He held to less encompassing truths, which you can find on page 35: “The future belongs to the White Race, never fear ... It does not belong, the future, to the Yellow, nor to the Black, nor to the Olive-colored. It belongs to the Fair-skinned Man, and it belongs to Christianity and to Protestantism.”

So many romantic hopes, along with Romanticism itself, disintegrated as World War I ground on, consuming some 20 million lives and desolating Europe. *The Atlantic* didn’t neglect the human toll. “I am cured of ever wishing to be a soldier again,” wrote one veteran whose experiences led him to question God, condemn patriotism, and long for those “clamoring for war” to volunteer “as stretcher-bearers only”



(page 52). A French lieutenant described how the charnel trenches hardened him, until he found himself laughing at the corpses trapped “in the drollest attitudes” in the mud; one soldier hung his canteen from a lifeless foot projecting over a wall (page 45). Mrs. A. Burnett-Smith, an Englishwoman, recounted the night a zeppelin blew up her home (page 104), and Marcelline Hemingway Sanford recalled her relief, one evening when she happened to catch a newsreel in Chicago, at glimpsing her brother Ernest, recovering from bullet wounds in the company of a pretty nurse in the Red Cross hospital in Milan (page 100).

Most moving—to me, anyway—are the letters home to his mother from an American soldier, Edwin Austin Abbey. They are moving in part because of the shocking—even though the reader fears it must be coming and tries to brace—interruption of a letter from a commanding officer, describing the young man’s death. (“One doesn’t often meet such fine fellows.”) Abbey’s letters, which appear on page 72, are full of faith in his mission, God, and the essential decency of man: “Do you not think that the war is making people less selfish in the world and in the United States? Surely it must.”

As it chronicled the costs, *The Atlantic* debated the big ideas in contest, from the war’s causes to its conduct (poison gas, one writer argued, here on page 68, was “the most efficient, most economical, and most humane, single weapon known to military science”). Often, the magazine looked ahead to the sorts of happy consequences that Edwin Austin Abbey, like Ellery Sedgwick, yearned for—that, as Barbara W. Tuchman observed in *The Atlantic* in 1967, “the agony must prove to have been the birth pangs of a better world.”

H. G. Wells proposed the most utopian vision. “Under the lurid illumination of world war,” he declared in 1919, in a co-written essay that appears here on page 118, “the idea of world unification has passed rapidly from the sphere of the literary idealist into that of the methodical, practical man.” Warming to his optimistic theme, Wells went on to validate his reputation for prophecy by delivering a TED Talk decades ahead of its time: “We live today in a time of accelerated inventiveness and innovation,” he declared, “when a decade modifies the material of

intercommunication far more extensively than did any century before.”

Wells saw a world shaken awake from “a dream of intensified nationality.” But others recognized a far darker place, in which the forces of national grievance and righteousness were not dissipating but gathering. As our inside report on Woodrow Wilson’s negotiations for peace at Versailles showed, he strove, unsuccessfully, against a harsh settlement that he rightly feared would make “dreams of vengeance an obsession” (page 122). In April 1919—just two months after *The Atlantic* published Wells—another writer was warning in these pages that the defeat of Germany “is not likely to diminish her hatred” of other nations. “It is far more likely to intensify that hatred ... The world should make its plans accordingly” (page 126). It didn’t, of course. Subsequent writers tracked the rise of Hitler.

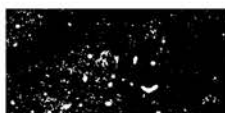
Rather than globalize the American idea, as Sedgwick had hoped, the Great War inflamed other national ideas, in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, where the breakup of the Ottoman empire created the crisis of legitimacy, in state after state, that we are living with today. One can draw a line from September 11, 2001, straight back to the decisions made by colonial mapmakers as the fighting raged in Europe 100 years ago, as well as forward to the conflicts of our time.

Reading this issue, you might find yourself wondering whether people in general, and Americans in particular, ever really learn. Across the generations, do we grow any wiser? In Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, and Ukraine, we Americans find ourselves once again struggling to reconcile our faith that our own national idea is self-evident with the reality that it is not self-executing, as Barack Obama put it in his second inaugural address. In these staggering collisions of nations and tribes, we are forever surprised, as we were a century ago, to encounter evidence that the American idea is not necessarily a world idea—along with fresh rebukes to the conviction that that idea can be spread at the point of a gun (or a drone), and harsh reminders that, sometimes, it has to be defended that way.

—James Bennet



★ The cover of the June 1915 *Atlantic*. *Opposite page:* After the United States entered the Great War, in 1917, a parade makes its way up Fifth Avenue, in Midtown Manhattan.



YES, IT COULD HAPPEN AGAIN

Instability in Ukraine, chaos in Syria, conflict in the East China Sea—the trigger points for World War III are in place.

BY ROGER COHEN



PESSIMISM IS a useful prism through which to view the affairs of states. Their ambition to gain, retain, and project power is never sated. Optimism, toward which Americans are generally inclined, leads to rash predictions of history's ending in global consensus and the banishment of war. Such rosy views accompanied the end of the Cold War. They were also much in evidence a century ago, on the eve of World War I.

Then, as now, Europe had lived through a long period of relative peace, after the end of the Napoleonic Wars. Then, too, rapid progress in science, technology, and communications had given humanity a sense of shared interests that precluded war, despite the ominous naval competition between Britain and Germany. Then, too, wealthy individuals devoted their fortunes to conciliation and greater human understanding. Rival powers fumed over provocative annexations, like Austria-Hungary's of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908, but world leaders scarcely believed a global conflagration was possible, let alone that one would begin just six years later. The very monarchs who would consign tens of millions to a murderous morass from 1914 to 1918 and bury four empires believed they were clever enough to finesse the worst.

The unimaginable can occur. That is a notion at once banal and perennially useful to recall. Indeed, it has just happened in Crimea, where a major power has forcefully changed a European border for the first time since 1945. Russia's act of annexation and its evident designs on eastern Ukraine constitute a reminder that NATO was created to protect Europe after its pair of 20th-century self-immolations. NATO's core precept, as the Poles and

other former vassals of the Soviet empire like to remind blithe western Europeans, is Article 5, by which the Allies agreed that "an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all," triggering a joint military response. This has proved a powerful deterrent against potential adversaries. Vladimir Putin, the Russian president, has been most aggressive in the no-man's-lands of Georgia and Ukraine, nations suspended between East and West, neither one a member of NATO. Had Ukraine been a member of NATO, the annexation of Crimea would have come only at the (presumably unacceptable) price of war. Article 5, until demonstrated otherwise, is an ironclad commitment.

When a 19-year-old Bosnian Serb nationalist, Gavrilo Princip, assassinated the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne in Sarajevo, on June 28, 1914, he acted to secure Serbia's liberty from imperial dominion. He could not have known that within weeks, Austria-Hungary would declare war on Serbia, goading Russia (humiliated in war a decade earlier by Japan) to mobilize in defense of its Slavic ally, which caused the kaiser's ascendant Germany to launch a preemptive attack on Russia's ally France, in turn prompting Britain to declare war on Germany.

Events cascade. It is already clear that the nationalist fervor unleashed by Putin after a quarter century of Russia's perceived post-Cold War decline is far from exhausted. Russians are sure that the dignity of their nation has been trampled by an American and European strategic advance to their border dressed up in talk of democracy, the rule of law, and human rights. Whether this is true is irrelevant; they believe it. National humiliation, real or not, is a tremendous catalyst for war. That was the case in Germany after the Treaty of Versailles imposed reparations and territorial concessions; so, too, in Serbia more than 70 years later, after the breakup of Yugoslavia, a country Serbia had always viewed as an extension of itself. Russia, convinced of its lost greatness, is gripped by a Weimar neurosis resembling Germany's post-World War I longing for its past stature and power. The Moscow-backed separatists taking over government buildings in eastern Ukraine and proclaiming an independent "Donetsk People's Republic" demonstrate the virulence of Russian irredentism. Nobody can





know where it will stop. Appetite, as the French say, grows with eating.

LET US INDULGE in dark imaginings, then, in the cause of prudence. Here is one possible scenario: Clashes intensify between Ukrainian government forces and paramilitary formations organized by Russian fifth columnists. The death toll rises. The ongoing NATO dispatch of troops and F-16s to Poland and the Baltic states, designed as a deterrence, redoubles anger in Russia—"a great and humble nation besieged," a Russian general might declare. The American president, saying his war-weary country will not seek conflict, imposes sanctions on the entire Russian oil-and-gas sector. European states dependent on Russian energy grumble; a former German chancellor working in natural gas says his country's interests lie with Moscow. Then, say, an independence movement of the Russian minority gains momentum in Estonia, backed with plausible deniability by Moscow's agents, and announces support for the Donetsk People's Republic. A wave of cyberattacks disables Estonian government facilities, and an Estonian big shot calls the Russian leader an "imperialist

★ German troops march off to war, with civilian support, after Kaiser Wilhelm II announced the nation's military mobilization on August 1, 1914.

troglodyte trapped in a zero-sum game." After an assassination attempt on the Estonian foreign minister at a rally in the capital, calls grow louder for the American president to invoke Article 5. He insists that "drawing red lines in the 21st century is not a useful exercise."

Let us further imagine that shortly after the president delivers his speech, in a mysterious coincidence, a Chinese ship runs aground on one of the uninhabited Senkaku Islands, administered by Japan, in the East China Sea. China dispatches a small force to what it calls the Diaoyu Islands "as a protective measure." Japan sends four destroyers to evict the Chinese and reminds the American president that he has said the islands, located near undersea oil reserves, "fall within the scope" of the U.S.-Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security. A Republican senator, echoing the bellicose mood in Washington, declares that "Estonia is more than a couple of rocks in the East China Sea" and demands to know whether "the United States has torn up the treaty alliances in Europe and Asia that have been the foundation of global security since 1945." The president gives China an ultimatum to leave the Japanese islands or face a military



response. He also tells Russia that another act of secessionist violence in Estonia will trigger NATO force against Russian troops massed on the Estonian border. Both warnings are ignored. Chinese and Russian leaders accuse the United States of “prolonging Cold War hostilities and alliances in pursuit of global domination.” World War III begins.

IT COULD NOT HAPPEN; of course it couldn’t. Peace, if not outright pacifism, is now bred in the bones of Europeans, who contemplate war with revulsion. Europe is politically and economically integrated. America, after two wars without victory, is in a period of retrenchment that may last a generation. Wars no longer happen between big land armies; they are the stuff of pinpoint strikes by unpiloted drones against jihadist extremists. Putin’s Russia is opportunistic—it will change the balance of power in Ukraine or Georgia if it considers the price acceptable—but it is not reckless in countries under NATO protection. China, with its watchword of “Harmony,” is focused on its own rising success and understands the usefulness of the United States as an offsetting Pacific power able to reassure anxious neighbors like Japan and Vietnam. For the time being, Beijing will not seek to impose its own version of the Monroe Doctrine. It will hold nationalism in check even as the Asian naval arms race accelerates. Unlike in 1914 or 1939, the presence of large American garrisons in Europe and Asia sustains a tenacious Pax Americana. The

★ In eastern Ukraine, pro-Russian separatists cheer calls for the region’s independence from the Kiev government. May 12, 2014.

United Nations, for all its cumbersome failings, serves as the guarantor of last resort against another descent into horror. The specter of nuclear holocaust is the ultimate deterrent for a hyperconnected world. Citizens everywhere now have the tools to raise a cacophony in real time against the sort of folly that, in World War I, produced the deaths of so many unidentifiable young men “known unto God,” in Kipling’s immortal phrasing.

Convincing? It would certainly be nice to believe that, as President Clinton suggested in 1997, great-power territorial politics are a thing of the past. A new era had dawned, he said, in which “enlightened self-interest, as well as shared values, will compel countries to define their greatness in more-constructive ways.” In fact, the realization that the Russian bear can bite as well as growl is timely. It is a reminder that a multipolar world in a time of transition, when popular resentments are rising over joblessness and inequality, is a dangerous place indeed.

The international system does not look particularly stable. The Cold War’s bipolar confrontation, despite its crises, was predictable. Today’s world is not. It features a United States whose power is dominant but no longer determinant; a one-party China that is a rising hegemon; an authoritarian Russia giddy on nationalism and the idea of a restored imperium; and a weak, navel-gazing, blasé Europe whose pursuit of an ever closer union is on hold and peraps on the brink of reversal.

Pacifist tendencies in western Europe coexist

with views of power held in Moscow and Beijing that Bismarck or Clausewitz would recognize instantly. After the genocides in Rwanda and Bosnia, the UN General Assembly ratified the concept that governments have a “responsibility to protect” their citizens from atrocities. But in the face of Syria’s bloody dismemberment and Ukraine’s cynical dismantlement, idealism of that kind looks fluffy or simply irrelevant. The Baltic countries are front-line states once again. The fleeting post-Cold War dream of a zone of unity and peace stretching from Lisbon to Vladivostok has died. As John Mearsheimer observes in his seminal *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, “Unbalanced multipolar systems feature the most dangerous distribution of power, mainly because potential hegemonies are likely to get into wars with all of the other great powers in the system.”

In this context, nothing is more dangerous than American weakness. It is understandable that the United States is looking inward after more than a decade of post-9/11 war. But it is also worrying, because the credibility of American power remains the anchor of global security. The nation’s mood is not merely a reflection of economic hardship or the costs of war; it is also determined by the president’s decisions and rhetoric. There was no American majority for involvement in World War I or World War II—until the president set out to forge one (helped decisively in Franklin D. Roosevelt’s case by Pearl Harbor). As Jonathan Eyal of Britain’s Royal United Services Institute says, “If a president stands up and says something, he can shift the debate.”

President Obama has made clear he does not believe in military force. His words spell that out; so does his body language. He asks, after Iraq and Afghanistan, what force accomplishes. These are fair questions; the bar must be very high for unleashing military power. But when an American president marches allies up the hill to defend his “red line”—as Obama did regarding Syria’s use of chemical weapons—and then marches them back down again, he does something damaging that the world does not forget. And when Obama, in response to a recent question about whether declaring that the United States would protect the Senkaku Islands risked drawing another “red line,” gives an evasive answer, he does something so dangerous that

his words are worth repeating:

The implication of the question, I think, ... is that each and every time a country violates one of these norms, the United States should go to war or stand prepared to engage militarily, and if it doesn’t, then somehow we’re not serious about these norms. Well, that’s not the case.

If these treaty obligations do not constitute a red line triggering a U.S. military response—the only way to prove the seriousness of “these norms”—all bets are off in a world already filled with uncertainties. A century ago, in the absence of clear lines or rules, it was just this kind of feel-good hope and baseless trust in the judgment of rival powers that precipitated catastrophe. But that, it may be said, was then. The world has supposedly been transformed.

But has it? Consider this article in my father’s 1938 high-school yearbook:

The machine has brought men face to face as never before in history. Paris and Berlin are closer today than neighboring villages were in the Middle Ages. In one sense distance has been annihilated. We speed on the wings of the wind and carry in our hands weapons more dreadful than the lightning ... The challenge of the machine is the greatest opportunity mankind has yet enjoyed. Out of the rush and swirl of the confusions of our times may yet arise a majestic order of world peace and prosperity.

Optimism is irrepressible in the human heart—and best mistrusted. Our world of hyperconnectivity, and the strains and aspirations that accompany it, is not so novel after all. The ghosts of repetition reside alongside the prophets of progress. From the “rush and swirl” of 1938 where “distance has been annihilated” would follow in short order the slaughter of Stalingrad, the mass murder of European Jewry, the indiscriminate deaths in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the anguish of all humanity. We should not lightly discard a well-grounded pessimism or the treaties it has produced. **A**

Roger Cohen is a columnist for The New York Times and the author of a forthcoming family memoir, The Girl From Human Street: Ghosts of Memory in a Jewish Family.



**THE
UNIMAGINABLE
CAN OCCUR.
INDEED, IT HAS
JUST HAPPENED
IN CRIMEA.**



THE WAR, YEAR BY YEAR



June 28: A Serbian nationalist assassinates Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, and his wife in Sarajevo.

July 28: Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia.

August 4: Britain declares war on Germany. The United States declares its neutrality.

August 6: Austria-Hungary declares war on Russia.



August 9: The first British troops land in France.

January–February: German air raids and a submarine blockade menace Britain's home front.

April 22: Germans first use chlorine gas as a poison, against French and Algerian soldiers in Belgium.

May 7: A German submarine sinks the ocean liner *Lusitania*. That 128 of the 1,198 victims are Americans challenges their nation's policy of neutrality.

June 5: Encouraged by the British, Arabs begin to revolt against their Turkish rulers.



November 7: U.S. President Woodrow Wilson is reelected, after campaigning with the slogan "He kept us out of war."

February 3: The U.S. cuts off diplomatic relations with Germany because of submarine attacks on American merchant ships.

1914

1915

1916

1917

July 31: Russia mobilizes its armed forces in support of Serbia.

August 1: Germany declares war on Russia.

August 3–4: Germany declares war on France, then invades Belgium on its way to France.

September 5–10: The First Battle of the Marne stops Germany's invasion of France.

September–November: Trenches are dug along the western front.

December 25: In an informal Christmas truce, enemy soldiers in the trenches play soccer and exchange cigarettes.

February–December: The Battle of Verdun. Initial German advances are driven back by French counterattacks, causing hundreds of thousands of casualties.

May: The Sykes-Picot Agreement is signed. The secret pact between Britain and France, with Russia's assent, divides up control of the Middle East should the Allies win the war.

July 1: The Battle of the Somme begins with the worst day of fighting in British military history: nearly 60,000 casualties. The British and French fail to break through German lines, producing a stalemate at a cost of more than 1 million casualties.

September 2: A German airship is shot down over Britain for the first time.

March 1: Germany is revealed as having pressed Mexico to side with it if the United States entered the war, in exchange for the return of Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico to Mexican sovereignty.



THE ASSASSINATION IN SARAJEVO gave Austria-Hungary an opportunity to declare war on Serbia. Entangled by alliances, the other major European powers soon slipped into war as well. Germany hoped for a quick victory on the western front, before Russia had time to mobilize in the east, and invaded Belgium—the clearest way into France.

French and British troops halted the Germans' progress, then failed in their attempts to break through German lines; the stalemate lasted for nearly the entire war. In 1917, the Bolshevik revolution prompted Russia to sue for peace, which freed Germany to shift its troops to the west. Germany's campaign to overwhelm France and Britain ended in defeat after the United States entered the war. — *Clare Sestanovich*

March 15: Czar Nicholas II abdicates the throne amid revolution in Russia.



April 6: At President Wilson's behest, the U.S. Congress declares war on Germany.

June 26: The first U.S. troops arrive in France.

January 8: President Wilson's Fourteen Points offer a vision of a postwar peace.

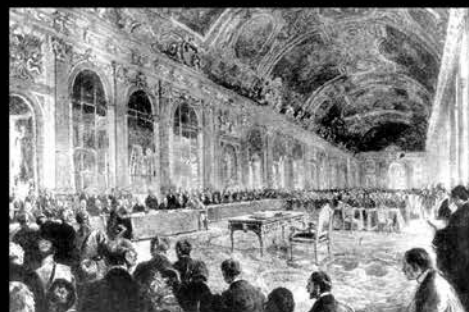
March 3: Russia signs a treaty with the Central Powers at Brest-Litovsk and loses territory, including Ukraine, Poland, and the Baltic states.

April 5: The first stage of Germany's Spring Offensive, halted by British and Australian troops, ends.

July 17: Bolsheviks murder Czar Nicholas II and his family.

August 8: The Allies force the Germans to retreat from the Somme, and the tide of the war starts to turn.

September: A series of Allied victories pierces the Germans' defensive line.



January 18: The peace conference begins in Paris.

February 14: President Wilson presents his draft proposal for a League of Nations covenant at the Paris Peace Conference.

March 19: The U.S. Senate fails to ratify the Treaty of Versailles.

1918

1919

1920

November 7: The Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Lenin, take power in Russia.

December 3: The new Russian government begins armistice negotiations with the Central Powers.

December 9: British troops capture Jerusalem, ending 673 years of Muslim rule.

May–July: American, French, and British troops stop the Germans from advancing to Paris.

July: German troops desert in large numbers as they are transferred from the eastern to the western front. Ernest Hemingway, serving as an ambulance driver, is wounded on the Italian front.

November 9: Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicates, and the Weimar republic is established.

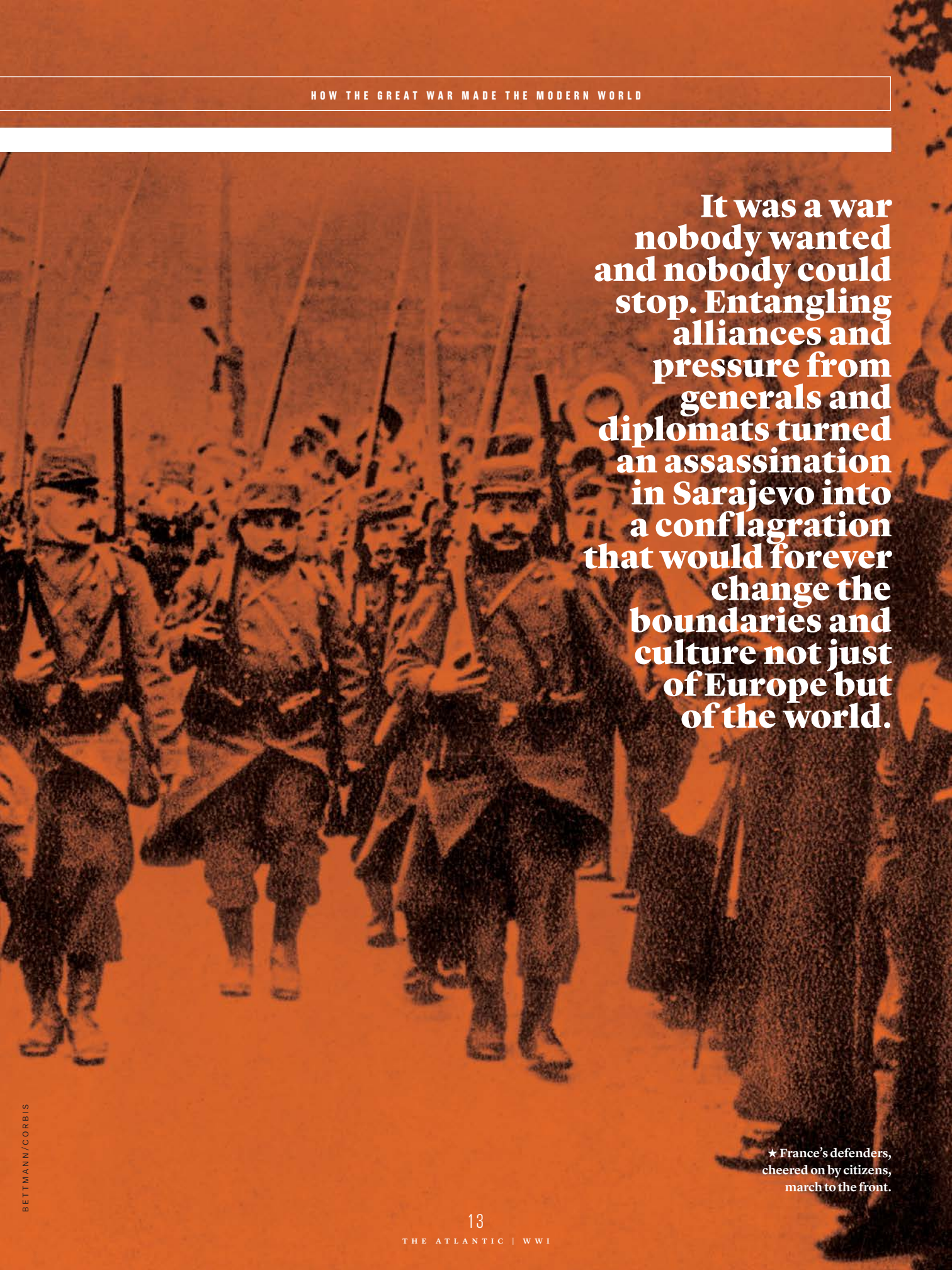
November 11, 10:59 a.m.: The last soldier to die in the Great War, an American private, is killed in France.

November 11, 11 a.m.: The Allies and Germany declare an armistice, effective immediately.

June 28: The Treaty of Versailles is signed.

September 25: President Wilson collapses in Pueblo, Colorado, after three weeks of a whistle-stop campaign to promote the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations.

1 WAR BREAKS OUT



**It was a war
nobody wanted
and nobody could
stop. Entangling
alliances and
pressure from
generals and
diplomats turned
an assassination
in Sarajevo into
a conflagration
that would forever
change the
boundaries and
culture not just
of Europe but
of the world.**

★ France's defenders,
cheered on by citizens,
march to the front.

IS A PERMANENT PEACE POSSIBLE?

The fighting in Europe prompted a noted British philosopher and pacifist to trace the “cruel absurdities” that had produced a world war—and to hope for peaceful means to settle future disputes.

BY BERTRAND RUSSELL

★★★★★

MARCH 1915

WHEN THE WAR BEGAN, certain writers, notably Mr. H. G. Wells, exhilarated by the romance of great events, and yet believing themselves to be lovers of peace, invented the theory that this was “a war to end war.” Both in England and in Germany, men who have professed a horror of war, but who do not wish it thought that they oppose this war, have argued that their own country is notorious for its love of peace ... but that it has been attacked by unscrupulous enemies, and must quell their ruthless pride before the world can be relieved from the dread of war. This language is not insincere, but is the result of a very superficial analysis of the events and passions which led up to the conflict ...

In surveying the larger causes of the war, we may leave altogether out of account the diplomacy of the last fortnight in July. Since the conclusion of the Anglo-French entente in 1904 the war had been on the point of breaking out, and could have been avoided only by some radical change in the temper of nations and governments. The annexation of Alsace-Lorraine

had caused a profound estrangement between France and Germany. Russia and Germany became enemies through the Pan-Slavist agitation, which threatened the Austrian influence in the Balkans and even the very existence of the Austro-Hungarian state. Finally, the German determination to build a powerful navy drove England into the arms of Russia and France. Our differences with those two countries were suddenly discovered to be unimportant, and were amicably arranged without any difficulty ... If goodwill and reason presided over international affairs, an adjustment of differences might have been made at any time; as it is, nothing but fear of Germany sufficed to persuade us of the uselessness of our previous hostility to France and Russia.



No sooner had this grouping of the European powers been brought about than the [British-French-Russian] Entente and the Alliance [of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy] began a diplomatic game of watchful maneuvering against each other. Russia suffered a blow to her pride in the Austrian annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Germany felt humiliated by having to acknowledge, though with compensation, the French occupation of Morocco. The First Balkan War was a gain to Russia; the second afforded some consolation to Austria. And so the game went on, with recurring crises and alternate diplomatic victories, first for one side, then for the other.

In all this struggle, no one on either side thought for a moment of the welfare of the

★ The destruction of the war and the estimated \$208.5 billion cost of waging it ruined the economies of Europe.

smaller nations which were the pawns in the struggle. The fact that Morocco appealed to Germany for protection against French aggression was not held to put England and France in the wrong. The fact that the Persians—the intellectual aristocracy of the Moslem world—had freed themselves from the corrupt government of the shah and were becoming liberal and parliamentary, was not regarded as any reason why their northern provinces should not be devastated by Cossacks and their southern regions occupied by the British. The fact that the Turks had for ages displayed a supremacy in cruelty and barbarism by torturing and degrading the Christians under their rule was no reason why Germany should not, like England in former times, support their tottering despotism by military and financial

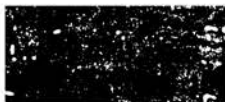


assistance. All considerations of humanity and liberty were subordinated to the great game: first one side threatened war, then the other; at last both threatened at once, and the patient populations, incited cynically by lies and claptrap, were driven on to the blind work of butchery.

A world where such cruel absurdities are possible is not to be put right by a mere treaty of peace. War between civilized states is both wicked and foolish, and it will not cease until either the wickedness or the folly is understood by those who direct the policy of nations. Most men do not mind being wicked, and the few who do have learned ways of persuading themselves that they are virtuous. But, except in moments of passion, men do mind being foolish ...

THE DISEASE from which the civilized world is suffering is a complex one, derived from the failure of men's instincts to keep pace with changing material conditions. Among savages, where there is no trade and little division of labor, the only economic relation between different tribes is that of competition for the food supply. The tribe which attacks with [the] most cunning and ferocity exterminates the greatest number of others, and leaves the largest posterity. Disposition to ferocity and cunning is, at this stage, a biological advantage; and the instincts of civilized men are those

**A WORLD WHERE
SUCH CRUEL
ABSURDITIES ARE
POSSIBLE IS NOT
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BY A MERE
TREATY OF PEACE.**



developed during this early stage. But through the growth of commerce and manufactures it has come about that nine-tenths of the interests of one civilized nation coincide with nine-tenths of the interests of any other.

So long as the disposition to primitive ferocity is not excited, men are able to see their community of interest—as, for example, most men do in America. But there remains in the background a readiness for enmity and suspicion, a capacity for all the emotions of the savage on the warpath, which can be roused by any skillful manipulator; and there remain many men who, from a brutal nature or from some underground effect of self-interest, are unable to see that friendship between nations is possible and that hostility has lost whatever *raison d'être* it once possessed. And so the old rivalries, now become an unmeaning and murderous futility, go on unchecked, and all the splendid heroism of war is wasted on a tragic absurdity.

THE OLD METHODS have brought us to the present disaster, and new and better methods must be found. So much is agreed on all hands. But as soon as we attempt to specify better methods, disagreement breaks out, partly from conflict of opinion concerning the facts which have brought about the present situation, partly from desire to find a heroic solution

which shall once for all make war impossible by some mechanical arrangement ...

New methods in international affairs are required, not in the interests of one side or the other, but in the interests of mankind, lest civilization and humanity should perish from the world. It would be disastrous if new methods were imposed by the victors upon the vanquished as part of the humiliation of defeat: they ought to be adopted by all, at the suggestion of neutrals, as an escape from the tragic entanglement which has dragged a horrified Europe, as though by the compulsion of an external fate, into a cataclysm not desired beforehand by one man in 100 in any of the nations involved in the struggle. In every nation, men believe they are fighting for the defense of home and country against wanton aggression; for they know that they themselves have not desired war ...

Most of the friends of peace are agreed in advocating some kind of international council to take cognizance of all disputes between nations and to urge what it regards as a just solution ...

Far more important than any question of machinery is the problem of producing in all civilized nations such a horror of war that public opinion will insist upon peaceful methods of settling disputes. When this war ends, it is probable that every nation in Europe will feel such an intense weariness of the struggle that there will be little likelihood of a great war for another generation. The problem is, so to alter men's standards and outlook that, when the weariness has passed away, they shall not fall back into the old bad way, but shall escape from the nightmare into a happier world of free cooperation.

The first thing to make men realize is that modern war is an absurdity as well as a crime, and that it can no longer secure such national advantages as, for example, England secured by the Seven Years' War. After the present war, it should be easy to persuade even the most ignorant and high-placed persons of this truth.

But it is even more necessary to alter men's conceptions of "glory" and "patriotism." Beginning in childhood, with the school textbooks of history, and continuing in the press and in common talk, men are taught that the essence of "glory" is successful robbing and slaughter. The most "glorious" nation is the one which kills the greatest numbers of foreigners and seizes

★ **A building in Antwerp, Belgium, bombed by a zeppelin airship. The German army's assault on Belgium in 1914 brought France and Britain into the war.**

the greatest extent of foreign territory. The most "patriotic" citizen is the one who most strongly opposes any attempt at justice or mercy in his country's dealings with other countries, and who is least able to conceive of mankind as all one family ... So long as hate and fear and pride are praised and encouraged, war can never become an impossibility. But there is now, if men have the courage to use it, an awakening of heart and mind such as the world has never known before: men see that war is wicked and that war is foolish. If the statesmen will play their part, by showing that war is not inevitable, there is hope that our children may live in a happier world, and look back upon us with the wondering pity of a wiser age. ■

A WAR TO PREVENT WAR

Archduke Ferdinand's assassination served as a pretext for an "immoral" preventive war.

BY CHARLES A'COURT REPINGTON

★★★★★

AUGUST 1918

Originally titled "The Direction of the War"

OPINIONS concerning the origin of the war and the responsibility attaching to various personages in various states for the outbreak of hostilities vary a good deal. My view is that the general staffs of the Central Powers deliberately determined on what they called a preventive war, in order to forestall the moment when Russia's impending military reorganization was likely, if not certain, to prevent the accomplishment of those ambitious projects on which nearly all

Germans or the ruling caste had set their hearts ...

A pretext was soon found in the Austrian archduke's murder at Sarajevo; and from that moment until all Europe was aflame the Germans steadily blockaded all practicable avenues to peace.

A preventive war is the most immoral of acts and the most detestable of political crimes. To drench the world in blood because something may happen which has not happened, is both criminal and foolish; and so it was always considered by Bismarck. ■



WHO STARTED THE WAR?

Europeans had no desire to fight one another.
Only after a score of men drove their
nations into battle did their peoples learn to hate.

BY G. LOWES DICKINSON

★★★★★

APRIL 1915

Originally titled "The War and the Way Out"

I MUST BEGIN by protesting against the view, industriously disseminated by the English, and, no doubt, by the French and Russian press, that the only cause of the war was the wickedness of Germany. For this view clearly is much too simple and superficial; and it leads to a wrong conception of the remedy. Let us then briefly examine it.

"Germany," we say, "made the war." Germany? But what is Germany? The German people? The peasants? The factory laborers? The millions of Social Democrats? They made the war? Is it likely? Ten days before the war broke out they, like the people everywhere, were working, resting, eating, sleeping, dreaming of nothing less than of war. War came upon them like a thunderclap. The German people are as peaceable as every other ... Now that the war has come, the German people are fighting; but they are fighting, as they believe, to protect their hearths and homes against the wanton aggression of

★ In this artist's rendition, a Serbian nationalist shoots Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austrian throne, and his wife on June 28, 1914. The assassination touched off the diplomatic maneuverings that plunged Europe into war.

ASSOCIATED PRESS; PICTURE-ALLIANCE/DPA/AP

Russia, France, and, above all, England. Like all the other people, they are fighting what they believe to be a defensive war. That is the tragic irony of it. Whoever made the war, it was not any of the peoples.

“Then, it was the German government.” Yes, or else it was the Russian, or else it was both. In any case, it was a very few men. The peace of Europe was in the hands of some score of individuals. They could make war, and the hundreds of millions who were to fight and to suffer could not stop it. That is the really extraordinary fact. That is what is worth dwelling on. How could it happen? Why are the nations passive clay in the hands of their governments?

First, because they do not know one another. They speak different languages, live different kinds of lives, have different manners and customs. They do not hate one another, but neither do they understand or trust one another. They do not feel that they belong together. Left to themselves, they would never, it is true, want to fight one another. They do not even think of one another; they are occupied with their own lives. But since they do not know foreigners as they know one another, they can easily be made to believe that foreigners are their enemies. They do not think of them as real individual men and women. They think of them as a great solid mass, and attribute [to] this mass any qualities suggestion may put into their heads. So, at the moment, the ordinary Englishman believes that “the Germans” are treacherous, brutal, bloodthirsty, cruel, while the Germans believe that “the English” are cowardly, hypocritical, and degenerate. They believe these things because they are told to believe them, by the people who want to make bad blood. And they believe them the more readily because they are at war.

The fact, then, that to every nation every other is “foreign,” makes the peoples of Europe the prey of those who want to make wars...

At the origin, then, of this war, there was no good cause at all. It was one of the many wars for power and position. Englishmen, it is true, have been strongly moved by [Germany’s] invasion of Belgium, and I throw no doubt on the genuineness of their feeling. But it was not the invasion of Belgium that made the war, although that was a contributory cause of the English intervention. The origin of the war was ambition and fear. **A**

THE INSANE ROOT

Even the lowest of the carnivorous animals do not kill members of their own species for no good reason.

BY L. P. JACKS

★★★★★

JANUARY 1917

IN THE SPACE of two years, 6 million human beings have been slaughtered by other human beings, and the slaughter still goes on; 35 million have been mutilated, and the mutilation still

goes on; 15 billion pounds’ worth of property has been destroyed, and the destruction still goes on. On the one side a devastating whirlwind, a tempest of elemental forces, a wild chaos of death and ruin; on the other side, a chorus of talkers and speech-makers and article-writers; political philosophers building their cloud-castles; a monotonous singsong about “humanity” and “society” and the “world-state” and the “social whole.” Visualize the 6 million slain and the 35 million wounded ... and you will understand, even though you cannot express, the meaning of the words, “Oh, how I wish they would all shut up!” ...

There is no theory of human nature, no view of the world, into which [this war] can be fitted. Even if one holds, as I have recently heard it suggested, that man is the lowest of the carnivora, the



★ The blood-soaked tunic of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, next in line to his elderly uncle’s Austro-Hungarian throne, remains a relic of the murder that sparked a war.

situation is still inexplicable and meaningless. The carnivora do not make war on their own species; they make war on other species; they make it in a less cruel manner, and for a far better purpose, for their prey is their food. There is nothing in the life of the lowest of the beasts which can be compared for utter senselessness with this mutual rending to pieces of the nations. **A**

AUTOCRACY VERSUS LIBERTY

The author, a former president of Harvard, framed the question he believed would decide the war: Would conscripted workers produce as strong an economy as those who could act of their own free will?

BY CHARLES W. ELIOT

★★★★★

APRIL 1915

*Originally titled "National Efficiency
Best Developed Under Free Governments"*

THE CAUSES of this fearful war are often discussed as if they were to be sought in the month before the war actually broke out. We hear men talking as if the exchange of telegrams and notes between the monarchs just before the war could supply an intelligent understanding of the causes of the outbreak. We hear the conversations between the various chancelleries of Europe in July spoken of as if the real cause of the war was to be found in them, or indeed, in the sequence of the orders given for mobilization. I have even read articles in which the cause of the war was found in the assassination of the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne.

Now, to my mind, all these so-called causes are merely superficial events, which might more properly be called the occasions than the causes of the war. To my thinking, the causes of the war are very deep-seated, and have to be traced back through long years, and, indeed, through generations of men. They are states of mind rather than events. They have their sources in racial feelings and to some extent religious differences; in the ambitions of princes; in long-cherished aspirations and ambitions of peoples; in continuously developed policies of governments; and deeper still in great popular emotions ...

More and more, as time goes on, this war develops into a conflict between free institutions and autocratic institutions ...

If, now, we take it for granted that the question between free and autocratic institutions in Europe, the question of more public liberty, the question of civilization developing under the forms of free government rather than under the forms of autocratic government, is the real issue this war is to decide, it becomes a very interesting study for all the freer peoples how German efficiency is going to turn out in competition with such efficiency as free nations develop ...

German efficiency has been an object of great admiration, not only in this country, but in England, France, and Russia, for 25 or 30 years. We have all admired it in the recent commercial and industrial development of Germany—not the less remarkable because it started about 60 years ago



★ A German boy carries his father's gun and bag to the train station on August 1, 1914. Out of a population of 65 million, the nation sent 11 million men off to war; more than half of them were killed or wounded.



from a low level. We have admired it, too, in the efficiency of her military and naval development. It is an extraordinary phenomenon in the history of the 19th century—this wonderful efficiency; but German efficiency is of a peculiar type. It is an efficiency in administration—in business administration, in municipal government strikingly, and in all the national government bureaus. It is an efficiency which takes hold of every child in Germany at birth, and follows every youth and every man and woman through life until death. It is that very efficiency which has prevented the last two generations of Germans from knowing anything about liberty. It is in the highest degree an autocratic efficiency...

The most interesting question to be studied as to the probable outcome of the European War is this—is Germany with its autocracy more efficient or less efficient than France and England with their liberties? The German way of procuring industrial and commercial efficiency is to make each individual man, in the first place,

★ On August 8, 1914, in St. Petersburg, Russia, reservists assembled to protect their fellow Slavs in Serbia from Austro-Hungarian attack. The Russian army suffered a 76 percent casualty rate during the war; only Austria-Hungary's was higher (90 percent).

a man well trained for the exact service he is to render, and then to keep him under a severe discipline which will result in his doing every time exactly what he has been trained to do ...

Now, what have the freer nations to say about their chance in industrial and military competition with the German autocratic system? They say in speech and action, "We believe a man or a nation will develop greater mental capacity and moral force with freedom than without it. Our philosophy of life teaches that doctrine; our history illustrates it; our practice and experience prove it" ...

The efficiency of all these nations is based on a high degree of personal initiative and of political and industrial freedom—not on the subjection or implicit obedience of the individual, but on the energy and goodwill in work which result from individual freedom, ambition, and initiative ...

The present war in Europe is going to put to a supreme military test this theory concerning the surest sources of national efficiency. The



war ought to demonstrate in the end that German efficiency in war is not so great as that of England and France, if we include in the definition of military efficiency the management of the supporting industries, and skill in summoning and applying financial resources, as well as the management of the troops in actual fighting. The war should demonstrate that a volunteer soldier is, on the whole, more effective than a conscript, because he has more personal initiative, more power of independent action, and more sense of individual responsibility ...

The war ought also to prove that the freer a people are, and the more accustomed to the exercise of self-controlled liberty, the more warmly and resolutely they will respond to calls on their courage, endurance, and love of country ...

A precious lesson of the war will be this: Toward every kind of national efficiency discipline is good, and cooperation is good; but for the highest efficiency both should be consented to in liberty. ■

A DIPLOMATS' WAR

If the public can make decisions about taxes and schools, why not about war?

BY G. LOWES DICKINSON

★★★★★

AUGUST 1916

*Originally titled
"Democratic Control of Foreign Policy"*

PEOPLE CANNOT FIGHT unless they believe that they are fighting for a great cause; and so, in fact, they always manage to believe it. Nonetheless, these voices at the outset of the war were the true ones. It is a diplomats' war. None of the peoples wanted it, and none of them would have stood for it, if in some way they could have been jointly consulted in the light of full knowledge of the fact. But they were not consulted, either jointly or severally, no more in the countries called democratic than in the autocracies. If they had been, there would have been no war. Hence the movement for the democratic control of foreign policy ...

On questions of domestic policy, in such countries, the people are constantly consulted. An insurance bill, a shop-hours bill, an education bill, a land bill, are canvassed eagerly and passionately in parliament and

the country. The whole press is set in motion; public meetings are held, deputations are arranged, ministries rise and fall. But where hundreds of millions of [dollars] and hundreds of thousands of lives are concerned; where the very existence of the country is at stake; where the decision to be

taken involves not an extra tax, or a tentative experiment in social legislation, easily to be recalled or modified if it does not succeed, but the immediate summoning of the whole manhood of the country to kill and be killed in ways of unimaginable horror; when, in short, that very thing to the fostering and development of which every act of man, private and public, is rightly and

exclusively directed; when life itself is to be destroyed wholesale, that decision, the most terrible any nation can be called upon to take, is precipitated by the fiat of half a dozen men, working in the dark, without discussion. ■



★ A 1914 British poster features Field Marshal Horatio Herbert Kitchener, the ruthless hero of the Second Boer War and Britain's secretary of state for war.

THE AFRICAN ROOTS OF WAR

After Belgium, France, and Britain carved up Africa among themselves, Germany felt the need to catch up. W. E. B. Du Bois, who by 1915 had established himself as one of America's leading writers and civil-rights activists, saw this competition for colonies as an underlying cause of the war.

BY W. E. B. DU BOIS

★★★★★

MAY 1915

★ A Somali fighter. Pastel by Eugène Burnand, a Swiss painter.





PARTICULARLY TODAY most men assume that Africa lies far afield from the centers of our burning social problems, and especially from our present problem of world war.

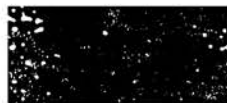
Yet in a very real sense Africa is a prime cause of this terrible overturning of civilization which we have lived to see; and these words seek to show how in the Dark Continent are hidden the roots, not simply of war today but of the menace of wars tomorrow ...

So much for the past; and now, today: the Berlin Conference to apportion the rising riches of Africa among the white peoples met on the 15th day of November 1884 ... Before the Berlin Conference had finished its deliberations ... Germany [annexed] an area over half as large again as the whole German empire in Europe. Only in its dramatic suddenness was this undisguised robbery of the land of 7 million natives different from the methods by which Great Britain and France got 4 million square miles each, Portugal three-quarters of a million, and

★ *This page:* Members of a Moroccan light-cavalry unit camp in northern France. Moroccans fought for the French army and often drew the most dangerous assignments. *Opposite page:* Officers of the Turkish camel cavalry stop for coffee as they march through Syria in 1915.



WHENCE COMES THIS NEW WEALTH? IT COMES PRIMARILY FROM THE DARKER NATIONS OF THE WORLD.



consciously groping toward the new imperialism. France, humiliated [by losing the war] and impoverished, looked toward a new northern-African empire sweeping from the Atlantic to the Red Sea. More slowly Germany began to see the dawning of a new day, and, shut out from America by the Monroe Doctrine, looked to Asia and Africa for colonies. Portugal sought anew to make good her claim to her ancient African realm; and thus a continent where Europe claimed but a tenth of the land in 1875, was in 25 more years practically absorbed ...

SUCH NATIONS IT IS that rule the modern world. Their national bond is no mere sentimental patriotism, loyalty, or ancestor worship. It is increased wealth, power, and luxury for all classes on a scale the world never saw before. Never before was the average citizen of England, France, and Germany so rich, with such splendid prospects of greater riches.

Whence comes this new wealth and on what does its accumulation depend? It comes primarily from the darker nations of the world—Asia and Africa, South and Central America, the West Indies and the islands of the South Seas ...

The present world war is, then, the result of jealousies engendered by the recent rise of armed national associations of labor and capital whose aim is the exploitation of the wealth of the world mainly outside the European circle of nations. **A**

Italy and Spain smaller but substantial areas ...

It all began, singularly enough, like the present war, with Belgium ... Leopold of Belgium was first on his feet, and the result was the Congo Free State ...

While the exploration of the valley of the Congo was the occasion of the scramble for Africa, the cause lay deeper. The Franco-Prussian War turned the eyes of those who sought power and dominion away from Europe. Already England was in Africa, cleaning away the debris of the slave trade and half

WWI ★ WAR BREAKS OUT

THE NEED FOR NAVAL IMAGINATION

An American writer and Naval Academy graduate placed the fate of Britain and the United States on the high seas.

BY WINSTON CHURCHILL

★★★★★

AUGUST 1917

*Originally titled
"Naval Organization,
American and British"*

★ These German torpedo boats, photographed circa 1914, were part of the young empire's effort to match Britain in naval power.



MODERN WARS, and especially modern naval wars, for their successful prosecution demand imagination. Hence our supreme problem today is, first, to organize our available imagination, then to make it count. Fortunately, in our naval service, imagination is not lacking ...

Energy, originality, imagination can be developed and encouraged, or suppressed, at the will and disposition of the secretary of the Navy. Officers, the best experts we possess in their various branches, may be given free play for their imagination, time and opportunity for joint discussion of problems and for forming concerted opinions, or their opinions may never be called for. They may have the continued heartbreaking experience of ... [being] swamped under the detail a \$20-a-week clerk could perform, and all their expensive training of a lifetime and interest in their profession go for nothing; they may spend hours of their time awaiting a secretary's signature, cooling their heels in his office—or they may be utilized ...

In this crisis, when the fate of the British empire and the future of America depend upon the successful prosecution of warfare at sea, the



personalities of [the] secretary of the Navy and of the British First Lord of the Admiralty become of paramount importance. It is not, indeed, too much to say that the question of the survival of the Anglo-Saxon system of government, of that individual liberty for which the people of the two nations have struggled through centuries, today rests largely on the shoulders of these two men. ■

Editor's note: Earlier display text for this excerpt misidentified the author as Winston Churchill, the then-future prime minister of Britain. In fact, the Winston Churchill in question was an American essayist and best-selling author of historical novels. In 1899, as a young journalist, the former Churchill wrote to the latter to announce that he was assuming a pen name—Winston Spencer Churchill—to avoid what he termed the “grave danger” of their works being confused. The concern was, apparently, justified. We apologize to both Churchills.

GREED CAUSED THE WAR

Poor nations didn't plunge the world into war.
Rich nations that coveted even greater riches did.

BY L. P. JACKS

★★★★★

SEPTEMBER 1915

Originally titled “War and the Wealth of Nations”

WHAT IS the cause of the terrible calamities which are now falling on the civilized world? Surely it lies in the fact that the economic development of mankind has outstripped the moral development. The nations of the world have grown richer without becoming wiser and juster in a corresponding degree. We all know that the possession of great riches is a dangerous thing—dangerous for the possessor and dangerous for his neighbors. We all know what the dangers are ...[unless] the moral development of the man's character keeps pace with the economic development of his wealth ...

It is indisputable that morality, by which I mean justice and wisdom, has not advanced, anywhere, in the degree that is needed to deal justly and wisely with the enormous accession of riches which has suddenly fallen to the lot of the human race. Material prosperity has taken the world unawares; morally the nations were unprepared for it; some of them made ready for war, but none of them made ready for the greater dangers of peace. The nations have acquired all this wealth, but in the deepest sense they don't know what to do with it; they don't know how it ought to be handled; they don't know how to make it a blessing, or even how to prevent it

from being a curse. This disparity between the moral and the economic development is the prime cause of our present trouble.

As things now are—wealth advancing by leaps and bounds, justice and wisdom advancing at a snail's pace—rich nations are bound to be quarrelsome nations ...

I will call your attention to a simple, obvious, and unquestionable fact. The present world war is, in the main, a war between rich nations. It is not a war between nations who are fighting, like starving dogs, for the bare means of subsistence. With the exception of Serbia and Montenegro, who of course are not the principals, each of the belligerent powers possesses vast territories and vast accumulations of wealth. Judged by any reasonable standard of human satisfaction, each has within itself not only enough, but far more than enough, to provide for the wants of the inhabitants ...

My contention is that vast accumulations of national wealth, so far from inclining nations to live at peace with one another, have, in the present backward state of international morality, precisely the opposite effect. The possession of great riches acts upon nations in the same way that we sometimes see it act upon individuals. Instead of making them contented with what they have, it makes them covetous to get more. ■

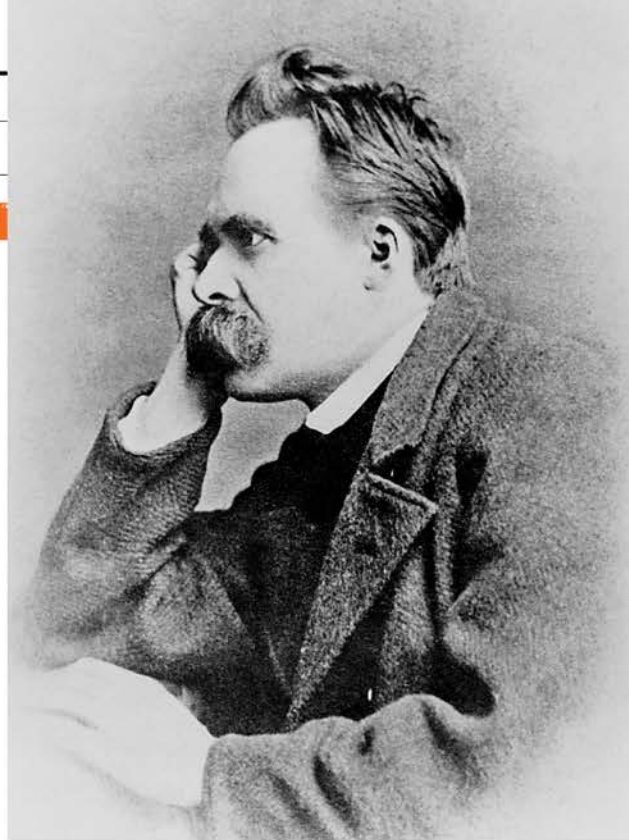
THE MAILED FIST AND ITS PROPHET

H. L. Mencken, a prominent German American journalist with reactionary racial views, was a frank admirer of Friedrich Nietzsche. Here he explained how Nietzsche heaped scorn upon Germans before they adopted him as a spokesman for their collective soul.

BY H. L. MENCKEN

★★★★★

NOVEMBER 1914



dungeons.” German taste was the negation, the antithesis, the torture and death of taste. German music was at once intoxicating and stupefying, “a first-rate nerve-destroyer, doubly dangerous to a people given to drinking.” German wit had no existence. German cookery was “a return to nature, that is, to cannibalism.” Germany itself was “the flatland of Europe.”

And having made all these charges, Nietzsche by no means tried to evade their implications, however embarrassing. Did his denunciation of German music collide with the massive fact of Wagner? Then he was far from dismayed. Wagner, on the one hand, was a mountebank, a sentimentalist in disguise, a secret Christian; and on the other hand, he was not a German at all, but a Jew! (His true name was Geyer, that is, vulture. It was but a step from Geyer to Adler—that is, eagle—and where is there a more thoroughly Jewish patronymic? I do not burlesque: somewhere in Nietzsche you will find the actual passage.) And Bismarck? Wasn’t he, at least, a German? By no means! He was an East German, which is to say, a Slav. (And so was Luther!) ...

IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING that all this heaping of scorn upon everything German won few readers for Nietzsche among the yeomen of the Germany that he attacked, and even fewer admirers. His charges were too strident, too extravagant, too offensive, to win any serious attention ...

OF ALL THE PUBLIC CRITICS of the Germans in modern times, not even excepting H. G. Wells, Napoleon III, and the ravished burghers of Louvain, there has been none who belabored the Tedesco [German] skull with harder blows, or got fiercer joy out of the delivery of them, than Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, heretic, rhapsodist, and prophet of the superman ...

No epithet was too outrageous, no charge was too far-fetched, no manipulation or interpretation of evidence was too daring, to enter into his ferocious indictment. He accused the Germans of stupidity, superstitiousness, and silliness; of a chronic weakness for dodging issues, a fatuous “barnyard” and “green-grazing” contentment; of yielding supinely to the commands and exactions of a clumsy and unintelligent government; of degrading education to the low level of mere cramming and examination-passing; of a congenital inability to understand and absorb the culture of other peoples, and particularly the culture of the French; of a boorish bumptiousness and an ignorant, ostrich-like complacency; of a systematic hostility to men of genius, whether in art, science, or philosophy (so that Schopenhauer, dead in 1860, remained “the last German who was a European even”); of a slavish devotion to “the two great European narcotics, alcohol and Christianity”; of a profound beeriness, a spiritual dyspepsia, a puerile mysticism, an old-womanish pettiness, an ineradicable liking for “the obscure, evolving, crepuscular, damp, and shrouded.”

The German soul, he argued, was full of “caves, hiding-places, and

★ The philosopher Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche's concept of a "superman" who rises beyond ordinary citizens' considerations of good and evil inspired Germans in expanding their empire.

The genuine turn of the tide toward Nietzsche was to be delayed for six years more. It came at last in 1892, with the publication of the four parts of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. Here, after six trials and six failures, he struck 12 with a resounding thwack. Here was success indubitable: a book almost perfectly adapted to arrest, arouse, stimulate, antagonize, inflame, and conquer. Here, at one stroke, was a profound and revolutionary treatise upon human conduct, and a glowing and magnificent work of art. The thing that Nietzsche accomplished in it was something that had been scarcely accomplished by anyone else since the day of the Hebrew prophets: he had put a whole system of morals into dithyrambs, and the dithyrambs were sonorous, beautiful, eloquent, thrilling.

It was as if a new Luther had begun to speak with the tongue of a new Goethe; as if a new David had been sent into Germany to kindle her against the false gods of the past ... Bismarck was an old, old man by now, and had been lately forced from the helm by the headstrong young kaiser. The ... heresies of Karl Marx were spreading like wildfire among the mob; the demands from below were growing more and more extravagant and more and more pressing.

What was needed was a sharp counterblast to all this gabble and babble, a coherent and convincing defense of the besieged elders of the state, a theory that would account in terms of right and justice for the embattled facts, a new gospel to take the place of the old gospel of brotherhood which the Socialists were turning so plausibly to their uses, an evangel of the counter-reformation.

This is what Nietzsche offered in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, and, as I have said, the medicine was fortunately without much bitterness, the sins and deficiencies of the Germans were temporarily overlooked, there was nothing to explain away. No wonder the book went through the country like wildfire! No wonder its impassioned justification of the *Herrenmoral* [master morality] was hailed by all the exponents of the new order as the voice of the true German spirit. **A**

WAR IS SOMEONE ELSE'S FAULT

How nations that go to war perceive themselves

BY WALTER LIPPMANN

★★★★★

AUGUST 1928

Originally titled "*The Political Equivalent of War*"

TO DENOUNCE WAR as a crime is to denounce something which a nation when it is entering a war never thinks it is committing. Invariably in modern times a nation goes to war to stop another nation from committing the crime of war. As the Austrians saw it in 1914, they did not make war on Serbia. They believed they were acting to prevent Serbia, backed by Russia, from making a criminal attempt to destroy the Austrian empire. The Germans did not make war upon Russia. They made war to prevent Russia from making war. The French did not make war.

They defended themselves. The British did not make war. They stopped an aggression. We did not make war. We tried to make the world safe for democracy ...

Nations on the eve of war almost invariably feel that they are innocent householders who are about to be attacked by robbers, or that they are witnesses of some dastardly outrage which is about to be perpetrated against their neighbors. The choice as it presents itself is not between the crime of war and the righteousness of peace, but between ruin and disgrace on the one hand, and self-preservation, courage, and honor on the other. **A**



★ Some of the 3.6 million Austro-Hungarians wounded in the war learn to walk with prosthetic limbs at a hospital in Budapest. Altogether, more than 21 million men were wounded.

THE KAISER AND HIS PEOPLE

The German monarch embodied “a new idealism,” exalting hard work and good government, according to this report by a German-born historian at Harvard.

BY KUNO FRANCKE

★★★★★

OCTOBER 1914



BERLINER VERLAG/ARCHIV/PICTURE-ALLIANCE/DPA/AP



★ Kaiser Wilhelm II (center) with his son (left) Crown Prince Wilhelm of Prussia, as they toured the conquered Serbia in 1916.



WHOEVER OR WHATEVER may have been immediately responsible for the terrible cataclysm, which in the midst of harvest time, like a Doomsday of nations, has befallen Europe and all mankind, there can be no question that German ascendancy of the last half century has been its ultimate cause ...

Seldom has an individual been so perfect an embodiment of a national movement as Kaiser Wilhelm II is of this new Germany. All his acts and utterances have been inspired by the one desire of developing German character to its utmost ...

He admonishes schoolboys to think of what their country will need of them when they are men, to abstain from alcohol, to strengthen their bodies and minds by hard work and hard sport, to strive after that harmony of life which the Greeks possessed and which "is sadly lacking today." He appeals to schoolteachers to make their pupils above all at home in the things nearest at hand, to make achievement

rather than knowledge the goal of instruction. He holds up to university students the spiritual heroes of the German past, from Walther von der Vogelweide to Schiller and Goethe, and warns them "not to waste their strength in cosmopolitan dreams, or in one-sided party service, but to exert it to make stable the national idea and to foster the noblest German thoughts." His own sons he urges to labor incessantly to make themselves true personalities, taking as their guide Jesus, "the most personal of all personalities," to make their work a source of joy to their fellow men—"for there is nothing more beautiful than to take pleasure jointly with others"—and where this is impossible, to make their work at least contribute something useful. Upon his officers he impresses the extreme necessity of firmness of character; for "victories are won by spiritual strength" ...

CORBIS; JÜRGEN DIENER/DPA/CORBIS



★ *Opposite page:* Kaiser Wilhelm II, flanked by Generals Paul von Hindenburg (left) and Erich Ludendorff. The two generals later met in Germany's 1925 presidential election, which Hindenburg won. *Above:* The kaiser with his mother and siblings in 1900. Wilhelm II stands third from the left, next to his mother, the eldest daughter of Britain's Queen Victoria, clad in black. This photo was taken on the terrace of her palace, in Kronberg im Taunus, Germany.

These are utterances of an individual. But they are typical of what millions of Germans feel, what Germany as a nation feels. Nothing could be more erroneous than to think that German ascendancy of the last generation has been merely industrial or commercial. A new idealism, a substantial enthusiasm for good government, for social justice, for beauty and joy, for fullness and richness of individual character, have accompanied it.

Can there be any doubt that Germany today is the best-governed country of the world? How utterly absurd is it to speak of the present conflict—as many American newspapers do—as a conflict between military despotism, represented by Germany, and peaceful democracy, represented by the strange partnership of Russia, Japan, England, and France ...

Is it a presumption to say that there is more honest striving for fullness of individual character in Germany than in other countries? I believe that there is; and I believe that this also is a part of that eager contest for ascendancy in which Germany has gradually outdistanced her neighbors—outdistanced, but not threatened. Is she now to be made to pay for all her efforts at self-improvement? Have these efforts not been more than merely national achievements? Have they not been a gain to humanity at large? Must she defend these achievements against a world in arms? If this desperate situation has been brought about by the very best there is in German character, then it must be accepted as part of the tragedy of human greatness. **A**

“THE FUTURE BELONGS TO THE WHITE RACE”

In a 1908 *Century Magazine* interview, suppressed by Germany, Kaiser Wilhelm II revealed his beliefs on white supremacy and on the historical role of great leaders.

BY WILLIAM HARLAN HALE

★★★★★

MAY 1934

Originally titled “Thus Spoke the Kaiser”

“YES, the big things in the world are always done by just a man—one man—one strong personality. History in its times of crisis

cries out for a man. Everything waits until a great personality appears; nothing happens until there rises up a man of absolute fearlessness, who knows what he wants and goes straight after it ...

“Parliaments may criticize; parliaments may hold back; parliaments may be very wise—but parliaments don’t *do* things. You may gather all the wisdom in the world in a parliament chamber, but you will never get action out of a parliament chamber. One man has got to lead. There must always be one man willing to assume responsibilities, to do things. Parliaments consider; they do not act ...

“The future”—the voice rang out—“the future belongs to the White Race, never fear!” His shoulders squared, his eye flashed, I could see the eagle above his head. “It belongs to the Anglo-Teuton, the man who came from Northern



★ Kaiser Wilhelm II, who ruled Germany from 1888 until he abdicated in November 1918, was a first cousin of Britain's King George V—“a very nice boy,” he once said.

Europe—where you to whom America belongs came from—the home of the German. It does not belong, the future, to the Yellow, nor to the Black, nor to the Olive-colored. It belongs to the Fair-skinned Man, and it belongs to Christianity and to Protestantism. We are the only people who can save it. There is no power in any other civilization or any other religion that can save humanity; and the future—belongs—to—us!” **A**

WAS THE GREAT WAR NECESSARY?

In Britain today, many see the war as a slaughter without necessity or meaning. But a great deal was at stake.

BY BENJAMIN SCHWARZ

★★★★★

MAY 1999



THE GREAT WAR, used interchangeably with *the First World War* (so named in 1918 by a sardonic English journalist, who knew it would not be the last such conflict), engendered in Britain a sense of loss that endures to this day; it remains the great divide in Britons' sense of their history. Along with the battles of Mons, Loos, the Somme, Ypres, and Passchendaele, and the writings of Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, Robert Graves, and Edmund Blunden, the statistics are probably known to every sixth-former in the United Kingdom: the 60 percent casualty rate that tore apart the British Expeditionary Force (probably the best army Britain ever fielded) in the first three months of the war, the 60,000 casualties on the first day of the Battle of the Somme, the 723,000 British dead by the end of the war (twice as many



as in the Second World War).

Although evocative and heartbreaking, this litany doesn't tell the full story. The war poets' perspective, for example, was hardly representative. (As the historian Correlli Barnett has argued, much of their revulsion was provoked by the squalor of daily life in the trenches, conditions that the common British soldier from the slums of Leeds, Liverpool, or London would not have found particularly noteworthy.) Nor were the death and mutilation spread evenly through British society. Although the majority of the British dead came from the working class, officers, drawn mostly from the upper classes, paid a disproportionately high price: for mobilized men overall the death rate was about 12 percent, but for graduates of Oxford and members of the peerage it was 19 percent, and for graduates of the 53 boarding schools where statistics are available it was 20 percent. Not since the Wars of the Roses had the aristocracy suffered such losses. The tiny, intimate world of the British elite ... truly lost a generation ...

The war is Britain's national trauma, and British and Commonwealth historians com-



pulsively revisit it in the way that American historians revisit the Civil War ...

FUTILE IS THE WORD that best describes the judgment presented to the British public regarding the First World War. From the war memoirs of the 1920s and 1930s to A. J. P. Taylor's illustrated history of the war (almost certainly the most popular chronicle of the conflict) to the recent novels of Pat Barker and Sebastian Faulks (and from the 1929 play *Journey's End* to the 1963 play *Oh! What a Lovely War* to the 1981 movie *Gallipoli*), the Great War has been portrayed as a meaningless and unnecessary slaughter, led by stupid generals and feckless politicians ...

There was in fact a great deal at stake for Britain in the Great War. Even assuming a benevolent German order on the Continent, the result of Germany's victory would have been that British independence as a great power would have been greatly diminished. This may seem like an abstraction. But those British generals, diplomats, and politicians who soberly committed their country to war in 1914 were

★ A huge ammunition dump supplied French and British troops during the Battle of the Somme, in northern France. More than 1 million men were wounded or killed during the 1916 clash—one of the bloodiest engagements in history.

hardly brimming with optimism—as Sir Edward Grey's oft-quoted lament, delivered on the eve of war, attests: "The lamps are going out all over Europe; we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime." They knew, however, that few responsible statesmen would voluntarily place their country at the will of another in a world in which Thucydides' hard law, "The strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must," has always obtained.

But to say that Britain fought the war so as not to be dependent on the sufferance of Germany doesn't settle matters, because the price Britain was compelled to pay to preserve its national independence was truly awful. Whether that price was too high is a question ... [that] has haunted the British mind for the past 80 years. But the question of whether submission might be preferable to waging war simply did not occur to the men who ruled Britain (or France or Germany or Russia) in 1914. As the cliché goes, the Great War ushered in the modern world. And in the world that began with four years of slaughter on the western front ... that question will never again go unasked. ■

2 IN THE TRENCHES

A line of trenches stretched 475 miles, unbroken from the North Sea to the Swiss border. Soldiers fought, ate, slept, and died without leaving their subterranean homes.

Barbed wire, no-man's-lands, and the use of poisonous gas obliterated any notion that war was noble.

★ American infantrymen charge over the top of a trench in France. Of the 65 million men mobilized worldwide, 13 percent were killed, another 33 percent were wounded, and 12 percent were taken prisoner or declared missing—a casualty rate of 58 percent.

THE CROSS AT NEUVE-CHAPELLE

At a village near the northern tip of France, the symbol of Christ caused Allied soldiers' deaths.

BY THOMAS TIPLADY

★★★★★

APRIL 1918



AN OFFICER TOLD ME that during the German retreat from the Somme they noticed a peculiar accuracy in the enemy's firing. The shells followed an easily distinguishable course. So many casualties occurred from this accurate shelling that the officers set themselves to discover the cause. They found that the circle of shells had for its center the crossroads, and that at the crossroads was a crucifix that stood up clearly as a landmark. Evidently the cross was being used to guide the gunners, and was causing the death of our men.

★ *Top:* A postcard of the "Christ of the Trenches" statue in Neuve-Chapelle. *Bottom:* Francois Flameng's 1926 painting, *A French Trench in the Village of Souchez*, depicts a scene in a village near Neuve-Chapelle on December 18, 1915.

But a more remarkable thing came to light. The cross stood close to the road, and when the Germans retired they had sprung a mine at the crossroads to delay our advance. Everything near had been blown to bits by the explosion except the crucifix, but that had not a mark upon it. And yet it could not have escaped, except by a miracle. They therefore set themselves to examine the seeming miracle and came across one of the most astounding cases of fiendish cunning. They found that the Germans had made a concrete socket for the crucifix so that they could take it out or put it in at pleasure. Before blowing up the crossroads they had taken the cross out of its socket and



removed it to a safe distance; then, when the mine had exploded, they put the cross back so that it might be a landmark to direct their shooting. And now they were making use of Christ's instrument of redemption as an instrument for men's destruction.

But our young officers resolved to restore the cross to its work of saving men. They waited till night fell, then removed the cross to a point of a hundred or two yards to the left. When in the morning the German gunners fired their shells... it looked as if someone had been tampering with their guns ... To put matters right they altered the position of their guns ... [and] the shells fell harmlessly into the outlying fields. **A**



PREPARING TO DIE

An American serving in the French Foreign Legion arranged his worldly affairs before a “grand attack.”

BY E. MORLAÉ

★★★★★

MARCH 1916

Originally titled “A Soldier of ‘The Legion’”



ONE HOUR BEFORE the time set for the advance, we passed the final inspection and deposited our last letters with the regimental postmaster. Those letters meant a good deal to all of us and they were in our minds during the long wait that followed. One man suddenly began to intone the *Marseillaise*. Soon every man joined in singing. It was a very Anthem of Victory. We were ready, eager, and confident: for us tomorrow held but one chance—victory ...

Tomorrow was the day fixed for the grand attack ... Tomorrow, at 9:15, was the time set. Every man, I suppose, wondered whether he would do or whether he would die. I wondered myself.

I did not really think I should die. Yet I had arranged my earthly affairs. “One can never tell,” as the French

soldier says with a shrug. I had written to my friends at home. I had named the man in my company to whom I wished to leave my personal belongings. Sergeant Velte was to have my Parabellum pistol; ... Birchler my money-belt and contents; while Sergeant Jovert was booked for my watch and compass. Yet, in the back of my mind, I smiled at my own forethought. I *knew* that I should come out alive ...

Just the same, I was glad that my affairs were arranged, and it gave me a sense of conscious satisfaction to think that my comrades would have something to remember me by. There is always the chance of something unforeseen happening.

★ French soldiers face German troops in 1915 in the Marne, in northeastern France. Barbed wire, popularized by cattle ranchers in the American West, first came into widespread use at this time as a tactic of war.



The pace was accelerating. The strain was beginning to wear off ... Men were beginning to chaff each other. I could distinctly hear Subiron describing in picturesque detail to Capdevielle how he, Capdevielle, would look, gracefully draped over the German barbed wire; and I could hear Capdevielle's heated response that he would live long enough to spit upon Subiron's grave; and I smiled to myself. The moment of depression and self-communication had passed. The men had found themselves and were beginning their usual chaffing. And yet, in all their chatter there seemed to be an unusually sharp note. The jokes all had an edge to them. ■

Dilemma

O Jesus, if your good Samaritan
Had come along the road to Jericho
An hour earlier; if he had heard
The cries for help; if he had found those thieves
Half-killing that unhappy traveler—
Would he have waited, peeping round the turn,
To give the helpless victim time to offer
His coat, and cloak also, and other cheek?
What would a neighbor do? O Son of Man,
That day you call the nations unto judgment,
Do not forget—we gave two pence for Belgium.

O Jesus, were you thinking of the Germans,
Or Turks, or Austrians, or French, or English,
Or Russians, or Italians, when you said,
“Be not afraid of them that kill the body,
But cannot kill the soul; fear rather him
Who may destroy both body and soul in hell”?
Or were you thinking of old Master Mammon,
Who laughs to see his puppets, Peace and War,
Obedient to his hand that pulls their strings,
Dancing his Dance of Death? O Prince of Peace,
How shall we slay the slayer of the soul?
How shall we know your peace from Mammon's
peace?

O Jesus, when we're set on your left hand
Among the goats, we wonder will it be
Because we took up arms and did our bit,
Killing our quota, reddening the shambles?
Or will it be because we always said—
America first!

— Florence Converse,
April 1917

★ On the eastern front, a Russian commander calls the roll.



THE ENEMY AS VERMIN

Russian soldiers saw nothing evil in leaving the bodies of Germans and Austrians on the battlefield to rot.

BY STEPHEN GRAHAM

★★★★★

MARCH 1915

Originally titled "The Russians and the War"

THE RUSSIAN PEASANT SOLDIER regards the enemy as vermin that must be destroyed. He has no doubt that he is clearing away something ugly and full of evil. He is fighting something pestilential, like the cholera or the plague.

The bodies of the Germans and the Austrians lay rotting on the fields of Poland this autumn and early winter, and infecting the air with odors. It was with difficulty that the Russian soldiers could be persuaded to bury them.

"Bury these corpses," said a general to one of his servant soldiers.

"No, your excellency," said the latter, "let them lie there like dogs; they are not fit to be buried in the good earth" ...

War to the Russian soldier is a great religious experience. "He liveth best who is always ready to die," says a holy proverb of the Russians. And readiness to die is the religious side of war. The Russian soldier kills his enemy without religious qualm, yet without hate. He does not feel that to shoot at a fellow man, to charge at him with a bayonet, is doing an evil thing to him. The great reality that confronts him is not that he may kill others, but that he himself may suffer terrible pain or may lose the familiar and pleasant thing called life. **A**

GEORGE H. MEWES/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY/CORBIS;
ADOC/CORBIS

CORPSES IN THE DROLLEST POSITIONS

A French officer found that the corpses half-buried in the walls of a trench became a matter of mirth.

BY LIEUTENANT RENÉ NICOLAS

★★★★★

JANUARY 1917

Originally titled "The Lieutenant's Story"



I WENT WITH THE GUIDE to inspect my new quarters. The [captured German] trench was an abomination—a charnel house—with dead piled upon dead, on the ground where you walked, above the parapets, in the walls of the trench, half buried, with either their heads sticking out or their feet or their hands or their knees ...

In the end, one gets used to living beside corpses, or “maccabees,” as we call them. They not only cease to make us uncomfortable, but they even make us laugh. Beyond the parapet there were two or three corpses, in the drollest attitudes. One looked as if he were invoking Allah, another was in the midst of a back somersault. One of my [soldiers] hung his canteen to a foot that was projecting over the wall; the others laughed and followed his example. The true French spirit was to the fore—an extreme adaptability, and, above all, good humor.

The odor of the corpses was nauseating, but pipes soon got the better of it. Meanwhile, shells and grenades kept pouring in on us. We were obliged to use the greatest care, and keep as near the side of the trench as possible. The shells were not very dangerous when they fell in the mud, for they either did not burst at all, or they exploded without much force; but when they went from one end of the trench to the other and landed farther on, they were indeed deadly. Toward noon a messenger came to bring orders from the captain. He was standing in front of me, nearly up to his waist in mud. Suddenly he was without a head; he tottered but did not fall; two streams of blood spurted violently from the headless body and bespattered me. It is hard sometimes not to have the right to have feelings; my men were all around me and I did not want them to see me blanch. I simply told them to cover his body with a tent sheet that was lying near, and sent word to the captain.

These various shocks hardened me. After that, I was more or less indifferent to the terrible things that happened. I even ate with good relish in the company of the head that was sticking out of the trench. **A**

★ A half-buried corpse of a Russian soldier in 1916



SUBTERRANEAN LIFE

Trenches were crowded, narrow cities replete with bunks, benches, and sewage systems.

BY **RAOUL BLANCHARD**

★★★★★

AUGUST 1917

Originally titled "Tactics and Armament: An Evolution"



WE HAVE ... a labyrinth of winding narrow lanes, forming a whole city, half underground, swarming with life, but singularly silent. In these muddy holes the soldiers live, perforce, day and night, with no chance to emerge. To protect themselves from rain or cold, they lose no time in digging themselves dwellings in the sides of the trenches. These are sometimes mere

niches, hollowed out of the earth, or, again, deeper cavities, the ceilings of which are reinforced by timbers or by iron beams. These are the dugouts, constructed below the level of the trenches, to which one gains access by a rude stairway. Rough bunks are found in them,



★ *Opposite page:* Modern trench warfare, first used in the American Civil War, brought a stalemate along the western front in Europe. *This page, top:* French soldiers defend their homeland during the Battle of Verdun, in March 1916. *Bottom:* A French soldier makes himself at home in a Belgian trench in March 1915.

as well as benches and tables, especially in the rear lines. The soldiers crowd into these to sleep; sometimes it is possible for them to light a fire. These are the barracks, or rather, the houses, of the subterranean city.

As the life in this city is extremely crowded, great care must be taken with the sewage system. Gutters must be dug to carry off the surface water, and a sort of pavement made of thin strips of wood must be laid. These precautions do not prevent the trenches ... from being constantly flooded with mud in which the unfortunate men who lead this underground life often sink up to their knees, sometimes even disappearing completely, as though swallowed up by a quicksand. 

Combat

When your nerves are feelin' shot,
And your engine's gettin' hot,
And it's up to you to bring 'er down alive,
An Albatross V-strutter
Seems to hear your motor sputter
And he's out of scalp another S.E. five.

And you've got no consolation
At the end of your formation,
And suddenly you see he's cut you off;
And there's nothing else to do,
So my boy! it's up to you,
And you wish to hell your engine wouldn't cough.

You pull 'er up and over.
It's your British crust that hove 'er,
And you're divin' down like leather bent for hell;
And your forehead starts a-painin',
But your engine starts a-gainin',
And you're underneath his tail—You've done it well!

You climb a little first,
And you let him have a burst,
And your Vickers starts a-spittin' like a snake;
But you're tremblin' like a child,
And your shots are goin' wild:
You can see 'em by the streaks your tracers make.

Well, you've pulled yourself together,
And you're goin' hell for leather,
But the Boche has rolled and got behind your back;
And his shots are fiery things,
And they're landin' in your wings;
So you roll, and almost hear 'em crack!

You'll deliver him to his Gott,
In the place where it's so hot,
And you aim and squeeze your Bowdin-lever well;
And before your shots are spent,
By God! you've gone and sent
Him blazin', spinnin', crashin' down to hell!

— John Lavalley,
April 1919



ALL FOR A FEW FEET OF FRANCE

A French officer witnessed the chaos of battle.

BY LIEUTENANT RENÉ NICOLAS

★★★★★

FEBRUARY AND MARCH 1917

Originally titled "The Lieutenant's Story II and III"

★ French soldiers resort to the most-primitive weaponry in trying to dislodge German troops from hillside trenches.

MARCH 20.

I find myself yielding to the charm of our life here. It is indeed the return to nature and simplicity; it is physical, almost animal. The primitive instincts of the race have full sway: eating, drinking, sleeping, fighting—everything but loving ...

MARCH 27.

I am writing my journal in a big underground shelter, comfortably stretched out in a hammock that my predecessor ingeniously rigged up out of two old tent sheets ... We are in the same trench as the enemy—next-door neighbors in fact, and not a bit civil. Nothing but a barricade of bags of earth separates us from the Boches [Germans]. Near the barricade stand the sentries, attentive and silent. No sound is heard on either side except for the whizzing of grenades that are continually being tossed back and forth. But the sentries are well protected in the sides of the trench, and they defy the German “turtles” ...

So the first German and French lines are in immediate contact. The reason is that our side has not been able to seize the whole of the trench, of which the enemy still occupies the eastern end. But this situation will not last, I think, and we shall increase our gains.

The trench is clean, except for bodies imperfectly buried here and there. We no longer pay any attention to them; but the really deplorable thing is that many corpses fall in the mud; the mud has hardened and the trench is less than five feet deep. It is impossible to make it deeper, for the least stroke of a pick brings up a piece of cloth or a bit of flesh. To circulate, we have to bend like hunchbacks. It is both painful and dangerous, so the men don't move around much but stay in the shelters ...

MARCH 28.

What a riotous night! ...

The first part of the night was uneventful, except for an abominable shower of grenades the Boches kept basting at us ...

I went to the barricade and saw that the [German] trench was for a fact empty, except for the machine gunners who were on duty beside their gun. I quickly gave orders to tear down



★ In August 1917, a chaplain and stretcher-bearers search for casualties in ravaged land the Allies had gained near the Meuse River, in northeastern France.

the barricade, and we ran into the Boche trench. The men of my section, according to my instructions, set up a furious fire ... As we ran, we threw several grenades at the machine gunners, who sank down before they were able to turn their guns against us.

In a twinkling we reached the end of the trench ... and from behind the barricade of dead men and earth fired three rounds into the retreating Germans. They were thrown into a panic. A good many must have been killed, for daylight brought to our gaze the sight of that trench piled with dead. The whole thing had not lasted more than two minutes. We were deluged with grenades, a continuous *zip, zip*; one of our men was killed, three or four wounded. Everything was in a wild tumult—trench rockets going up, guns firing at the double quick ... Barbed wire was rushed into place and the trench reversed—minutes of mad excitement and insane activity. We were without consciousness of danger, hypnotized by the work to be done.

We expected a counterattack ... We waited. There were false alarms. A man who is a little



Rupert Brooke

(Died at the Dardanelles, April, 1915)

You need no praise, nor is this meant to be:
But the sincere and baffled grief of one
Who walked with you under last summer's sun,
And laughed with you at vain mortality.
An hour, that afternoon, we sat for tea
In a café, upstairs. Time soon had run.
We talked of great things waiting to be done—
Talking, as young men will, ambitiously.
I smiled, then, seeing your open throat, soft tie,
The golden, godlike head, your eyes' bold blue,
Your burning seriousness—O youth! thought I.
But now (not strange), I think and think of you
Saying that day, "It does not matter why
Men act: what matters most is what men do."

— Conrad Aiken,
July 1915

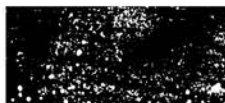
nervous begins to fire rapidly, his neighbor follows his example, then the squad, then the section, then the whole company gets on the rampage. The machine guns begin to clatter, the second-line troops take alarm, the artillery steps in with a few shells and—the Boches over opposite, bewildered by the hubbub, send up ... trench rockets, whose rays illumine the grass growing green in the spring, the tangle of wire, and several poor dead bodies lying with hands outstretched toward the opposite trench, as if pointing the path of duty to the one behind. The counterattack did not come, but shells upon shells were rained upon us ... I gave my canteen of wine to my prisoners ... It is nothing at all—50 meters of trench; and yet, it is a few feet of France won back again.

HOLY THURSDAY.

The thing that tried me most sorely was this mole-like existence. I who am always longing for large action and open and intense fighting with an enemy who is before your eyes.

The Boches have been bombarding rather

**WE WERE
DELUGED WITH
GRENADES, A
CONTINUOUS
ZIP, ZIP;
ONE OF OUR MEN
WAS KILLED.**



violently. That is to be expected since this is Holy Thursday. But, in spite of everything, there has been something religious in the calm of the elements these latter days. Nature is at her devotions. This evening is superb. Shells are bursting in great numbers, and the little church of Perthes totters as if it were about to fall ... Larks are singing, full-throated, a sublime paean of life and joy. In the distance lie the dead, and the frightful mangled corpse of the village of Perthes ...

MAY 4.

In order to guard against gas bombs we have been given horrible, nightmarish masks, goggles set in a kind of pig jowl or snout made of rubber and containing a solution of ammonia. They make one look like a wild animal, and as soon as I got mine I put it on for the benefit of my [soldiers]. They nearly laughed themselves into fits.

But life in general is calm, too calm even. I am reading *Anna Karenina*, which came by mail yesterday, and smoking endless pipes. **4**

THE FLOWER OF YOUTH, MANGLED AND MAIMED

The chief officer of a British ship was sickened by burying so many young men at sea.

BY ANONYMOUS

★★★★★

FEBRUARY 1916

Originally titled "Radical's Progress"



I AM SICK TO DEATH. I saw more men blown up in one hour [in the Dardanelles] than I saw killed all through the Boer War. I am cured of ever wishing to be a soldier again. You will appreciate why when I have finished my story.

After we landed our troops on April 25, we were turned into a distributing hospital ship. Over 20,000 wounded passed through our vessel. It fell to my lot to sew up and bury the dead. To see the flower of the youth of Britain, Australia, and New Zealand—and Turkey, too, for that matter—mangled and maimed beyond recognition: not

a man over 35 years and not one under 19 years ... To see lines of men charging, with shrapnel blowing big gaps in their lines, makes one wonder if there is a living God who looks down and allows such things to go on ...

One evening I buried 27 of the best my country ever produced, all Scots fusiliers. The words, "We therefore commit his body to the deep" are graven on my very soul. It is at this part of the service that the body is slid overboard. For full an hour after this first burial, the thought of these countrymen of mine being sewn up in blankets and dumped overboard like so many bundles of rubbish—I had a terrible craving to get at the throats of the capitalists and jingoists who are responsible for it all. Submarine commanders cannot be blamed for sinking *Lusitanias*. They are simply doing their jobs and obeying orders. Those who issue such orders cannot be got at; at least, not yet.

Day after day these burials went on. Later I refused to attend them. The finish came when one body stuck to the stretcher by reason of the blood having oozed through the wrappings and congealed. The body had to be pried adrift before it would slide of its own weight into the sea.

I cannot tell you any more just yet. I sicken as I write.

The stupidity of it all!—the wrong men doing the fighting and bearing all the suffering. Kindly-hearted fathers killing other kindly-hearted fathers at the behest of—whom? ... Those in your country who are clamoring for war: let them volunteer to come over as stretcher-bearers only.

It is horrible, horrible, too horrible ...

I HAD KILLED A MAN MYSELF [during the Boer War]. It was in a skirmish. My regimental chum sang out at me, "Step right!" I did so instinctively, and this fellow lunged past me, and fell with the force of his missed blow. I brought down the butt of my rifle on his skull and crushed it, as one breaks an egg.

All the rest of the day I vomited at intervals. Once I cried. I could not eat. Two days earlier had come a letter from my mother asking me not to take life if I could help it ... It wasn't the letter. It was the physical shock of seeing a man's brains beaten in like jelly. I made up my mind then and there that I had had enough of patriotism. **A**



★ In a trench on the western front, Red Cross workers arrange a wounded soldier on a stretcher. The Red Cross grew exponentially during the war, to include more than 23,000 nurses and 4,800 ambulance drivers.

LEFT TO DIE IN FLANDERS FIELDS

Abandoned in no-man's-land, some wounded men spent days crawling to safety.

BY JAMES NORMAN HALL

★★★★★

MAY 1916

Originally titled "Kitchener's Mob: III. 'Sitting Tight'"

THE INHUMANITY OF A WAR without truces was revealed to us at Loos as never before. Hundreds of bodies were lying between the opposing lines of trenches and there was no chance to bury them. Fatigue parties were sent out at night to dispose of those which were lying close to the parapets; but the work was constantly interrupted and delayed by persistent sniping and heavy shell fire. Others, farther out, lay where they had fallen, day after day and week after week. Many an anxious mother in England was vainly seeking news of a son whose body had become a part of that Flemish landscape.

During the week following the commencement of the offensive, the wounded were brought back in twos and threes

from the contested ground for which the opposing forces were so fiercely striving. One plucky Englishman we discovered about 50 yards in front of our parapet. He was waving a handkerchief tied to the handle of his intrenching tool. Stretcher-bearers ran out under fire and brought him in. He had been wounded in the foot when his company was advancing up the slope 1,500 yards away. When it was found necessary to retire to the first line of the German trenches, which we were holding, he had been left, with scores of dead and wounded comrades, far from

Two soldiers ... gave vivid accounts of the hideous proceedings of the war in Flanders and of their own feelings of terror. Their accounts agreed, but the conclusions they drew were different. One man ended by saying with a sort of gasp, "It made you believe in God; I can tell you." The other, a more thoughtful man, said, "It made you doubt the existence of God." I think that the effect of this year of history will be to discourage the higher kind of religion and immensely strengthen the lower.

— Gilbert Murray, "*Herd Instinct and the War*," June 1915



the possibility of help by friends. He had bandaged his wound with his first-aid field dressing and started crawling back, a few yards at a time. He secured food from the haversacks of dead comrades, and at last, after a week of painful creeping, reached our lines.

Another of our men was discovered by a listening patrol six days after he had been wounded. He, too, had been struck down close to the German second line. Two kindhearted German sentries to whom he had signaled crept out at night and gave him hot coffee to drink. He begged

★ During combat in Flanders, a shell strikes a British tank, which bursts into flames and nearly crushes a soldier. Another tank crashes through a barrier of barbed wire.

them to take him in, but they said they were forbidden to take any wounded prisoners. As he was unable to crawl, he would have died had it not been for the keen ears of the men of the listening patrol. A third victim whom I saw was brought in at daybreak by a working party. He had been shot in the jaw, and lay unattended in the open through at least five wet October days and nights. His eyes were swollen shut. Blood poisoning had set in from a wound which would certainly not have been fatal could it have received early attention. ■



THE BATTLE OF VERDUN

At a fortress town in northeastern France, the German army repeatedly tried to break through Allied lines, in one of the greatest dramas of the war.

BY RAOUL BLANCHARD

★★★★★

JUNE 1917

THE BATTLE OF VERDUN, which dragged its length from February 21, 1916, to the 16th of December, ranks next to the Battle of the Marne as the greatest drama of the world war. Like the Marne, it represents the checkmate of a supreme effort on the part of the Germans to end the war swiftly by thunderstroke. It surpasses the Battle of the Marne by the length of the struggle, the fury with which it was carried on, the huge scale of the operations ...

In February and March Germany wished to end the war by crushing the French army at Verdun. She failed utterly. Then, from April to July, she wished to exhaust French military resources by a battle of fixation. Again she failed. The Somme offensive was the offspring of Verdun. Later on, from July to December, she was not able to elude the grasp of the French, and the last engagements, together with the vain

struggles of the Germans for six months, showed to what extent [the French] had won the upper hand.

The battle of Verdun, beginning as a brilliant German offensive, ended as an offensive victory for the French. And so this terrible drama is an epitome of the whole great war: a brief term of success for the Germans at the start, due to a tremendous preparation which took careless adversaries by surprise—terrible and agonizing first moments, soon offset by energy, heroism, and the spirit of sacrifice; and finally, victory for the Soldiers of Right. 

★ An artillery shell explodes during the Battle of Verdun.

VERDUN, BEFORE AND AFTER

A beautiful town brought to ruin

BY HENRY SHEAHAN

★★★★★

JULY 1916

Originally titled "Verdun"



★ The remains of a church, northwest of Verdun

THE VERDUN I SAW in April 1913 was an out-of-the-way provincial city of little importance outside of its situation as the nucleus of a great fortress. There were two cities—an old one, *la ville des évêques*, on a kind of acropolis rising from the left bank of the Meuse, and a newer one built on the meadows of the river. Round the acropolis Vauban had built a citadel whose steep, green-black walls struck root

in the mean streets and narrow lanes on the slopes. Sunless byways, ill paved and sour with the odor of surface drainage, led to it. Always picturesque, the old town now and then took on a real beauty. There were fine, shield-bearing doorways of the Renaissance to be seen, Gothic windows in greasy walls, and here and there at a street corner a huddle of half-timbered houses in a high contrast of invading sunlight and retreating shade. From the cathedral parapet, there was a view of the distant forts, and a horizontal sweep of the unharvested, buff-brown moorlands ...

The Verdun I saw on March 24, 1916, after a month of explosive shells and incendiary bombs, was almost half in ruin. Almost every house was bitten and pockmarked with fragments of shell. A large number, disemboweled by projectiles, had fallen into the street. Incendiary shells had done the greatest damage, burning great ugly areas in the close-packed streets.

Opening on rue Mazel, by some miracle untouched, was the gay shop window of a military tailor, and in the window stood a mannikin dressed as a lieutenant. With hand raised to salute, of irreproachable *tenue*, the dummy surveyed the scene of desolation with inane eyes. Shells have scarred the steep walls of the citadel, and dug great craters in the enclosure at the summit. Many times in a day shells start new fires ... The smoke of the artillery hangs low on the buff-brown moor. There are German assaults at Malancourt and toward the Hauts de Meuse. But the great attack is over. Both sides know it. Verdun is beyond all question out of danger. **A**



★ Infantrymen near Verdun, in northeastern France, use holes made by artillery shells as their shelter.

SILENCE AT VERDUN

How a lush countryside came to resemble
the surface of the moon

BY LOUIS OCTAVE PHILIPPE

★★★★★

OCTOBER 1916

Originally titled "With the Iron Division at Verdun"

WE MARCH. A stretch interminable and lugubrious. We wind through a little valley, cross fields, pass through ravines; we follow along a railroad track; we stumble over the bodies of dead horses; we fall into holes made by exploding shells. But here are cannon, very near! These shells seem to be hunting for us. They explode to the right, to the left, ahead on the path. Fortunately they do not fall exactly where we are ...

The march continues, grimly, slowly. We have not stopped yet, and it is 2 o'clock in the morning. We enter a ravine with steep wooded sides. Here we must go one by one, in Indian file, along an improvised path. What fatigue! We



must ascend, descend; extricate ourselves from the underbrush; hurry, so as not to lose the file; we must push back the branches which lash our faces. The darkness is complete. Our eyes are tired after three nights without sleep, and with trying in vain to see. They perceive vague outlines and at once construct from them the most fantastic objects.

Every instant rockets shoot up, throwing suddenly a light like that of the moon, which vanishes as quickly, making the night blacker than ever ...

At midnight exactly, the shells, which up to now had visited us rather hesitatingly, suddenly multiplied their powerful roar. Little by little their rhythm increased, and the situation became terrible. The enemy artillery hammered

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★ *Top:* The battle of Verdun marked an early deployment of phosgene gas, considered 10 times deadlier than the chlorine gas used before. *Bottom:* The rubble inside the cathedral in Verdun.

the ground methodically. Soon we were in the midst of a furnace. At first, when the explosions were taking place 500 or 600 meters away, we were rather indifferent. But as the thick of the shell-bursts drew nearer, the crash of the explosions shook us through and through ...

We had suffered cruelly. Yet we had been almost at the edge of the bombarded zone. What, then, had been the situation for the poor unfortunates in back of us, in the ravine, in the middle of the furnace? I have a chance to go and see. Men are needed to help bring up provisions. I go there, and I shall never be able to describe my vision of horror. But I shall try, just the same.

The sight was terrifying: the ground made me think of the yawning craters one sees in photographs representing the surface of the moon. The underbrush had been ripped and chopped. There remained of it nothing but shreds. The trees had all been cut off, smashed; not one did I see standing. They had been shaved clean off at different distances from the ground. Of the wood there remained nothing but an indescribable confusion of trunks and branches, broken, crushed, splintered.

But all this is only a setting for an atrocious scene. The ground is strewn with corpses. Poor mutilated bodies! To what odious profanations they have been submitted! Here is one which had been sheltered by a tree; the tree has been cut, and in falling the trunk has crushed him to the earth. This other one has had his head flattened, without a wound, as if it had been made of cardboard. That one there has an empty skull. That one over there has had his chest staved in, and his arms and legs dismembered. Here are some bodies which have been hurled into the trees and are hanging there, pathetically, like old rags. Here and there are parts of human bodies—intestines clinging to the branches, from which the blood runs in a horrible dribble. Right here is a human trunk without a head, or arms, or legs, which is glued to a tree trunk, flattened out and split open. Everywhere is an atrocious mixture of flesh and blood, over which floats a fetid, sickening vapor. **A**

To N.S., Who Died in Battle

I knew you glad to go; I envied you.
To pour the glory of your young life forth
In one libation—what more happy lot?
Be spared the slow, sad drip of dreams and hopes. Of loves
and memories, that leaves us dry
And bitter, seared and bleared with creeping age—
Who would not die in battle? Life cut short?
Nay, blossomed in a moment, rich with fruit,
Blossom and fruit together, which the years
Might never ripen, uneventful years
Of nursery-gardening one small, precious self,
Which seeds and dies and none knows why it was.

I knew you glad to go; you knew not why—
The sting of high adventure in your blood,
The salt of danger savoring nights and days;
And in your heart the wave of some unknown
Deep feeling shared with comrades, that bore you on
The tideways that the coward never knows,
Nor he who hoards his life for his own ends.

O happy boy, you have not lost your years!
You lived them through and through and in those brief days
When you stood facing death. They are not lost:
They rushed together as the waters rush
From many sources; you had all in one.

You filled your little cup with all experience,
And drank the golden foam, and left the dregs,
And tossed the cup away. Why should we mourn
Your happiness? You burned clear flame, while he
Who treads the endless march of dusty years
Grows blind and choked with dust before he dies,
And dying goes back to the primal dust,
And has not lived so long in those long years
As you in your few, vibrant golden months
When like a spendthrift you gave all you were.

— Anonymous,
February 1918

HAS THE WAR AFFECTED THE WEATHER?

A meteorologist investigated whether explosions and gunfire were causing climate change.

BY ALEXANDER McADIE

★★★★★

SEPTEMBER 1916



IT IS A COMMONPLACE of conversation that for some months past the weather conditions have been abnormal, particularly in the matter of rainfall, in the battle zones and elsewhere. Detailed data from regions close to the firing lines are not available; and we have only general statements of inclemency insofar as they affect military operations. But in districts not far away—the British Isles, for instance—the records of excessive raininess during the winter of 1914–15 and at subsequent times have not escaped comment; and others besides meteorologists are discussing the possibility of a connection between the heavy cannonading and the rainfall. The professional meteorologist is called upon to answer whether there is any rational explanation of what appears to be a marked departure from the usual sequence of weather conditions. Is it possible that the tremendous expenditure of



ammunition—an expenditure which the layman may well regard as an experiment in concussion sufficiently vast to be decisive—has facilitated condensation and its later stage, precipitation? In concise terms, has the bombarding not only caused clouds but forced the clouds to send down rain? ...

Sometimes Nature conducts a rain-making experiment in very dramatic fashion, as when a volcano blows its head off. Thus, when Mont Pelée, Krakatoa, Mount Asama, Katmai, and even little Lassen were in eruption, there were produced the heavy rolling clouds, the lightning, the wind-rush, and the downpour. And not only is there direct rain-making close to the volcano: indirectly and at a distance eruptions cause rain, since the gases and fine ash or dust are carried far and wide by the winds, and ... increase the rainfall in countries far removed ... Someone will say, do not these facts prove that the claims of “rain-makers” regarding explosions and rains are correct? The answer is, not quite. The explosive output and the atmospheric disturbance in the two cases are not comparable. For example, during one of the recent eruptions of Mount Asama, pressure disturbances were recorded on all the barographs in Japan; but the

CORBIS



daily noon gun fired close to the observatory in Tokyo never affects the instruments ...

A WORD OR TWO is in order regarding the claims of those who insist that explosions, particularly gunfire, are accompanied by or cause rain. Edward Powers published a book in 1890 proving to his own satisfaction that the great battles of the Civil War were followed by heavy rain. A wider study of the facts does not bear out the statement. This volume, *War and the Weather*, led to an appropriation by Congress of the sum of \$10,000 for experiments in producing rain by the use of high explosives. The writer witnessed some of these experiments, made under favorable conditions. There was no evidence of a causal relation between the detonations of the dynamite and the showers ...

If the war is not the cause of the abnormal weather, what is? We do not know ...

Excessive rains have occurred in previous years when there were no wars; and in all probability will occur again, regardless of the prevalence of gunfire. **A**

★ A wasteland in Flanders after a rainstorm

“ALL THE WORLD IS TIRED HERE”

Diary entries from Mont Blond, in northern France, which was stormed by French and Moroccan troops in May 1917

BY WILLIAM TOWNSEND PORTER

★★★★★

FEBRUARY 1918

Originally titled “The Clue”

MAY 24, 1917
The three surgeons played baccarat. I sat on the edge of a plank and watched the game. We had an acetylene light. The shells fell all around, shaking the place and repeatedly putting out the light. The noise was remarkable. The air was filled with screams, hisses, and loud reports, followed by the slide of masses of earth. Many shells were so close that a strong push of hot gas was felt. At 6 o'clock the Moroccans took the ridge by storm. At midnight the bombardment slackened but did not cease.

With the dawn the wounded came in a stream, and were laid in the upper room. The wounds were of all sorts. The worst was a completely crushed jaw, in a man with a dozen slighter wounds. One man had a hole through the temple into the brain—a hole two inches long and half an inch wide. Another had a smashed leg, a bad head, and in the thigh a wound the size of a small orange.

I watched the blood pressure carefully. Imagine a cellar with a plank floor covered with clay an eighth of an inch deep. A horrible tub full of bloody dressings. Two

stretchers on the floor. Ten men in a space 10 by 12 feet, shoulder to shoulder. Two candles. Sandbag walls. The roof so low that I am always hitting my helmet against the beams. The air thick with the smell of blood, sweat, alcohol, iodine, vomit ...

May 25. Today two or three rather elderly soldiers came in, with the plea that they were sick. The doctor, who has a soft full beard, large brown eyes, and a very gentle manner, said, “You are not sick. You are only tired. But all the world is tired here” ...

May 26. Just before daybreak there was drum-fire—continuous roars from all the batteries. This lasted two hours. I got up and crawled into the upper cave, but was at once driven down again. After the fire slackened, I went out—about two feet out—and Gérard prepared my toilet—a shave and face-wash. I have not had any of my clothes off during the last three days and nights. After shaving, I went out to brush my teeth. The air was clear and brisk, and the sun not fully risen. To stand on the open slope of the hill, in the keen wind of dawn, under fire, and use a tooth-brush, was really exhilarating. It was the first time I have ever enjoyed brushing my teeth. **A**

SCIENCE AT THE FRONT

Geologists, meteorologists, and chemists helped make their nations' armies more lethal.

BY JOSEPH S. AMES

★★★★★

JANUARY 1918



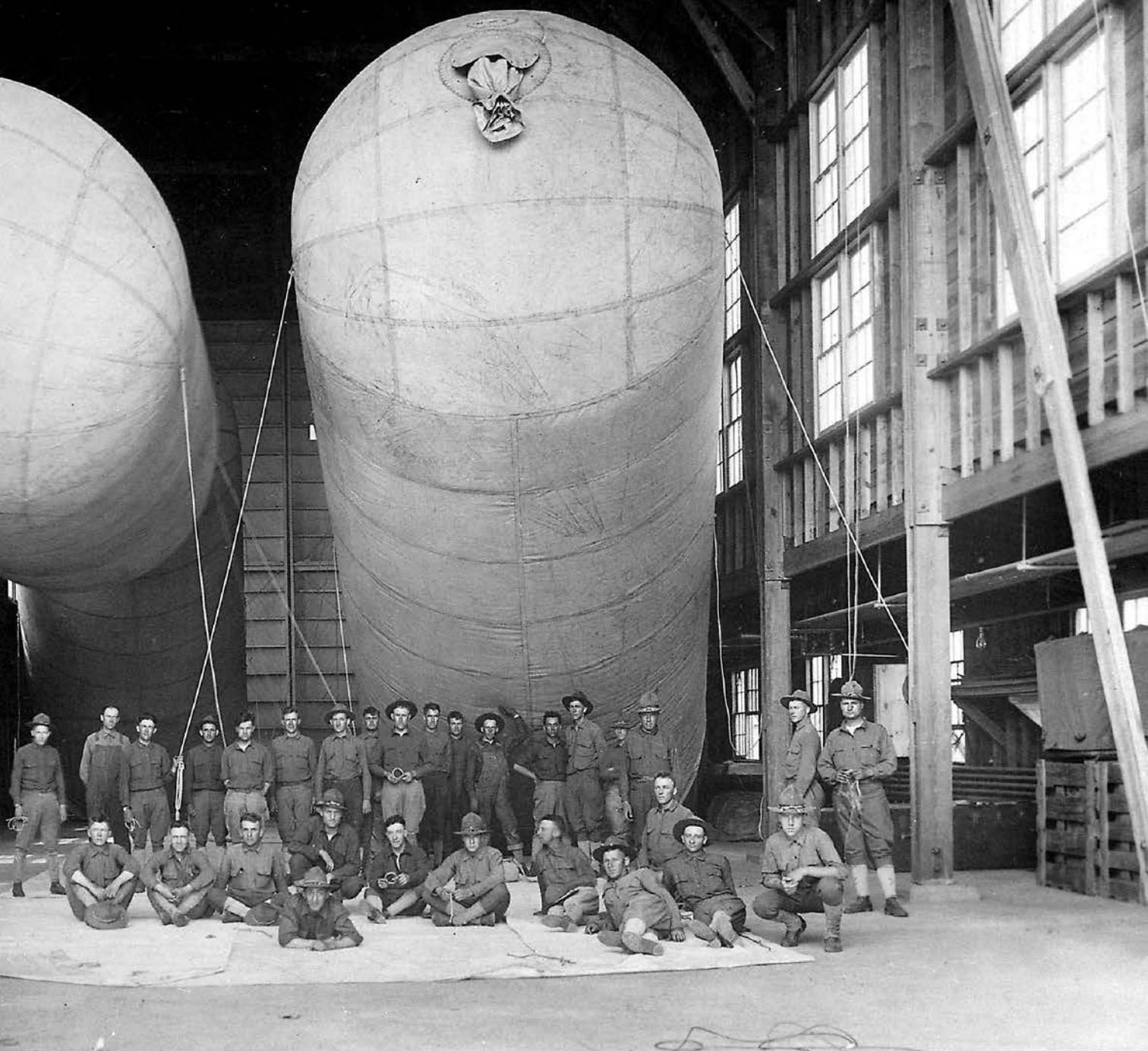
THE MORE ONE goes up and down the battle line, the more one is amazed at the vital part which science is playing ...

There is no branch of science which is not being applied in this war. This was a most surprising fact to me. Take geology. I had heard that geologists were attached to the staff; but I had pictured them as mining engineers rather than as professors of the pure science. Imagine, then, my surprise when I found in one of the rooms at headquarters a world-famous geologist studying and marking areas on a geological map of Flanders. All this country through which the battle line passes has been studied with care by geologists for many decades, and Belgium and France have both published sets of maps

showing all the geological details. On the professor's table was a map of the district directly east of Ypres; he was coloring certain areas red and others various shades of blue. He was also marking certain points and drawing a few straight lines.

Naturally I asked what it all meant. One color meant, "Here it is safe to make dugouts"; another, "Here you will strike rock"; another, "Look out for quicksands"; and so forth. The points meant, "Dig for water." I asked him why he did not use a divining-rod expert (only I said a "dowser," as I was speaking real English). He laughed and said that *unofficially* he might do so.





The straight lines meant, "Here you may make tunnels or burrow mines" ...

IN THIS WAR the "weather man," the meteorologist, has come into his own. No one laughs at him now. His information is desired by the artillery officer who has to know the temperature of the air and its moisture content, the strength of the wind at different levels, and the like, in order that he may aim his guns. When the temperature is hovering about the freezing point, the staff wish to know if the improvised roads will be frozen sufficiently to permit the movement of guns or motor trucks.

★ These so-called nurse balloons, at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, carried gas to inflate other balloons used to observe enemy movements.

The captains of the air squadrons must know the condition of the atmosphere up to heights of 20,000 feet ...

At the beginning of the war the value of meteorological prediction was not recognized by the Allies. Two incidents produced a sudden change. One morning the batteries were ordered to resume firing at the same range as on the previous afternoon; no change in elevation was made, and the shells began landing in their own front trenches, whereas the day before they had reached the enemy's lines. Such is the effect of marked changes in the air. In the early days the British weather reports leaked



into Germany; and one week every condition reported indicated that for a few days ahead the weather would be such as the Germans desired for the dispatch of zeppelins over England. The forecasters in London, however, did not, in their printed statements, tell all that they knew, and informed the Admiralty that a change was probable which would make the conditions favorable for attack on the zeppelins. The latter came, and found the British ready for them. From that time on the meteorologist came into favor ...

EVER SINCE GUNPOWDER was introduced into warfare, chemistry has been recognized as the one science which was

★ *This page: An attack of poison gas, photographed from a Russian aircraft. Opposite page, top left: A scout descends from a balloon searching for German U-boats. Top right: Horses as well as men wore gas masks. Bottom: Soldiers in a cloud of gas.*

essential in preparations for war; but a new chapter was opened when the Germans introduced poisonous gases as an instrument of death, in place of bullets. This was at the second battle of Ypres [in the spring of 1915], in which the Canadian soldiers suffered so cruelly. The plan then followed was to transport to the front-line trenches steel cylinders containing the liquefied gases, level down the edge of the parapet toward the British forces, letting the nozzles project over the top, and then wait for a favorable wind.

Of course, as soon as the idea of the Germans in planning this hideous mode of warfare was recognized, it became comparatively easy to block it; the preparations could always be seen;



then a bombardment could be set up which destroyed the tanks where they were, much to the distress of the Germans themselves. Consequently, the manner of using poisonous gases had to be altered; and the plan adopted was to take the shells in use with the big guns and fill them with the liquefied gases instead of with shrapnel. Special guns were devised for use at short range; and these so-called gas shells now form a most important feature of artillery.

The only protection against these gases is a mask which may be put on quickly, and which is so constructed mechanically that the man can breathe in and out without strangling. The part of the chemist was to determine what substance should be put in the passages through which the air is inhaled, so as to absorb the poisonous gases. The way in which the French and English chemists solved this problem—for it is solved—excites the admiration of the world; and the real scientific work done in connection with it is a great contribution to pure science.

When the moral question involved in this use of gas as a weapon in war was settled and the Allies determined also to adopt it, chemists were again appealed to. The result has been a study of hundreds upon hundreds of gases, their toxicity, their density, their liquefaction, and the ease of manufacture; and here again the purely scientific side of the subject will be of permanent value. The work is going on unceasingly. Chemists are attached to all the armies, and chemical laboratories are in operation; so that, if the Germans send over any new shells—and a certain proportion always fail to explode—they may be investigated instantly. **A**



IN DEFENSE OF GAS WARFARE

Noxious chemicals have been used in battle since at least ancient Greece. They are more economical—and more humane—than any other weapon, one writer argued.

BY W. LEE LEWIS

★★★★★

JUNE 1922

Originally titled "Is Prohibition of Gas Warfare Feasible?"

MAN HAS a native equipment of low fighting caliber. His untrained fists are puny; he cannot run fast or kick hard, and a projecting nose interferes with his biting proclivities. He, therefore, early supplemented his native equipment with artificial weapons, and poisons played a large part in early controversies, as in the poisoning of arrows and spears.

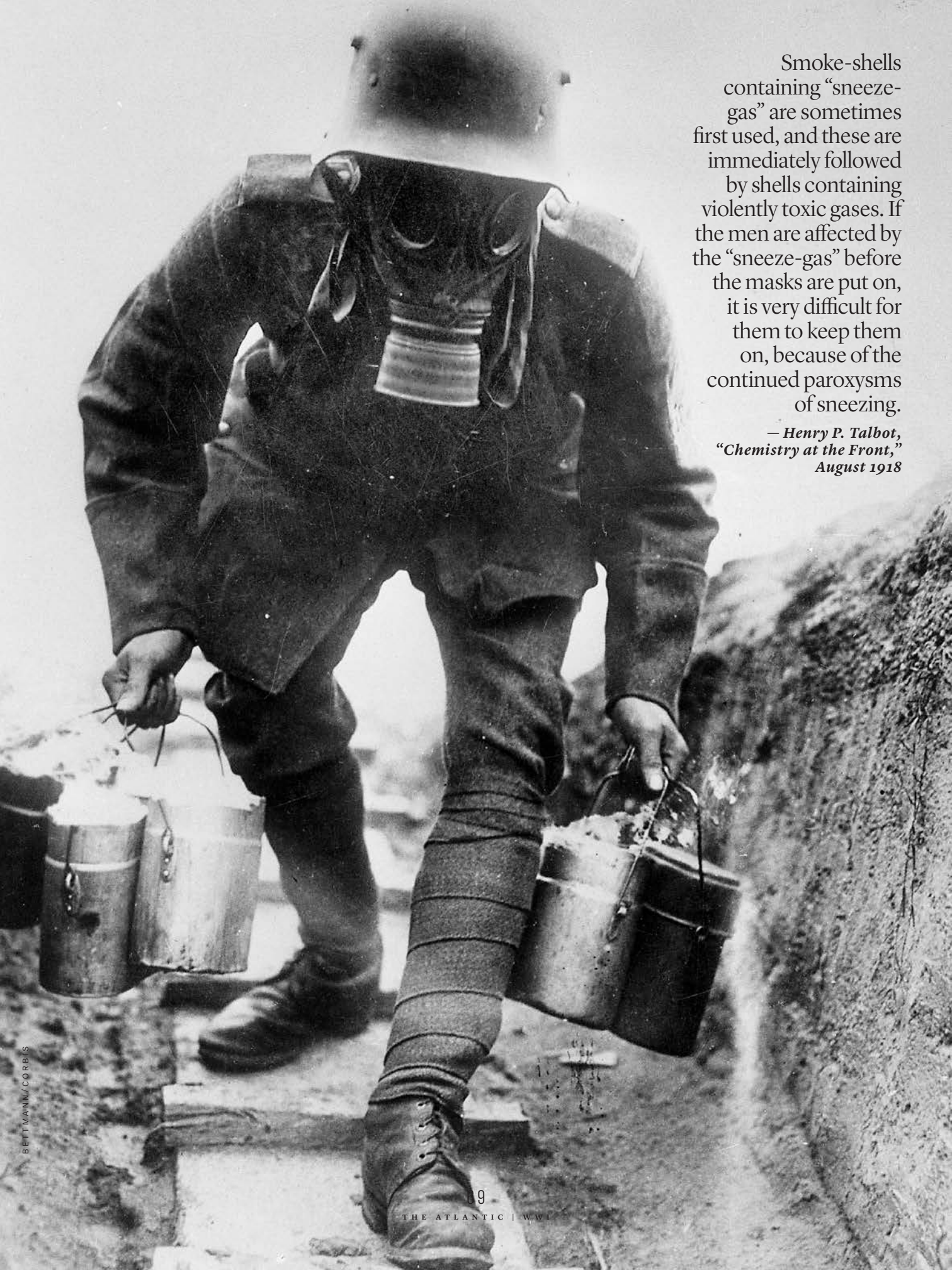
Among the earliest recorded human use of noxious chemicals in war is the employment of pitch and sulphur, which were burned at the foot of the walls of the ancient cities of Belium and Plataea by the Spartans, in their wars with the Athenians, during the fifth century B.C. Later, we read of the use of stinkballs, apparently mixtures of asafetida and combustibles—little courtesies exchanged between ships fighting at close range ... Even the English during the Crimean War considered seriously, for a period, the plan of smoking the Russians out of Sebastopol with burning sulphur ...

As to the relative amount of suffering involved in death by gas and death by disembowelment with a bayonet, it is obvious that we can collect no scientific data, owing to the nature of the experiment. The point may, however, be safely left to the imagination. It is significant in this connection, that the American statistics show that a gas casualty has 12 times the chances of recovery of a casualty resulting from an encounter with such Christian weapons

as high explosives, bullets, shrapnel, and the like. The relative chances of being maimed or disfigured for life are obvious. Observation of gassed soldiers, over a considerable period of time, by the surgeon general's office, did not reveal any predisposition toward pulmonary trouble, which is contrary to the popular opinion.

The question of the involvement of civilian population is important, and there is here some misapprehension. The nontechnical mind looks upon a gas as something that travels stealthily, and devastates all animal and vegetable life over a large area; something that may be carried by the wind a long distance. As a matter of fact, the great problem in gas warfare is to build up a concentration, namely, to liberate on a certain objective a sufficient amount for even a very short time ...

Poison gas stands in a military class by itself. It is the most efficient, most economical, and most humane, single weapon known to military science. 



Smoke-shells containing “sneeze-gas” are sometimes first used, and these are immediately followed by shells containing violently toxic gases. If the men are affected by the “sneeze-gas” before the masks are put on, it is very difficult for them to keep them on, because of the continued paroxysms of sneezing.

— Henry P. Talbot,
“Chemistry at the Front,”
August 1918

THE DESERTER

Perhaps cowardice had motivated him, a British conscript conceded—or a “primitive kind of common sense.”

BY ANONYMOUS

★★★★★

SEPTEMBER 1930

Originally titled “The Deserter: Just as He Was”



★ A British soldier eats dinner in a trench.

DO NOT KNOW when the idea of deserting from the army entered my head. During those winter months in the trenches in France I had often said: “Christ! Wait till I get back to England. They’ll never get me out here again.” Just as most of the other soldiers in our lot would talk at times. We were all men from factories, mines, shops, and offices. There was none of that *Journey’s End* English public-schoolboy spirit (let us all be Peter Pans forever) that won the Battle of Waterloo on the playing fields of Eton about us. We were unwilling soldiers, conscripts ...

When conscription came to England in the early part of 1916, and I found myself in the first groups officially “called up,” I welcomed the opportunity to escape from the dull drudgery of shop life. I saw a way out of my economic slavery. I dreamed of a freer life when I got out of the army. It was an escape from a life

I hated. It was also an experience, and I was in that adolescent mood which welcomed experience, especially one which could be used as a means to an end.

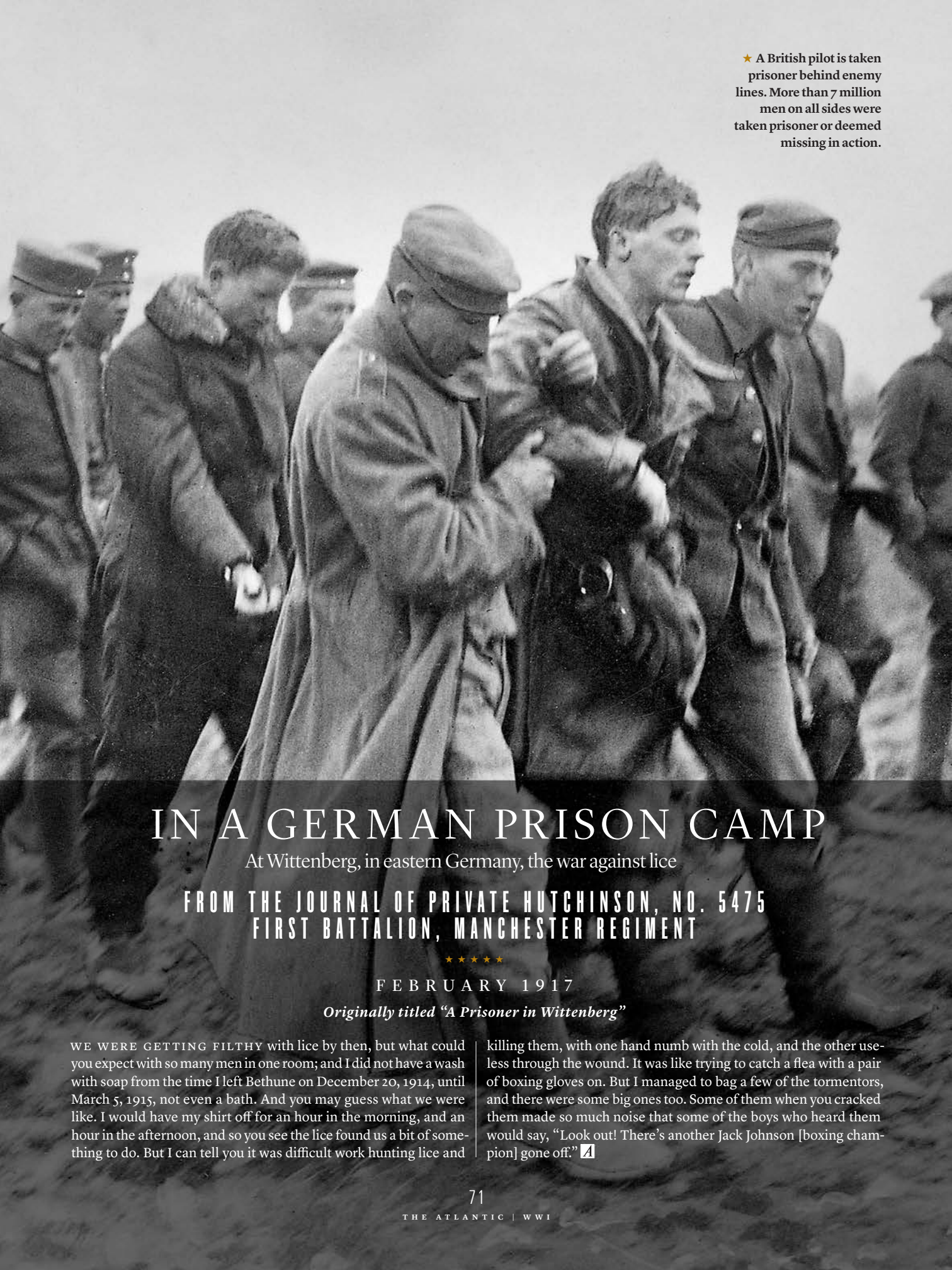
I was called up on Saint Patrick’s Day, March 17, 1916, placed in a well-known London regiment, and sent to a training camp. After four months I landed in France on July 14, a date easy to remember, for the flags were flying at Boulogne for the French national holiday. After a part summer, autumn, and part winter spent on the Somme and the Ancre, taking part in only one battle, that of Beaumont-Hamel, I finally managed to get an ankle broken—a sudden, unexpected event envied by all the other chaps when it luckily took me back to England ...

This was the end of February 1917. While in the London hospital I was found to be suffering from a mild form of typhoid fever—I had had trench

dysentery—and I therefore spent the next few months recovering from my minor accident and my minor illness ...

During all those months in hospital I had vaguely known at the back of my mind that I should have to face the issue sooner or later. But whether because I was ill and weak, or because the return to civilization from the trenches made me evade the solving of serious problems, I did not think very much about the matter ...

But ... drilling and route-marching and bomb-throwing and bayonet-fighting all brought it vividly back to me. I was in the machine again, being trained to kill and be killed. And I was absolutely firm in my own mind that I was not going to risk being shot or killed by a German anymore. What I felt and thought at that time may be called sheer cowardice by some patriotic people, but, as I saw it, it was the most primitive kind of common sense carried into action. I just felt the whole war was futile—it was just three years old—and my connection with it less than nothing. I felt a fool ever to have allowed myself to be drawn into the mess. Now it was up to me to get out of it once and for all. But how? That was the question. **A**



★ A British pilot is taken prisoner behind enemy lines. More than 7 million men on all sides were taken prisoner or deemed missing in action.

IN A GERMAN PRISON CAMP

At Wittenberg, in eastern Germany, the war against lice

FROM THE JOURNAL OF PRIVATE HUTCHINSON, NO. 5475
FIRST BATTALION, MANCHESTER REGIMENT

★★★★★

FEBRUARY 1917

Originally titled "A Prisoner in Wittenberg"

WE WERE GETTING FILTHY with lice by then, but what could you expect with so many men in one room; and I did not have a wash with soap from the time I left Bethune on December 20, 1914, until March 5, 1915, not even a bath. And you may guess what we were like. I would have my shirt off for an hour in the morning, and an hour in the afternoon, and so you see the lice found us a bit of something to do. But I can tell you it was difficult work hunting lice and

killing them, with one hand numb with the cold, and the other useless through the wound. It was like trying to catch a flea with a pair of boxing gloves on. But I managed to bag a few of the tormentors, and there were some big ones too. Some of them when you cracked them made so much noise that some of the boys who heard them would say, "Look out! There's another Jack Johnson [boxing champion] gone off." 

A GENTLEMAN UNAFRAID

In a series of letters to his mother, an American fighting with the Canadian army in France described how his love of family and his religious faith had prepared him for his fate.

BY EDWIN AUSTIN ABBEY

★★★★★

APRIL 1918

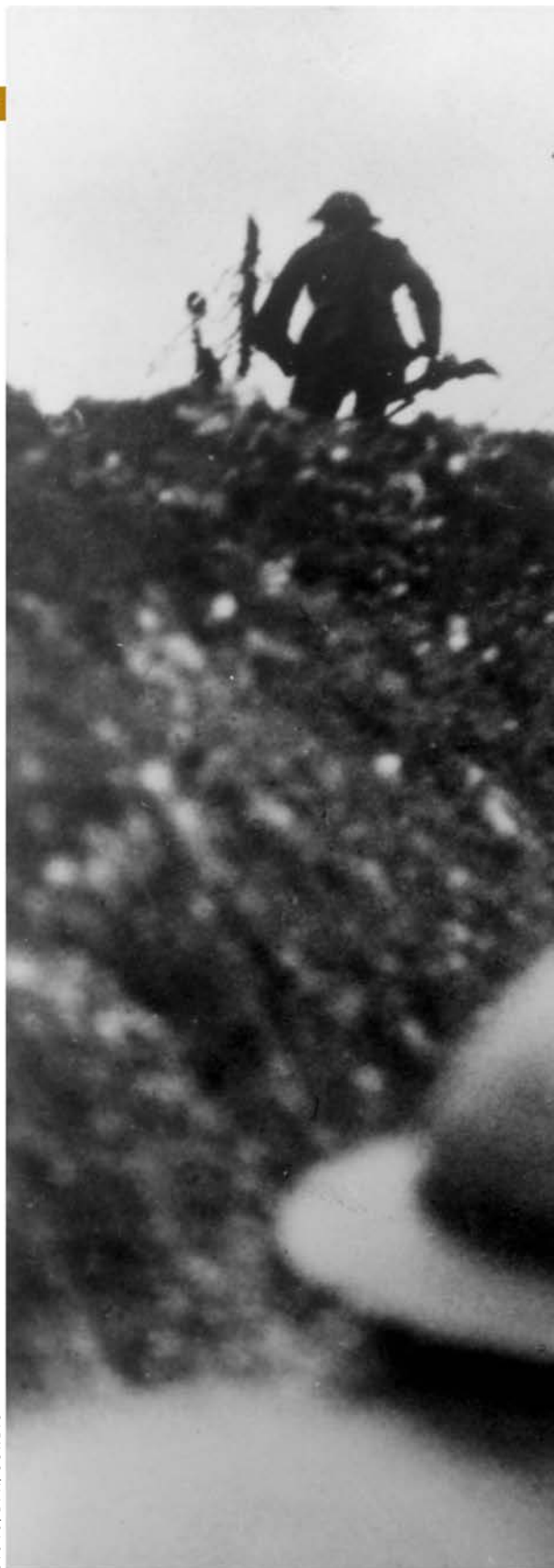


IN CAMP, March 22, 1916.

The trenches twist and turn so, a precaution against enfilade fire in the event of the enemy's occupying any position, that we seemed to walk miles before we reached our new destination. It was a new support trench about 40 yards back of the front line. Saturday night, I was on a "carrying party," whose duty was to carry timber, wire, etc., from a material pile to the working party. Sunday night we went in again, and I was in a digging gang. Some of the new work had fallen in, and we had to remove the sandbags and dig down in front of the screens and push the latter out, wire them back, fill up behind them, and put back the bags. It sounds simple enough, but the digging was the worst I ever struck. Sticky mud that clings to your shovel, so that you can only get rid of one shovelful out of every three ...

April 13, 1916.

A soldier must live from day to day, with no thought of the future, just a steadfast purpose of carrying out orders and being stronger and steadier than he naturally is; and faith and trust in God's purpose make it possible



91040/DPA/COREIS

★ On the attack at the Somme,
in northern France



for me. Do you not think that the war is making people less selfish in the world and in the United States? Surely it must, when in so many places people are sacrificing their dear ones and their money for a cause. Even if it seems to some more a question of honor and family, or national tradition, than justice or freedom.

I often think of the rank and file of the German army, and even the junior officers. They are suffering untold hardships, and showing magnificent bravery in the face of heavy odds, as much, or perhaps more, than the soldiers of the Allies ...

BOULOGNE-SUR-MER,

April 26, 1916.

Dearest Mother,

The dearest old lady, who is a regular hospital visitor, has just been to see me and given me this paper to write to you. It is really the first chance I have had, for the sisters here are terribly busy, and one hates to bother them. I was wounded in the left shoulder by a piece of shrapnel, very early, about 12:30, Easter morning ... Everything would be fine were it not for the fear of your anxiety. The wound is a small one, and has never given a minute's pain. I was taken to a clearing hospital in a field ambulance, arriving about 6 a.m., Sunday, and left Tuesday afternoon, arriving here about 11 p.m. We came on the hospital train, which was a beauty. This is a lovely hospital, in a big casino, right on the seashore, and everyone is lovely to me. Yesterday the doctor removed the shrapnel, a little round bullet, so now I am all right ...

(On his recovery, Abbey was given a commission and returned immediately to the front.)

December 18, 1916.

Dearest Mother,

I am in the trenches, my tour not being over until next Saturday; but I am not in the front line, but in the supports. We only stay in the front line three days at a time. I have just been reading over the little *Manual of Prayers for Workers*, which you sent me some time ago. It is fine, especially the plea for duty before everything. There is a paragraph by Dean Church on "Manliness—which takes for granted that man is called to a continual struggle with difficulties and makes it a point of honor

not to be dismayed by them," and "Quality—which seizes on the idea of duty as something which leaves a man no choice." That is the quality which I need most now, the strength to do my duty, and I pray for it hourly, and I know that you do it for me, too ...

Christmas Day, 1916.

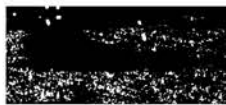
Today is my second Christmas away from home in my 28 years. What joy it will be if God grants us one together again after this long separation! I am going to start by telling you where I am. Picture a little French village, with one long, narrow, cobbled street. At one end the street leaves the village and crosses over a deep railway cut and then wanders away through the rolling country. I should have told you that the village is on a hill-top. From the railway bridge, the street runs perhaps a hundred yards, then turns 90 degrees to the left and runs downhill ... The houses are low, one-storied affairs of stone or white plaster, and tile roofs, and are lined right along the street ... There are several larger houses, with courtyards in front with high walls. It is all beautifully picturesque in spite of my description ... Altogether it is a very picturesque old place, and less than four miles from that famous streak of mud which separates the Allies and Germans. The men are living in the loft of the barn, a big lone place, and they have straw and bunks and brazier fires; but it is pretty cold and dark there just the same. Still, the magnificent spirit of making the best of grim situations keeps them happy and cheerful ...

January 31, 1917.

I am writing this in a front-line dugout. This is our third day in the line, and we have three more to go, I think, possibly a few more. It has been quite cold and the ground is still covered with snow. Last night it snowed quite a lot more. It is a very pretty picture, and a new one to me, to see the trenches in this condition ...

February 21, 1917. Ash Wednesday.

Here we are at the beginning of another Lent, although it is not quite a year since the first time that I came to France. This week I have had your long letter of January 26th, one from father, and the crucifix. It is just the same as the first, and I am glad to have it again pinned inside of my



**I DO NOT THINK
OF DEATH OR
EXPECT IT,
BUT I AM NOT
AFRAID OF IT.**



breast pocket. Thank you for having it fixed and sent so quickly.

My letters do not seem to have any news in them, because there is so much to repress that I long to tell you. You must know how much I think of you, and long that you could be spared all this anxiety, and yet I know that you rejoice to bear that part in the victory that must be won. Dearest mother, you will never know how much I owe to you for strength and courage and inspiration to carry me through this ...

Easter Morning.

Happy Easter, dearest mother. I have been in the Communion service in the YMCA tent, and now have just finished my breakfast. It is a beautiful, sunshiny spring day, one of the loveliest we have had for weeks ... I am very well and happy just now, and we are all full of the inspiration and encouragement that this great new Ally, the U.S., and all the fine success of the French and British farther south, have given us. It is only a question of pushing steadily and determinedly ahead now, and we will win. There are lots of strong men here, and lots more ready to come from England and America, so we go ahead with that thought in our hearts. I wish I could tell you more about things now, but perhaps that will come later ... I must stop for a while now. My dearest love to you and father always.

From your son EDWIN

IN THE FIELD, April 22, 1917.

W. B. ABBEY, ESQ.,
523 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia.
DEAR MR. ABBEY—

I would like to write you concerning the death of your son in action on the morning of April 10 ... I thought very highly of him as a gentleman and a friend. At the time of his death, he was in charge of one of our most dangerous posts. It was a strong point in front of our trench and a little distance over the crest of Vimy Ridge. It was necessary to hold it in order to deny to the enemy the approach up the hill to the crest. Because of the loss we had suffered in the post, it was almost decided to withdraw from the post during the day, but your son came and argued that he should continue to hold the post because of its importance. In this he showed his fine devotion to duty and disregard

of danger. On his way out to the post he was shot and killed by an enemy sniper ...

The chaplain ... read the service over his grave.

I would like to assure you of my genuine sympathy in your great loss. I feel a sense of personal loss myself, for one doesn't often meet such fine fellows. In my brief experience with him, he had always shown himself a gallant soldier and a thorough gentleman.

Yours sincerely,
A. P. MENZIES,
Major 4th C.M.R.

(Found in soldier's kit, forwarded to his mother from Ottawa)

FRANCE, April 6, 1917.

Good Friday.

Dearest Mother and Father,

We are going up to an attack in a short time, and I am going to leave this note to be sent to you in case, by God's will, this is to be my final work. I have made my Communion, and go with a light heart and a determination to do all that I possibly can to help in this fight against evil, for God and humanity. I do not think of death or expect it, but I am not afraid of it, and will give my life gladly if it is asked. It is my greatest comfort that I know that you too will gladly give all that is asked, and live on happily doing all that can be done, grateful to God for his acceptance of our sacrifice. Today the news came to us here that the United States had joined the Allies, so I go with the happy consciousness that I am, and you are, fighting for our dear Flag, as thousands of Americans have before us, in the cause of Liberty. It may be comfort for you to know that I have a great company of comrades, men and officers all filled with determination and cheerful courage.

My dearest love to S— and H— and their dear children. My heart is full of gratitude for having such love as they have given me. My dearest love to all my friends, all who have loved me and whom I love.

Now, dearest mother, and dearest father, I will say goodbye for a time. You have given me my faith which makes this so easy for me, and a wonderful example and inspiration of courage and unselfishness. All of my love, and God bless you both.

YOUR SON. 4



**MY LETTERS
DO NOT SEEM
TO HAVE ANY
NEWS IN THEM,
BECAUSE THERE
IS SO MUCH
TO REPRESS
THAT I LONG TO
TELL YOU.**



"A SOUNDLESS RIVER OF PEACE"

When the armistice ending the Great War was signed on November 11, 1918, the victorious capitals erupted in celebration. On the battlefield, the soldiers fell silent.

BY RICHARD ALDINGTON

★★★★★

NOVEMBER 1939

Originally titled "For Armistice Day, 1939"



AT DUSK ON November 10, 1918, the battalion of which I was signal officer halted at the Mons-Maubeuge road, a little to the north of Maubeuge. We had been marching hard all day vainly trying to establish contact with the retreating enemy. At dawn the next morning the colonel ordered me to march headquarter details back to Bavay, some miles to the rear, and find billets. I was surprised and a little shocked at this order. It seemed to me that our plain duty was to pursue the enemy by forced marches and bring his rear guards to action. But I was in no sense displeased; a few days' or even one day's rest would be very welcome. Rumor had it that the fast-marching light infantry would take our place.

We were in complete ignorance of the real situation ...

About halfway on our march a staff officer rode up, and shouted to me that an armistice had been signed and would come into effect at 11. He waved his hand in answer to my salute and galloped off. We had been fed so long on falsely optimistic news that I didn't quite believe him, especially as there was heavy gunfire to the north, which I believe was some peppy Canadians having a last-minute show on their own. Later, round about noon, the colonel showed me



ASSOCIATED PRESS



the official notification. I found an abandoned hovel, lay down on the dirty floor, and slept the sleep of exhaustion. The war was over, and we could rest at last.

After dinner that night, as soon as etiquette allowed, I left the officers' mess and walked out alone. It was a mild dark November night with a few misty stars ... What impressed me was the silence. For the first time in those endless years there was no night firing. Minute after minute passed with that beautiful silence flowing by like a soundless river of peace. Yet the habits of war

★ French soldiers read the terms of the armistice.

had become so mechanical, the idea of peace was still so new and unbelievable, that I had unconsciously taken my gas mask and steel helmet.

The feelings and reflections of that insignificant young subaltern can be of no interest or importance to the world, except that they were typical of what millions of young soldiers were feeling and thinking that night. In the capitals and great cities of the Allies the civilian populations were shrieking and dancing in an orgy of hysterical triumph and rejoicing. But in the armies there was silence. ■

WWI ★ IN THE TRENCHES

WHERE MEN FELL

In the century since the Great War turned northern France into a battleground, the rolling countryside has recovered its beauty and fertility. But traces of the savagery remain.

CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHS BY
MICHAEL ST. MAUR SHEIL





◀ THE SOMME

On July 1, 1916, the first day of fighting along the Somme River, in northern France, British troops suffered nearly 60,000 casualties. During the battle, which lasted four and a half months, more than 1 million men were killed or wounded, but the Allied troops gained no more than seven miles. Trenches used then are still visible today (above).



▶ MEUSE-ARGONNE

Molleville Farm (above) was a crucial position in the German defenses during the decisive battle of Meuse-Argonne. American troops attacked toward the camera on October 11, 1918; by the 16th, suffering heavy casualties, they had captured the German-occupied woods to the north of the farm. The battle lasted 47 days and involved more American troops—1.2 million—than any other clash in history. It ended with the armistice, on November 11.



BELLEAU WOOD

After German troops pierced French lines in northeastern France on June 1, 1918, U.S. marines stood in their way. Urged to retreat by the hightailing French, Captain Lloyd Williams replied, “Retreat? Hell, we just got here.” His retort, and the marines’ bravery—and awful losses—have become Marine lore. Here (top photo), the camera looks east toward Belleau Wood, where the Germans were entrenched. On June 6, the marines advanced across this field, attacking six times—often fighting hand to hand—before they pushed the Germans (one of their casualties is pictured here, bottom photo) from the forest, on June 26.

PREVIOUS SPREAD: ASSOCIATED PRESS; HULTON-DEUTSCH COLLECTION/CORBIS; BETTMANN/CORBIS.
THIS SPREAD: ASSOCIATED PRESS.



◀ AISNE

The Oise-Aisne American Cemetery, in northern France, is the resting place for 6,012 doughboys killed nearby, including the poet Joyce Kilmer, who died at age 31.

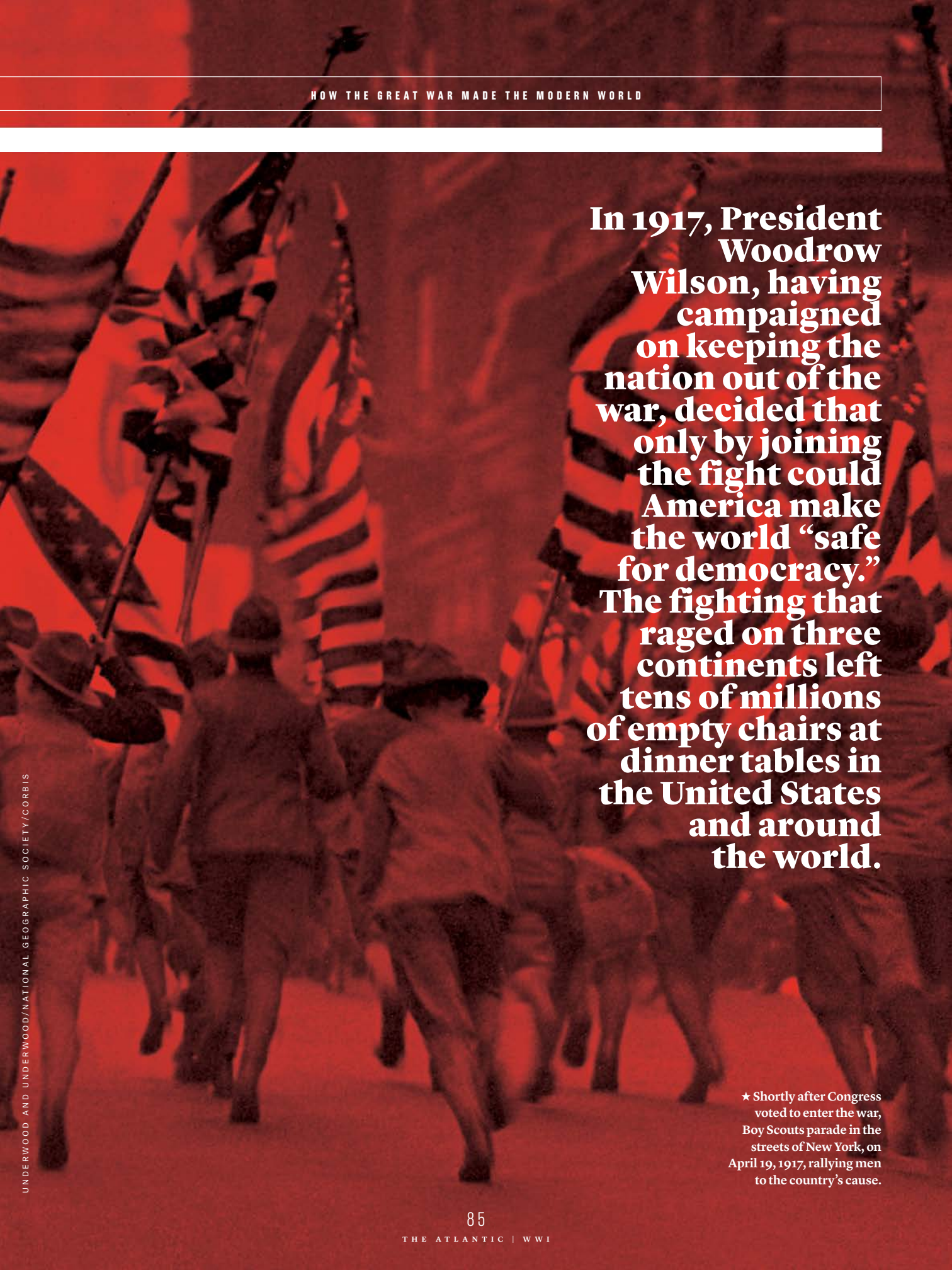
CANTIGNY ▶

Below: Looking east across the plains of northern France. On the morning of May 28, 1918, this was the direction some American troops took to capture the village of Cantigny in their first sustained offensive of the war. The U.S. First Division suffered 199 killed and many more wounded; the French awarded the Croix de Guerre to the infantry regiment that spearheaded the attack.



3

THE HOME FRONT



In 1917, President Woodrow Wilson, having campaigned on keeping the nation out of the war, decided that only by joining the fight could America make the world “safe for democracy.” The fighting that raged on three continents left tens of millions of empty chairs at dinner tables in the United States and around the world.

★ Shortly after Congress voted to enter the war, Boy Scouts parade in the streets of New York, on April 19, 1917, rallying men to the country's cause.

WHY DON'T AMERICANS REMEMBER THE WAR?

The Allies would not have won without doughboys, materiel, and money.

BY RICHARD RUBIN



SOME YEARS AGO, when I set out to write a book about America and the First World War, I made the rounds of local bookstores to see what was out there already. I was pretty well prepared to confront a dearth of material on the American role in the Great War; that was, indeed, one of the reasons I had chosen the subject. What really surprised me, though, was how little there was to be found on *any* facet of the war. The stores' history sections contained bookcases of volumes about the Civil War and World War II, but only—if I was lucky—a shelf of World War I books sandwiched in between. And almost all of those were British imports.

So I turned to vintage bookshops, hoping that perhaps, once upon a time, more had been written and published in this country on a topic formerly known simply as the world war. I quickly discovered that more had. Much, much more. No one seemed to want any of it, either; eventually I amassed, for a pittance, a library of hundreds of volumes published between 1914 and 1930 or so, all of them long since out of print.

And there was still more: In flea markets and junk shops, I came across stacks of Great War-era 78s, reams of wartime sheet music, posters, pieces of uniforms, Army-issued handbooks and prayer books. Most of all,

it seemed that wherever I went, in every part of the country, I found monuments and memorials to the war and to the men and women who went off to fight it. If an American town anywhere was a thriving concern in 1917, I would bet it put up *something*—a plaque, a statue, a marble bench, an arch—after November 11, 1918. Even places that don't have anything commemorating the Civil War or World War II have something, in my experience, for World War I.

The people who commissioned those monuments—and who read those books, played those records, bought that sheet music—weren't thinking short-term. They believed the Great War would remain great in the American consciousness for eternity, that future generations would sooner forget Bunker Hill and Lookout Mountain than Belleau Wood and the Argonne Forest. They believed, more than anything, that it was Americans who had won that war. How surprised they would be, less than a century later, to find all those old books languishing unread and to discover that few Americans are writing new ones, because Americans now largely believe—when they think about the subject at all—that their country just didn't do all that much in the First World War.

And those Americans of yore would be justified in their surprise. While it is certainly too much to say the Yanks won the Great War by themselves, it is indisputable that the Allies would not—could not—have won the war without the United States. Although America was not, at that time, widely regarded as a world power, the nation made three indispensable contributions to the Allies' victory over the Central Powers in World War I.

1914–16: MONEY AND MATERIEL

When Europe collapsed into war in the summer of 1914, many Britons expected that the United States would soon enter the conflict on their side; although the U.S. wasn't a British dominion—as were Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, all of which declared war on Germany when Britain did—there was a strong belief that the spirit of Anglo-American kinship would move the former colony to join the fight anyway. No one, not even Germans, dared imagine that America might enter the war on



Germany's side, despite the strong economic ties and generally friendly relations the two nations enjoyed (going back to the Revolutionary War, when many German officers volunteered for the Continental Army), and despite the fact that in 1914 more Americans traced their ancestry to Germany than to any other country (which is still true in 2014). The best the Central Powers could hope for was that America might sit this one out.

And it did, at the outset. Most Americans favored neutrality, and President Woodrow Wilson obliged them. He even adopted a rather muscular definition of *neutrality*, which he articulated to Congress on August 19, 1914:

The United States must be neutral in fact, as well as in name, during these days that are to try men's souls. We must be impartial in thought, as well as in action, must put a

★ American soldiers who went to war became known as dough-boys, possibly because their long marches left them covered in dust. Here, the Seventh Regiment shows the colors in New York City.

curb upon our sentiments, as well as upon every transaction that might be construed as a preference of one party to the struggle before another.

At the same time, though, no one—at least no one in a position to make policy—believed that neutrality meant you couldn't do business with both sides. Quite the contrary: in the America of 1914–16, it was regarded as a violation of neutrality for the government to *prevent* Americans from trading with any of the combatant nations. In theory, American manufacturers were free to sell munitions to the highest bidders, whoever they might be.

But only in theory. The British had the largest and most powerful navy in the world in 1914—they really did rule the waves back then—and quickly established an impenetrable blockade against the Central Powers, one that held up until the armistice. So while Americans were free to sell all the war materiel they liked to Germany, Germany had no way to take delivery and, therefore, little interest in buying. Fortunately for U.S. manufacturers, the Allies had a tremendous appetite for American arms and armaments: the United Kingdom, for example, spent about half—*half*—its war budget in the United States. Arthur Guy Empey, an American who served with the British army in France, recounted in his best-selling 1917 memoir, *Over the Top*, seeing in Flanders “a never-ending stream of men, supplies, ammunition, and guns pouring into the British lines,” among them a great convoy of steam-powered tractors pulling enormous howitzers.

When one of these caterpillars would pass me with its mighty monster in tow, a flush of pride would mount to my face, because I could plainly read on the name plate, “Made in U.S.A.” ... Then I would stop to think how thin and straggly that mighty stream would be if all the “Made in U.S.A.” parts were withdrawn.

Britain's war budget, as you might imagine, was quite large; even half of it was much more than the British could finance on their own. “Neutral” American bankers, though, had plenty of cash on hand, and were happy to lend Britain all it needed (at healthy interest rates, naturally). And not just Britain: France borrowed so

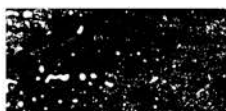
heavily from U.S. banks (primarily the House of Morgan) that repaying the loans nearly destroyed its economy after the war. And so, from the outset of hostilities, America and the Allies had a symbiotic relationship that was essential to the course of combat. Without American war materiel—and the American money to purchase it—the Allies could never have come close to matching the productive capacity of Germany, the world's leading industrial power at the time; if they hadn't, they would have lost the war well before 1917.

Germany, meanwhile, unable to trade with the United States, employed more-surreptitious methods to curtail the Allies' advantage. One was sabotage, dispatching secret agents to destroy American-made war materiel before it could be delivered to Britain or France. (In the most notorious incident, in 1916, saboteurs at a munitions depot near Jersey City set off an explosion—felt in Philadelphia, heard in Maryland—that destroyed hundreds of tons of armaments bound for Europe.) Another was unrestricted submarine warfare against ships thought to be carrying munitions to the Allies. It was these U-boat attacks that ultimately drove Wilson to reconsider his policy of neutrality and to prevail on Congress to declare war against Germany in April 1917.

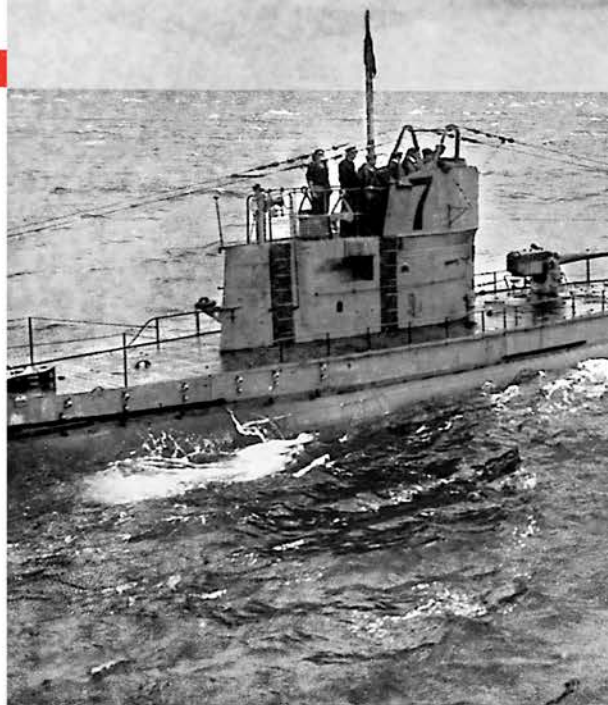
1917: THE MENACE OF MANPOWER

Given the role that German U-boats played in drawing the United States into the war, many Americans believed at first that their country's main military contribution would be naval. Within weeks, however, Britain and France would send officials to Washington to persuade the War Department that what the Allies really needed was men in the trenches, and lots of them. Two and a half years of trench warfare had taken a terrible toll on their ranks.

General John J. Pershing, the commander of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF), was fine with that—with some caveats. For one thing, the United States didn't have much of an army yet—fewer than 200,000 men when the country entered the war—and would need time to build one. And more time to train it. Pershing made clear that he would not allow Americans to fight until they were ready, and he planned



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to be conservative in making that judgment. When they *were* ready, they would fight only in American divisions, under American commanders. Pershing didn't want them parceled out to British and French units as replacements; he knew that colonial and dominion soldiers were often put in indefensible positions to distract the enemy from British and French troops and, as a result, took very high casualties.

But if the British and French were unhappy about Pershing's decrees—and they were—they could take comfort in the number of troops the general expected to raise: 4 million. They spread that figure around, hoping to foment panic in the German high command.

It worked. The Central Powers—which, in Europe, at least, really meant the Germans, as the Austro-Hungarian army had proved itself largely ineffective since the war's earliest days—had been surrounded and outnumbered from the start. Still, they had managed to hold their own, because the margin of difference (at least on the western front) wasn't that great, and the Germans had superior industry, technology, and—most historians would concede—soldiers and generals. But 4 million fresh American troops would surely tip the balance in the Allies' favor, and the Germans knew it.

They also knew—besides its saboteurs, Germany had an excellent network of spies in America—that those doughboys wouldn't reach



France for a while. Russia was teetering; knocking the Russians out of the war would enable Germany to shut down the eastern front and transfer half a million seasoned soldiers to France before the Americans arrived in force. This would allow German troops to launch a massive offensive and win the war in the nick of time.

Which they did—except for that last part. It took Germany longer than expected to secure a peace treaty with Russia, and by the time it did, on March 3, 1918, the fledgling AEF already had several fighting divisions—about 25,000 men apiece—in France. Anxious to get the offensive under way before even more Americans showed up, Germany launched its attack less than three weeks later. That was barely enough time to get all the troops in place, and not nearly enough time to establish adequate supply lines or even to plan the offensive with any precision. Yet the Germans pushed ahead, gambling that the advantages of speed and surprise would compensate for these shortcomings.

The Spring Offensive of 1918, as it is now remembered, succeeded magnificently—too magnificently, really. The Germans got so far ahead of their own supply lines that they were soon beset by crippling shortages. What's more, they overran their initial objectives so quickly that they found themselves floundering, with no idea what, exactly, to do next. While it appeared on the surface to have paid off handsomely, that

★**Left:** By attacking U.S. merchant ships with submarines, Germany drew America into the war. **Right:** German troops advance through northeastern France during their ambitious Spring Offensive in 1918.

great gamble the Germans had taken because of the threat of 4 million fresh doughboys actually left them confused, directionless, hungry, and ill-equipped—vulnerable.

And the first of those doughboys were already in a position to exploit that vulnerability.

1918: MILITARY MIGHT

The Germans, seeing their Spring Offensive falter, held out one last hope: that they might inflict so much damage upon the untested American Expeditionary Forces in battle that the doughboys could lose their will to fight or even succumb to defeat. And indeed, in the two armies' first major encounter, on April 20 at Seicheprey, in northern France, German shock troops caught the Americans by surprise and quickly took the town, along with nearly 200 prisoners. But within hours, the Americans rallied and recaptured it; then U.S. troops went on the attack and drove the Germans out of Cantigny on May 28 and, a few days later, repelled the Germans at Chateau-Thierry. The Germans moved into Belleau Wood, a dense, strategically located forest nearby, where they had formidable defenses. The French, reluctant to follow the Germans into such a place, asked Pershing to send in an American division to root them out; Pershing, perhaps unaware of how dangerous the position was, dispatched



the Second Division, which included two regiments of marines. The battle lasted nearly three weeks and claimed nearly 10,000 American casualties. (More marines were killed or wounded at Belleau Wood than in the service's entire 143-year history to that point.) But in the end, it was a grand triumph for the American forces—militarily and psychologically.

The Germans regrouped and launched a vast assault across the Marne River, where French and British troops had stopped them four years earlier. This time, they made great advances—everywhere except at the critical western end of the line, only about 40 miles from a panicked Paris, where the American Third Division stopped them cold at the river's edge. (To this day, the division is known as “The Rock of

★ *This page:* General John J. Pershing, at his headquarters in Haute-Marne, France, insisted—wisely, as it turned out—that Americans fight under American command. *Opposite page:* American engineers clear away German barbed wire in preparing for the climactic battle of the Meuse-Argonne.

the Marne.”) It was the Germans' last offensive of the war: three days after they failed to move the Rock of the Marne, American and French troops launched a counteroffensive that would ultimately drive them out of the area entirely. The Germans would remain on the defensive until the war ended.

Though they could no longer win the war outright, they still hoped—quite reasonably—to achieve a stalemate, dragging out the fighting and weakening their enemies' will to the point that they could dictate the terms of a cease-fire. Both sides expected the war to rage well into 1919, especially considering how fiercely the Germans clung to every bit of ground and how dearly they made the Americans pay for every inch. Then, in early September 1918, the Expeditionary Forces



caught the Imperial German Army by surprise at Saint-Mihiel, in northeastern France, and captured more than 200 square miles—including many towns the Germans had occupied for four years—in just two days. The American troops followed this with their greatest offensive of the war, the Meuse-Argonne, to the west. Some 1.2 million Americans fought there; by the time the battle ended, at 11 a.m. on the 11th of November, 26,277 of them had been killed. It remains, to this day, the deadliest battle in American history—but it was also a great American victory, and a crucial one. As much as anything else that fall, Meuse-Argonne forced Germany to plead for an armistice.

This isn't to say the U.S. won the war on its own. But America's three major contributions, going back to 1914, unquestionably guided the war's course. Without the United States, the Allies, at best, would have fought to a stalemate.

SO WHY HAVE Americans forgotten the first worldwide war, and their pivotal role in it? The answer starts with an uncomfortable truth: Although it ended in victory, World War I proved to be more of a traumatic experience than Americans were prepared to deal with. In just 19 months, the United States lost more than 116,000 men in the War to Make the World Safe for Democracy; many more would die in later years slowly and painfully, from the lingering effects of bullets, shrapnel, poison gas, and what was then called shell shock.

For a while, it seemed, Americans comforted

BY THE ONSET OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION, AMERICANS NO LONGER CARED TO TALK OR THINK ABOUT THE GREAT WAR; EVEN VETERANS FELT THAT WAY.



themselves by staging parades, building monuments, and otherwise honoring their doughboys, dead and living. But hard times can make people introspective, and by the onset of the Great Depression, many Americans found themselves wondering just what, exactly, all those young men had died for; it was obvious, by then, that much of the world was still not safe for democracy, and might never be. Americans no longer cared to talk or think about the Great War; even veterans felt that way, as I discovered while interviewing dozens of them (ranging in age from 101 to 113) more than eight decades after the armistice. Americans who lived through the Great War, typically born and raised in meager circumstances, tended to believe that everyone had troubles, and you shouldn't attract attention to your own. American authors, who had cranked out books on the war for a while after it ended, stopped writing about it, ceding the history of America's role to anyone else who cared to address it.

That turned out to be the British, who never tired of writing about the trauma of the Great War, and who alone continued to do so in Americans' mother tongue. Unfortunately for Americans, many in Britain were still upset over the U.S. refusal to enter the war in 1914 and, taking a dim view of the Expeditionary Forces' accomplishments in 1917 and 1918, portrayed its generals as incompetent, its officers as ineffective, and its soldiers as poorly trained, ill-disciplined, and inconsequential. (Some British historians still hold this view today.) The Americans, these skeptics held, arrived only near the end, too late to do anything but claim credit they didn't deserve. Many Americans—even those who had lost someone Over There—seem to have taken that to heart and accepted it as gospel. And believing that, why would they care to remember the war?

Perhaps now the war's centennial will encourage Americans to reexamine their nation's part in the Great War. Perhaps they'll rediscover that America's role was, in fact, indispensable. A few of them might even choose to write about it. ▣

Richard Rubin, a longtime contributor to The Atlantic, is the author, most recently, of The Last of the Doughboys: The Forgotten Generation and Their Forgotten World War.

WAITING

The editor of *The Atlantic* from 1909 to 1938 called on the United States to abandon its neutrality and enter the war “purely for a world idea.”

BY ELLERY SEDGWICK

★★★★★

MARCH 1917



THE WAR HAS BROUGHT America great prosperity. Some hundreds of our citizens have gained great fortunes, some thousands have two dollars to spend where once one sufficed. A hundred millions of us, it is true, have to pay half as much again for the necessities of life. But the sense of money is everywhere. The papers teem with the printed billions of the stock market, and editors flatter their readers with the massive figures of our export trade. This prosperity is neither our fault nor our merit. It arises from circumstances which give us, as a people, acute unhappiness. Not unnaturally, the contrast between the misery of Europe and the overflowing garner of America wins for us foreign envy and dislike. Not unnaturally, it rouses repugnance in the breasts of many onlookers at home. It is not nice to batten on suffering surpassing all the horror which the civilized world has known. It is not nice, and, though the situation is not of our own making, it is not comfortable.

But comfortable or not, the situation has been a test of character. England was driven

★ U.S. marines pose for the corps's recruiting campaign in 1918. Before America entered the war, the size of its army ranked just 17th in the world. By the war's end, the U.S. military had grown more than 100-fold.



to make her great decision within three days, while we for almost as many years have been left to find ourselves, swayed by fresh argument, now forward, now back ...

But when the rape of Belgium came, our sympathies were fixed. The *Lusitania* massacre, the butcheries of Armenia, and organized piracy on the high seas made our judgment certain. It was not the cause but the method of the war which made our assurance sure. To Americans, a Teuton victory could only mean in Europe the subversion of everlasting right.

And, as the nation felt, so felt the leader. Trained in English thought, with British blood flowing through him, his mind and spirit disciplined by Burke and Wordsworth, every consideration of birth and education urged him to sympathize with the Allies. But Mr. Wilson was president of the greatest neutral nation. He shared to the full the common American belief that the world can no longer progress except through peace. And the United States, a world in miniature where the nations have joined together as a single people in a supreme experiment in the art of living together, can alone provide a common clearinghouse for



the discussion of a worldwide pact. As spokesman for America, the president kept the peace and offered, in all sincerity, his offices to the belligerents ...

Scarcely had the reverberation of that celebrated speech died down when we began to perceive, even the traditionalists among us, that the time when the United States must cease to be neutral was not in the next war, but *now* ...

In a war involving the nations of five continents, the United States alone fights without expectation, without desire for reward other than the common security of the seven seas. For herself alone she demands absolutely nothing. She enters the struggle purely for a world idea. France, most heroic of nations, fights for her life; Russia for power; Italy and Roumania for territory; unhappy Serbia and Belgium because their rights as nations are destroyed; England because her empire, even her existence, is at stake; the Central Powers, from a coarse mingling of fear and greed; but if we fight, we fight because a world ordered like this one is intolerable to all, remote and near. In such a world, security, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are forever impossible. **A**

OUR DIVIDED COUNTRY

The outbreak of a European war was perplexing for a nation of (mostly European) immigrants. "Hyphenated Americans" faced suspicions about their allegiances.

BY HENRY J. FLETCHER

★★★★★

FEBRUARY 1916

IF THERE ARE 9 millions of German birth or descent [in the United States], 3 millions of Scandinavian, 1.5 millions of French, more than 2 millions of Italian, 10 millions of English, the extent to which their presence weakens the country becomes a matter of the first magnitude. The strength of the tie of allegiance to the United States as against the country of their origin, in case of life-and-death struggle between the two, is something which the individuals themselves are wholly incapable of estimating in advance. It depends upon the extent to which the old ties have been weakened and the new ties formed here. It

depends upon the extent to which the German, French, Russian, Italian, English characters have been erased and American traits developed in their place ...

Allegiance is a matter of psychology, quite as much as of law. In short, it is simply a question of the thoroughness with which the melting pot has done its work. Until the nationality of the immigrant and his descendants has been melted and recast, he is still at heart a foreigner; he is an element of weakness and disunion, and to that extent he will be a traitor to his adopted country whenever that country comes to death-grips with the land of his birth. **A**



★ European countries feared their own fifth columns. Here, authorities in London round up resident Germans and send them back to their native country.



THE END OF ISOLATION

Americans had always kept aloof from Europe's affairs, in the hope that Europe would stay out of theirs. Woodrow Wilson declared: no more.

BY H. N. BRAILSFORD

★★★★★

APRIL 1917

Originally titled "The United States and the League of Peace"

IF PRESIDENT WILSON, when he addressed the League to Enforce Peace, at Washington (May 27, 1916), had been content to make an academic speech in favor of the processes of arbitration and mediation, we should have listened with a fatigued and languid attention. Persuasive and cultured orators have exhausted that theme in all the languages of civilization. Rousseau was more eloquent and Kant more acute. On the merits of the question Mr. Wilson said nothing new; there is nothing new to say. He made a new fact by shattering once and for all the tradition of American isolation. Since Washington warned his countrymen against "entangling alliances," and President Monroe formulated his Doctrine, the principle that the United States must hold aloof from the politics of the Old World has reigned as an unquestioned dogma. It was

NATIONAL ARCHIVES; FOUND IMAGE PRESS/CORBIS; CORBIS



★ *Opposite page:* American troops join a parade of Allied soldiers past the alliance's headquarters in Vladivostok, Russia. *This page:* More than 4 million copies of this poster were printed in 1917-18.

more than a preference and an instinct. It was the condition on which Americans hoped to purchase the immunity of their own continent from the ambitions of European dynasties ...

From this aloofness, a policy not merely of self-interest and calculation, but of sentiment and morals, Mr. Wilson is prepared to step down. He has offered, not merely his services to assist Europe to form a League of Peace, but the power of the United States to back the authority of such a league. His speech was a deliberate and explicit pledge that, if a league is formed among the nations to conduct their common affairs by conference, conciliation, and arbitration, the United States will take her place in the League, and use her economic and military resources against any power which makes war without submitting its cause to one of these processes. He has boldly adopted the idea of using "coercion" in "the service of the common order, common justice, and common peace." It was a declaration, in words that consciously echoed the old Stoic maxim, that nothing which concerns humanity can be foreign to any civilized people. "What affects mankind is inevitably our affair." It means that henceforward to be neutral when wrong and aggression are suffered by any nation is a dereliction of duty ...

The new fact in the world's history is that for the first time a great power with a formidable navy, a population from which vast armies might be raised, and an economic and financial strength which might alone be decisive in any future conflict, is prepared to stake its own peace, not merely to guarantee its own interests, or to further the partisan aims of its allies, but to make an end in the world of the possibility of prosperous aggression. 4

TO RIGHT WRONGS

Only the United States sought nothing selfish or commercial from going to war.

BY STANLEY WASHBURN

★★★★★

DECEMBER 1917

Originally titled "The Tragedy of Roumania"

OTHER COUNTRIES entered the war through necessities of various sorts. America committed herself to the conflict for a cause which even the cynical German propaganda, hard as it has tried, has been unable to distort into a selfish or commercial one. We are preparing to share in every way the sacrifices, both in blood and wealth, which our allies have been making these past three years. And as our reward we ask for no

selfish or commercial rights, nor do we seek to acquire extension of territory or acquisition of privilege in any part of the world. We have entered the war solely because of wrongs committed in the past, and with the just determination that similar wrongs shall never again be perpetrated. No country and no people on this globe are more responsive to an obligation, and more determined to fulfill such an obligation when recognized, than are the American people. 4



★ Inside an American tank, northwest of Verdun, France, in 1918. The war introduced the use of tanks; the Allies had many more than the Germans did.



THE WIVES OF GERMAN AMERICANS

How nationalistic fervor broke up a happy home

BY M. L. S.

★★★★★

JUNE 1917

THERE MUST BE a great many women in the United States besides myself whom the present war has involved in a terrible predicament. I refer to the American wives of German sympathizers; to the American mothers of children whose fathers' hearts and convictions are with the Teutonic cause ...

My husband was born in the United States; he never saw Germany, he does not even speak German with fluency. His father, like so many of his countrymen, left his native country that he might have freedom of speech, of life. That freedom he found in the United States ...

I am just beginning to realize what has been—what is—the state of mind of German sympathizers living in this country. They endure civil war within their own minds and hearts. It must be a bitterness, a disruption, greater than any other imaginable. There are two reasons why they are so extreme: they are forcing themselves to unnatural conclusions, and they are maddened by pain.

My husband came home [after learning



★ German soldiers celebrate Christmas in 1914. Along the western front, combatants from both sides engaged in an informal Christmas truce that included at least one game of soccer.

about the sinking of the *Lusitania* on May 7, 1915] exhilarated by a dark passion ... The passengers should not have sailed, he said: they had been warned. It was their responsibility, and they must take the consequences. The war had been forced on Germany, and it was justifiable for her to do whatever would enable her to win it. England had arrogantly seized the seas; Germany must get her rights. I repeat the statements in brief; I shall not call them arguments. The strangest part of it all is this: my husband had, until this war, been a particularly kind and tender-hearted man. He thus seems to represent in his own person a nation changed and obsessed by the false ideal held up before it ...

I could no longer maintain neutrality. I cried out against such doctrines—against teaching our sons such things. It was horrible. Our family peace was gone. After 18 years of dwelling with us love had fled. ▣

THE THREATENED ECLIPSE OF FREE SPEECH

A plea to distinguish idealists from traitors

BY JAMES HARVEY ROBINSON

★★★★★

DECEMBER 1917

MANY INTELLIGENT persons, as well as the great mass of the unthinking, would, now that war is on, have us surrender some of the normal constitutional safeguards of free speech; they would have the plainclothes men and police officials, our district attorneys, juries, and judges, exercise new vigilance in their control of meetings and public speeches. The excuses for this are the activities of German agents and sympathizers, the encouragement which slackers may receive, and the depressing effect upon our troops of tolerated pacifists and conscientious objectors.

The people, speaking through their duly appointed representatives—the president and Congress—have, after the most atrocious provocations and reiterated attacks upon our national honor, deliberately and with the general sanction of the nation decided to enter the war in defense of the highest ideals of democracy and of world peace. The minority, who are still unreconciled with this decision or are not yet fully persuaded, must, it is urged, yield to the majority and keep their mouths shut. For them to continue their protests when the boys are in the trenches is giving aid and comfort to the enemy; it is essentially disloyal, if not downright treasonable ...



★ Protesting the war became dangerous, once the Sedition Act of 1918 made it a crime to use “disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language” in describing the federal government or the military.

In the first place difference of opinion is not necessarily disloyalty ...

Those ... who continue to say that they wish we had not entered the war; that some other less horrible policy might have been selected; that war has never yet begotten lasting peace but only new war; that some men loathe shooting their fellow men under government auspices in the same sickening way that they would loathe private murder—such persons are in no way treasonable, and disloyal only in the sense of failing eagerly to cooperate with the majority in a crisis ...

It is this confusion between real traitors on the one hand, and on the other hand those persons whose human sympathy and idealism outrun the common bounds, that fills many of us with dismay. ▣

OUR SOLDIERS

In the West Virginia hamlet of Dry Creek, household after household delivered its sons to war.

BY MARGARET PRESCOTT MONTAGUE

★★★★★

OCTOBER 1917



THE NIGHT BEFORE the boys went, a farewell prayer meeting was held for them, at which some among us ... drew such a picture of the horrors of war, that some of the boys' relatives went wild with grief. Not so the little brown mother whose two boys are going. She stood firm amid all the waves of emotion and stoutly declared that *she* was *proud* to have men to send. Only readers who know something of the crowd-hysteria of a shouting prayer meeting can have any idea of what she—accustomed

all her life to that type of religion—withstood at that moment for the sake of her sons. And those sons will have something fortifying to remember, something heroic on which to anchor their souls in the face of a night assault or of a gas attack.

And what about the rest of us? Is that mother the only one among us who has shown a great



spirit to match the greatness of the times? ...

Here on this ridge, at the first house, is a young fellow who volunteered, but could not pass the physical examination. He honestly wanted to go for the sake of France, and also, he hoped, if he was taken, it might excuse his younger brother. What shy and touching bits of affection between brothers, usually so jealously hidden, war drags into the light! At the next house on this ridge, a mile and a half away, there lives another man who, though over age and having a wife and child, has declared his intention of volunteering if he finds that his younger brother has done so ...

Leaving this ridge and descending into a branch of the Big Draft [tributary], one comes to a cabin from which one of our four volunteers has gone. Jumping across a ridge from there, is a house where two little people of about 10 and 12 have asked their mother to give them corn bread for dinner for the sake of the saving of wheat flour ...

AND WHAT ABOUT the boys themselves? Well, they all look different to me in these days. Boys whom, a few short years ago, I looked upon somewhat askance ... are all seen now through the glamour of the great adventure. But I am a spectator, and perhaps a sentimentalist. How do the boys look to themselves, I wonder, there in that golden haze? Why, very much as usual, I should say. If they are aware of a golden haze, they doubtless see it just beyond themselves—over there in France, no doubt. If there is any great thrill of excitement running

It Is Well With the Child

The word has come—*On the field of battle, dead.*
Sorrow is mine but there is no more dread.

I am his mother. See, I do not say,
“I was”; he is, not was, my son. To-day
He rests, is safe, is well; he is at ease
From pain, cold, thirst, and fever of disease,
And horror of red tasks undone or done.
Now he has dropped the load he bore, my son,
And now my heart is lightened of all fears,
Sorrow is mine and streams of lonely tears,
But not too heavy for the carrying is
The burden that is only mine, not his.

At eventide I may lay down my head,
Not wondering upon what dreadful bed
Perchance—nay, all but certainly—he lies;
And with the morn I may in turn arise,
Glad of the light, of sleep, of food, now he
Is where sweet waters and green meadows be
And golden apples. How it was he died
I know not, but my heart is satisfied;
Never again of all my days will one
Bring anguish for the anguish of my son.

Sorrow is mine but there is no more dread.
The word has come—*On the field of battle, dead.*

— Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer,
September 1917

★ *Opposite page:* American soldiers, marching along a road in Flanders, head for the battlefield in France. *This page:* A U.S. artilleryman jots a few lines in the doorway of his shelter. The arrival of millions of doughboys in 1917–18 stymied the Germans.

through them, they keep it for the most part to themselves. Yet I suspect, when they lie together in little knots under the trees, that fighting in France is the main topic of conversation. How did Joey, for instance, who milks our cow and grooms our Ford, take last Saturday, the day on which the numbers of the conscripted men were out? Why, with the utmost calmness. If his pulses went a beat or two faster, or if he wondered whether he had not been drawn, there was certainly nothing in his outward manner to suggest it. **A**

HEMINGWAY GOES TO WAR

A *Kansas City Star* reporter deemed unfit for military service found a spot as an ambulance driver at the Italian front. Days later, he got hit by a mortar shell and machine-gun fire.

BY MARCELLINE HEMINGWAY SANFORD

★★★★★

FEBRUARY 1962

Originally titled "At the Hemingways: Ernest Returns From War"

HE HAD TRIED to enlist in all the services, he wrote me. He told me that the Army, the Navy, and the Marine Corps had all turned him down, not for being underage, since he was past 18, but he could not pass the physicals because of his inherited bad eye.

"We all have that bad eye, like Mother's," I remember he wrote in one letter. "But I'll make it to Europe some way in spite of this optic. I can't let a show like this go on without getting in on it. There hasn't been a real war to go to since Grandfather Hemingway's shooting at the battle of Bull Run." That Grandfather Hemingway served at Vicksburg and wasn't in the battle of Bull Run did not affect Ernie's point at all. I sympathized.

Ernie wrote that he liked newspaper work. Then,

early in 1918 came a letter full of jubilation. He told us that he had been assigned to interview a group of Italian Red Cross officers who had come to the United States to recruit volunteers for the American Red Cross Ambulance Corps in Italy. When he interviewed them for *The Star*, he learned that the Red Cross was accepting men who were in general good health but who were unable to fulfill the physical requirements of our own country's armed services.

Ernest was delighted. At last he had found a way to get to the war in Europe. He signed up at once and was ordered to report to Ambulance Unit 4 for Italy ...



WHEN ERNEST LEFT for the Red Cross service in Italy, he expected to be behind the lines. But after he landed and had driven an ambulance for a few days, he and his pal Bill Horne found the place where they were stationed too safe and rather dull. They heard there was a chance to volunteer for a special branch, the Red Cross Rolling Canteen Service, which operated right up to the front lines. It was early July, and Ernest was excited and happy when he wrote us that he and Bill had managed to work their way forward, where things were going on. He had volunteered to be one of the bicycle riders who distributed mail, chocolate, and tobacco

★ Ernest Hemingway on crutches in 1918, outside the American Red Cross hospital in Milan. The protagonist in his World War I novel, *A Farewell to Arms*, is an American ambulance driver on the Italian front who was wounded in both legs.

to the soldiers in the trenches at the front ...

On July 8, 1918, while Ernest was on his bicycle, delivering mail and chocolate—it was seven days after he had transferred to the Rolling Canteen Service, and less than 10 days after he had gone to the active front in Italy—he was handing chocolate and a cigarette to an Italian soldier when a trench-mortar shell hit and almost buried him. It knocked him unconscious and filled his body below the waist with over 200 pieces of shrapnel. When he came to and went to the rescue of a wounded Italian, he was hit again, with a machine-gun bullet, below the left knee ...

One night late that fall, Marion Vose and I decided to go to a movie near our school in Chicago. By accident, after the feature, we saw a newsreel about the work of the American Red Cross in Italy. The new Red Cross hospital in Milan was described and shown. Suddenly, in the silent film, Ernest appeared. He was in uniform, sitting in a wheelchair on the hospital porch, being pushed by a pretty nurse. Over his lap was spread a robe of knitted wool squares. He smiled at the camera and waved a crutch for a second. I was hysterical with excitement. At the end of the regular picture, I waited for the newsreel to come on again. They didn't run it. Marion Vose and I went to the manager and asked if we could please see it again. We told him why. He was kind and said if we wanted to wait until the theater was empty, he would run it once more, just for us.

Later the manager came over and sat with us as we saw Ernie smile once more. Then the manager gave us the name of the next theater where this same newsreel would be shown. Even though it was midnight, I stopped in at a drugstore to telephone the family in Oak Park to tell Daddy and Mother where they could see Ernest in the movie the next day. My parents went to that theater the following night, and I joined them. We all wiped away tears of joy while we watched Ernest smiling as he sat in his wheelchair on the hospital terrace, wearing his military cap and overcoat. We had not seen him for almost six months.

Mother told me later that Daddy followed that newsreel all over Chicago. Mother saw it twice more herself, and I caught it again at another neighborhood theater. No film ever did a family more good. ▀

THE WAR AND GERTRUDE STEIN

Dining in Paris with Picasso as a zeppelin
loomed overhead

BY GERTRUDE STEIN

★★★★★

JULY 1933

*Originally titled "The War and Gertrude Stein:
Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas. III"*



THE GERMANS were getting nearer and nearer Paris, and the last day Gertrude Stein could not leave her room—she sat and mourned. She loved Paris, she thought neither of manuscripts nor of pictures, she thought only of Paris and she was desolate. I came up to her room; I called out, “It is all right, Paris is saved, the Germans are in retreat.” She turned away and said, “Don’t tell me these things.” “But it’s true,” I said, “it is true.” And then we wept together ...

The dreary winter of 1914–15 went on. One night, I imagine it must have been about the end of January, I had, as was and is my habit, gone to bed very early, and Gertrude Stein was down in the studio working, as was her habit. Suddenly I heard her call me gently. “What is it?” I said. “Oh nothing,” said she, “but perhaps if you don’t mind putting on something warm and coming downstairs I think perhaps it would be better.” “What is it,” I said, “a revolution?” ...

“No,” she said, “not exactly.” “Well what is it?” said I impatiently. “I don’t quite know,” she answered, “but there has been an alarm. Anyway you had better come.” I started to turn on the light. “No,” she said, “you had better not. Give me your hand and I will get you down, and you can go to sleep downstairs on the couch.” I came. It was very dark. I sat down on the couch and then I said, “I’m sure I don’t know what is the matter with me, but my knees are knocking together.” Gertrude Stein burst out laughing. “Wait a minute, I will get you a blanket,” she said. “No, don’t leave me,” I said. She managed to find something to cover me and then there was a loud boom, and then several more. It was a soft noise, and then there was the sound of horns blowing in the streets and we knew it was all over. We lighted the lights and went to bed.

The next time there was a zeppelin alarm, and it was not very long after this first one, Picasso and Eve [Gouel] were dining with us. By this time we knew that the two-story building of the atelier was no more protection than the roof of the little pavilion under which we slept, and the concierge had suggested that we should go into her room where at least we should have six stories over us. Eve was not very well these days and fearful, so we all went into the concierge’s room. Even Jeanne Poule, the Breton servant who had succeeded Hélène, came too. Jeanne soon was bored with this precaution and so, in spite of all remonstrance, she went back to her kitchen, lit her light, in spite of the regulations, and proceeded to wash the dishes. We too soon got bored with the concierge’s loge and went back to the atelier. We put a candle under the table so that it would not make much light, Eve and I tried to sleep, and Picasso and Gertrude Stein talked until two in the morning, when the all’s clear sounded and they went home. **A**



★ Gertrude Stein, the American novelist, poet, and playwright, was the acid-tongued god-mother of the expatriate community of writers and artists in Paris.

“THE MOUTH OF HELL HAD BEEN OPENED”

The writer watched as a zeppelin dropped incendiary bombs on a town in Great Britain.

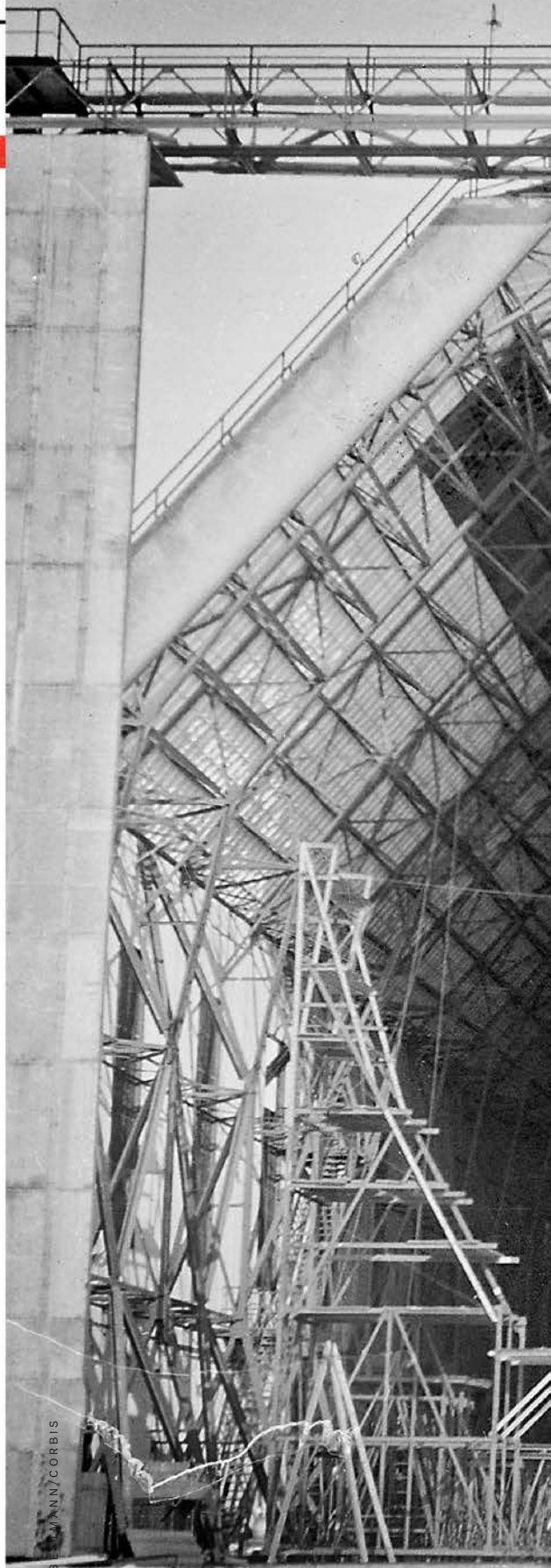
BY MRS. A. BURNETT-SMITH

★★★★★

JUNE 1918

Originally titled “An Englishwoman’s Message”

★ A zeppelin built by the Germans to bomb New York. Britain took possession of it after the armistice was signed.



B. WANN/CORBIS





AM SO TIRED of telling this story of how my own house was destroyed.

In October 1915, the zeppelins' visits began to be very serious. They had made other visits before, and we were much interested in them. We always ran out like children to watch them. A zeppelin may be 600 or 800 feet long. The last ones we know were 800, because we saw one come down near where we lived. Made of beautiful shining material, so exquisitely woven, it was a joy to look at.

When you see a shape outlined against a dark-blue sky on a starless night, it is like a fairy picture; but when it starts to do its deadly work, you forget about its beauty; and when you hear the grinding of its engine, you have nothing but terror in your heart.

My daughter, who had been working for over three years in the French War Zone, was at home for her first leave that night. She was very anxious to see an airship. (Both the boys and the girls feel that this war is a great adventure. If they had the real fear and hatred of it that we older people have, whose souls have been seared by the suffering and anguish, they

★ Men use searchlights to find zeppelins, which killed more than 500 British citizens in bombing raids. Britons had not been attacked at home for more than a century.

would never be able to do the things they do. We ought to rejoice, and we do, that they have the spirit that sends them when necessary "over the top.") When I told her that I thought the zeppelins were out, we went into the garden. We don't venture out anymore, for many were killed by falling shrapnel. I have even heard it pattering on my roof like hail. The boys back from the front don't like it.

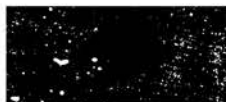
We all stood there in the garden, listening. Suddenly the engine stopped; following that there was another sound, quite familiar to us because we had heard it in the distance before. It was the explosion of a very large bomb; and that was followed by another and another, in such rapid succession that we were quite stunned. We had no time to be afraid. It was such a wonder to us. It was terrifying in a way. We never spoke a word during the four or five minutes in which this rapid and fierce bombardment took place. In our old town, which had kept its 1,000th birthday shortly before, strange-looking things kept dropping, which proved to be incendiary bombs, intended to set fire to the buildings of which the explosive bombs had begun the destruction. The air was filled with

strange, sulphurous, smoking fumes. Above the noise of the bursting bombs could be heard the cries of the wounded. It was as if the mouth of hell had been opened.

We soon saw the evil thing above us. On the lawn was a wonderful old cedar tree, which had stood for 400 years. This was split by the concussion, and had afterward to be taken down. When it was over and comparative quiet restored, the man who stood by us said, "I think now we can go into the house." And so we walked across the terrace, and tried to go in. There was a French window opening on the terrace, and it was unbroken; but when we tried to open it, we found there was no house. The entire front had been blown up, and the noise was so great, and the concussion being outward, not toward us, we did not know that it had happened. Books, pictures, furniture, walls, roof—everything was down in one inextricable heap ...

I HAVE TALKED TO munition workers in factories, etc., etc. All women who work on munitions need encouragement. It is not women's work. If you could see the heads bent over the work—women's heads, such pretty heads!—you would rebel as I did. But they are dedicated to this service because there is one thing worse than war, and that is dishonorable peace ...

I spoke to the women on the night shift, reminding them that they were soldiers quite as much as the boys at the front, and that they must stand behind the fighting men. As I stood speaking to these women and girls, suddenly the lights went out. We knew what that meant. We could hear the grinding of the zeppelin engine, and we knew that if one shell fell on the glass roof above us, but few would live to see the dawn of another day. It was an awful moment, and presently the nerve of some of the women began to break. You could hear a sob here and there and a little scream, and presently someone, inspired by the message from on high, began to sing softly that beautiful hymn, "Jesus, Lover of My Soul." I wish that I could make you see and feel what it was like—that wonderful low melody stealing across the factory, taken up by every voice—and how it fell like a benediction upon the bowed heads and beating hearts until all fear was stilled and we knew that nothing would happen to us; and nothing



**IN EVERY HOME
IN OUR
COUNTRY
TODAY THERE
IS FOUND
THE VACANT
CHAIR.**



did. Presently the lights went up, and work was resumed as usual ...

We have taken the vow, on our hearts and our consciences, that we will never, never let go; that we will stand to fight to the last man, to the last woman, to the last ditch. That is one of the things that the war has done for us. It has made us feel, because we have suffered so much, that we can endure more; and the same thing is true of Italy, France, and wherever there is the war. You will find the squaring of the shoulders, the setting of the lips, the hardening of the eye, that tells of a people who have lost neither hope nor courage ...

For it is not an ordinary war, an ordinary struggle between nations for a bit of supremacy or power or prestige: it is the beginning of the final struggle between good and evil, between might and right, between the powers of evil and the powers of good. And because we know and believe that this great English-speaking people are on the side of liberty and humanity, we have courage to go on and hold on, even through the days of sacrifice and darkness ...

In every home in our country today there is found the vacant chair, the loss of some near kindred. In my own little country—Scotland—you will find many, many villages from which the Highland regiments have been recruited. There are no boys left to come back. They are all dead.

Not many weeks before I came to this country ... I was speaking in a church on the spiritual side of the war. At the close, a woman came to me, a little simple country woman, dressed in deep mourning, and in her bag she had three portraits of boys dressed in the uniform of the Gordon Highlanders, and a little yellow missive, which I, alas, knew too well. "The War Office Department regrets to inform ——— that ——— was killed in action." She laid this little missive beside one of the portraits, and said, "That came yesterday. That's Jimmie. He's the last of the three." She had given her all. Then she added, "I hear you are going to America. Will you tell American mothers I have given all my lads? I had only three and I would give six, if I had them, for the same cause." Another friend of mine has given all her five sons. She was a widow and she has none left; but she is working in one of the canteens with no shadow on her face. **A**

THE DECLINE OF THE BERLINER

Before the war, Germans were jovial and hospitable to foreigners. But after it started, they displayed growing intolerance and savagery.

BY ADELE N. PHILLIPS AND RUSSELL PHILLIPS

★★★★★

JANUARY 1918

IN THE 12 LONG YEARS previous to the outbreak of the war, during which we had resided in Berlin, we had ... been always kindly received and had appreciated to the utmost the hospitality extended to us, which, as everybody knows who has resided in the city for any length of time, is boundless to the stranger upon whom the burgher centers his affections. Those characteristics which lie so near the surface, and which have been transmitted from generation to generation until they have been allied with the natural designation of *Deutsch*: cleanliness, fearlessness of expression, candor, *der Mut* (moral courage), probity, and an inherent love of justice had endeared them to us ... The passing years did not weaken the early impressions, but rather deepened them, until the esteem in which we held [Berliners] had ripened into a strong and enduring affection ...

But with the outbreak of hostilities new traits began to be perceptible even in the gentlest and most refined—student, philosopher, and the most phlegmatic of burghers alike—that distressed the most casual observer ...

In the almost tigerish rage which followed the Belgian opposition [to Germany's invasion], the Germans became a people characterized by

cruelty almost maniacal in its ferocity. Centuries were bridged, and the savageries of the early days of the Christian era came trooping over the span. Thumbs were turned down and kept down. A deaf ear was turned to the cries of distress which followed the accumulated wretchedness that the decision entailed. What psychology can analyze the mentality of a peaceful, law-abiding people suddenly imbued with a lust for blood?

With the greatest sorrow we had witnessed the orgies that followed the sinking of the *Lusitania*. Horror-stricken Americans in Berlin were compelled to sit in silence while some burgher, suddenly transformed from an amiable, jovial being into a gloating fiend, would tell of the greater horrors yet to come ...

The spirit of intolerance was still abroad in the third year of the war. An American, a buyer for a large millinery house, came to Berlin ...

As we dined together one evening in a



KEYSTONE/CORBIS; ASSOCIATED PRESS

★ *Top:* At the center of Berlin, young men cheer as they join up to fight.
Bottom: Prussian soldiers are encouraged with flowers as they leave for the front.



well-known restaurant, we were conversing in English. Seated at the next table was a quartet of officers, home on furlough. Presently a waiter stepped up to us and said that the officers objected to our speaking the English tongue. Knowing that we were well within our rights, we refused to discontinue the conversation. The four officers then rose, stood stiffly at attention, and demanded that we be ejected from the restaurant. It was a very unpleasant and humiliating experience; but, as we look back, we cannot fail to see the humor of it, with the men standing so ridiculously straight in the center of the place. The American, as host, approached the group and endeavored to explain; but he was swept aside with haughty gestures. When he returned to the table, the proprietor informed him that he would be unable to serve the rest of the meal, and we were compelled to leave the restaurant. ■



WAR AND THE SEXES

With millions of young men gone to their graves or sickbeds, the marital future of women across Europe looked bleak.

BY ELLEN KEY

★★★★★

JUNE 1916



THE FIRST YEAR of the war was nearing its close when a middle-aged American woman, visiting in my home, said to me, “Nowhere will the war bring about a more radical change, more unexpected changes, than in the relations between the sexes. What way out will be found by the millions of women who more than ever must give up all hope of realizing their longing for love and children?” ...

After the war, woman’s prospects, from the point of view of her natural duty—motherhood—will be dark indeed.

The number of women who will have to dismiss all thought of marriage—already far too large—is destined to become much larger still. The number of those who lead immoral lives and are childless, or who bear illegitimate children, will therefore increase. Others, from a sense of patriotic duty to which appeal has already been made, may marry invalids. How many of these will be disappointed in their most justified wishes for happiness! Those women who have chosen among the men who are rejected from military service quite often have defective children ...

A considerable number of plans have already been suggested in Europe to relieve the abnormal sex-conditions, which have, of course, met with much formidable opposition.

Someone in London has conceived the idea of founding a “society for the marrying of wounded heroes”—an appeal to woman’s self-sacrifice and patriotism to make the lives of these men bearable and to propagate children who will inherit their father’s qualities of heroism. These wives, who would, in most cases, have to become the supporters of their families, would, therefore, be paid a man’s wages and would, in many cases, also be given a stipend to facilitate their marriage. Moreover, in order to insure suitable mating, it is suggested that recourse be had to selective committees of clergymen and physicians; it is



HULTON-DEUTSCH COLLECTION/CORBIS



★ Blind soldiers in London. About 1 million British soldiers died, out of nearly 9 million; another 2 million were wounded.

evidently not proposed to let the parties themselves choose. Women who are physically strong will be expected to marry men who need to be carried or pushed in a chair. Blind men, who can still at least enjoy good food, will be married to good cooks, and so forth ...

What was formerly considered a sin—loveless marriages contracted simply for the purpose of having offspring—will perhaps, from a national point of view, come to be considered a duty hereafter. The bearing of children outside of marriage, and perhaps other deviations from the ideal of monogamy, will be practiced openly after the war to a far greater extent than was done secretly by people of Europe before the war ...

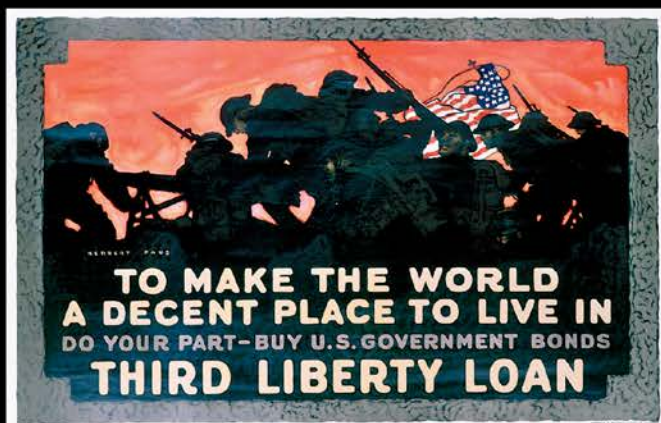
Another moral question that was previously discussed—that of birth-prevention—has come

up again during the war. In East Prussia the question has been discussed as to whether the law against abortion should be suspended for those women who fell victims to the Russian soldiers. And in France, where many women have, with great suffering, borne the children of their enemies, some people still advocate preventive measures; someone even suggested killing these children, in order to ensure the purity of the race. Surely one cannot go further from the ideals of Christian morality! And though these suggestions have been rejected, the mere fact that they have been discussed proved what this whole war has so clearly shown: that the religion of Europe is no longer that of *Christianity* but that of *nationalism*, and that everything that is considered good for the nation is assumed to be right. **A**

THE ART OF WAR

As societies mobilized for an unexpected and undesired war, governments used posters as a propaganda tool.

1.



1. After the United States entered the war, in April 1917, the government tried a high-minded plea for Americans to open their wallets. **2.** A 1918 poster called on every American to pitch in. **3.** An appeal to American manliness, to fill the ranks for an unpopular venture. In the first six weeks after the U.S. declared war, only 73,000 men volunteered, prompting the government to institute a draft.



2.



3.

K. J. HISTORICAL/CORBIS; DAVID POLLACK/CORBIS;
SWIM TINK 2/CORBIS; CORBIS

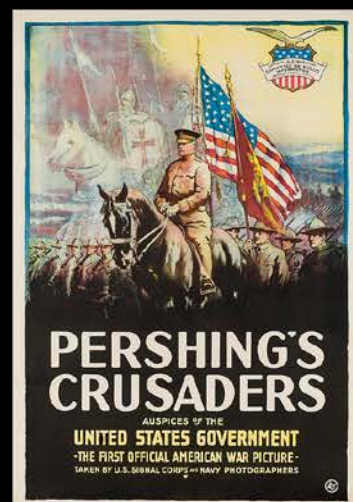
4.



5.



6.



7.



4. A 1917 Canadian poster. As a British dominion, Canada entered the Great War the moment Britain did. 5. A British poster by Norman Wilkinson, a marine artist who devised “dazzle camouflage”—bold patterns painted on warships’ hulls to confuse enemy submarines. 6. The commander of the American Expeditionary Forces, John J. Pershing. 7. In 1918, the Central Powers pleaded with their straitened citizens for yet another round of loans.

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



1. Great Britain recruits noncombatants. 2 & 3. Practical appeals to young American men in search of a trade. 4. The YMCA owned 44 factories in Europe, which made cookies and candy for Allied troops. 5. A British recruitment poster from 1915.

6.



7.



6. In a 1918 poster, the strapped British government turned to women, who were barred from fighting, to fill noncombat positions. 7. The work of Britain's Bert Thomas, a longtime contributor of political cartoons to the humor magazine *Punch*. 8. An appeal to Britons living abroad to come home to join their country at war. 9. To finance victory, the U.S. government called on Americans to buy war bonds. 10. A canine plea to Americans. 11. Bert Thomas, preying on British guilt.

8.



9.



10.



11.



4

THE NEW WORLD

The war was supposed to end all wars. It didn't—the savage peace and the failure of the League of Nations led to the next, larger war.

★ Leaders of the victorious powers gather around a table in Versailles and craft a hard-hearted peace.

THE IDEA OF A LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Horror at the Great War, along with technological change, made the idea of world government imaginable.

BY H. G. WELLS ET AL.

★★★★★

JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 1919



★The League of Nations, convening in Geneva in 1923, saw its idealistic hopes dashed, in part because of America's refusal to join.



AT THE OUTBREAK of the Great War in August 1914, Europe and the world awoke out of a dream of intensified nationality to a new system of realities which were entirely antagonistic to the continuance of national separations.

It is necessary to state very plainly the nature of these new forces. Upon them rests the whole case for the League of Nations as it is here presented. It is a new case. It is argued here that these forces give us powers novel in history and bring mankind face to face with dangers such as it has never confronted before. It is maintained that, on the one hand, they render

possible such a reasoned coordination of human affairs as has never hitherto been conceivable, and that, on the other, they so enlarge and intensify the scope and evil of war and of international hostility as to give what was formerly a generous aspiration more and more of the aspect of an imperative necessity. Under the lurid illumination of the world war, the idea of world unification has passed rapidly from the sphere of the literary idealist into that of the methodical, practical man ...

In the history of mankind, the great phases seem all to be marked by the appearance of some new invention which facilitates trade or intercourse, and may be regarded as the operating cause of the new phase. The invention of writing, of the wheel and the road, of the ship, of money, of printing, of letters of exchange, of joint-stock undertakings and limited

★ Delegates at a session of the League of Nations Council in San Sebastian, Spain, circa 1923



liability, mark distinct steps in the enlargement of human intercourse and cooperation from its original limitation within the verbal and traditional range of the family or tribe.

A large part of the expansion of the Roman empire, apart from its overseas development, may be considered, for example, as a process of road-making and bridge-building. Even its trans-Mediterranean development was a matter of road-making combined with ship-building ...

And we live today in a time of accelerated inventiveness and innovation, when a decade modifies the material of intercommunication far more extensively than did any century before, in range, swiftness, and intensity alike. Within the present century, since 1900, there have been far more extensive changes in these things than occurred in the 10 centuries before Christ. Instead of regarding *Around the World in Eighty Days* as an amazing feat of hurry, we can now regard a flight about the globe in 15 or 16 days as a reasonable and moderate performance ...

While all these things, on the one hand, point plainly now to such possibilities of human unification and world unanimity as no one could have dreamed of a hundred years ago, there has been, on the other hand, a change, an intensification of the destructive processes of war which opens up a black alternative to this pacific settlement of human affairs. The case as it is commonly stated in the propaganda literature for a League of Nations is a choice between, on the one hand, a general agreement on the part of mankind to organize a permanent peace, and on the other, a progressive development of the preparation for war and the means of conducting war which must ultimately eat up human freedom and all human effort, and, as the phrase goes, destroy civilization ...

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS cannot be a little thing; it is either to be a great thing in the world, an overriding idea of a greater state, or nothing. Every state aims ultimately at the production of a sort of man, and it is an idle and a wasteful diplomacy, a pandering to timidities and shams, to pretend that the League of Nations is not ultimately a state aiming at that ennobled individual whose city is the world. ■

THE SECRET TO WORLD PEACE

Nations must give up their absolute sovereignty over foreign affairs.

BY BERTRAND RUSSELL

★★★★★

MAY 1917

Originally titled "National Independence and Internationalism"

NATIONAL SENTIMENT IS a fact and should be taken account of by institutions. When it is ignored, it is intensified and becomes a source of strife. It can be rendered harmless only by being given free play so long as it is not predatory. But it is not, in itself, a good or admirable feeling. There is nothing rational and nothing desirable in a limitation of sympathy which confines it to a fragment of the human race. Diversities of manners and customs and tradition are on the whole a good thing, since they enable different nations to produce different types of excellence. But in national feeling there is always latent or explicit an element of hostility to foreigners ...

So long as national feeling exists, it is very important that each nation should be self-governing as regards its internal affairs ...

This principle, however, does not decide how the relations between states are to be regulated, or how a conflict of interests between rival states is to be decided. At present, every great state claims absolute sovereignty, not only in regard to its internal affairs but also in regard to its external actions. This claim to absolute sovereignty leads it into conflict with similar claims on the part of other great states. Such conflicts at present can be decided only by war or by diplomacy, and diplomacy is in essence nothing but the threat of war ...

There cannot be secure peace in the world, or any decision of international questions according to international law, until states are willing to part with their absolute sovereignty as regards their external relations, and to leave the decision in such matters to some international instrument of government. An international government will have to be legislative as well as judicial. It is not enough that there should be a Hague Tribunal, deciding matters according to some already existing system of international law; it is necessary also that there should be a body capable of enacting international law, and this body will have to have the power of transferring territory from one state to another, when it is persuaded that adequate grounds exist for such a transference. Friends of peace will make a mistake if they unduly glorify the status quo. Some nations grow, while others dwindle; the population of an area may change its character by emigration and immigration. There is no good reason why states should resent changes in their boundaries under such conditions, and if no international authority has power to make changes of this kind, the temptations to war will sometimes become irresistible.

The international authority ought to possess an army and navy, and these ought to be the only army and navy in existence. ■

WOODROW WILSON AT VERSAILLES

The president's physician witnessed the drama behind closed doors at the peace conference.

BY CARY T. GRAYSON

★★★★★

NOVEMBER 1959

Originally titled "Memories of Woodrow Wilson"



ONE MORNING the three premiers [of France, Great Britain, and Italy] grew so passionate in their opposition to Mr. Wilson's calmer, forward-looking policy that they accused him of being pro-German. I happened to enter the room just as they were about to recess for lunch. Mr. Wilson told me a little of what had occurred, but for the most part was quite silent at the lunch table. After lunch he asked me to ride with him ... He was very silent, but I could see that he was thinking deeply and that his emotions were profoundly stirred. When we returned to the house and just before we got out of the motor, he said to me: "I want you to come into the room with me. Those men this morning accused me of being pro-German. They have gone a step too far and I don't know what may happen." With that he walked down the hallway, very straight, his jaw set, his eyes fixed. I could see that his fighting blood was circulating, and there was electricity in the air.

In a moment or two the others came in and all were seated, and for a few seconds there was intense silence. Contrary to his usual custom in the Council of Four, he rose from his chair and began to speak standing. I wish I had a stenographic report of what he said, for it was certainly one of the greatest speeches of his whole career. In substance, it was to the effect that he had never liked Germany, that he had never been in Germany, that he had never cared for the German methods of education, that no man in the room was less German-minded than he, and that he resented deeply the accusations which they had brought against him at the morning session. Turning to M. Clemenceau, with his eyes ablaze, he said: "And yet you this morning told me that I should be wearing the kaiser's helmet. And why? Because I have protested against laying a taxation upon Germany which will make life so unattractive to the little children and the children yet unborn that existence would be a running sore and dreams of vengeance an obsession. I am not thinking only of Germany. I am thinking about the future of the world. I am thinking of the inevitable results of a so-called peace founded merely upon revenge ... We are trying to stabilize a world that has been thrown into chaos.



“One reason why France has had the sympathy of most of the world in this terrible war is that individuals and nations have remembered with indignation the terms which Germany imposed upon France after the [1870] Franco-Prussian War, the insolence and the inhumanity of it all. This is why most of the nations have become allies of France—because she had been wronged ... If we do wrong around this peace table the sympathy of the world will someday turn to Germany as it has turned to France in this war. I want to save the whole world from repetitions of such disasters as the world has experienced during the last four years. I know that you men are going the wrong way about it, and I know that I am right, because I know human nature and the processes of war. I am for a severe punishment for Germany but a just one.”

While he was speaking, M. Clemenceau made a motion to rise from his chair. Mr. Wilson whirled around toward him and said: “You sit down. I did not interrupt you ... this morning.” M. Clemenceau sank back in his chair.

Then Mr. Wilson continued ... “It is not only the innocent children of Germany that I am thinking of. I am thinking of the children of France, of England, of Italy, of Belgium, of my own United States, of the whole world. I see their little faces turn toward us in unconscious pleading that we shall save them from annihilation. I am not asking for a soft peace but for a righteous peace.”

Again M. Clemenceau rose from his chair and slowly approached Mr. Wilson, this time with moisture in his eyes. Taking the president’s hand in both of his, he said: “Mr. President, I want to say that you are not only a great man but you are a good one, and I am with you.” There was tense silence. In his chair, [British Prime Minister David] Lloyd George sat nodding approval, and [Italian Prime Minister Vittorio] Orlando was standing over by the window softly sobbing. ■

★ *Opposite page:* Woodrow Wilson delivers his opening speech at Versailles. Wilson shifted from neutrality to intervention after Germany proposed an alliance with Mexico, promising the return of Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico, and after German U-boats attacked U.S. merchant ships.

THE CASE OF WOODROW WILSON

A popular historian agreed with Freud that Wilson was a tragic figure whose neuroses got in his way.

BY BARBARA W. TUCHMAN

★★★★★

FEBRUARY 1967



(which must be read not as a stale slogan but in the first fine rapture of its promise) as one made “safe for democracy,” safe from war ever again, safe from tyranny, hunger, and injustice, safe from the oppression of one people by another. It was felt he had made the world a promise; nor was it only simple people who believed in him, but also the sophisticated—men of affairs and intellectuals. It was these whom the subsequent disillusion most embittered, for they felt they had been made to look like fools. When the Treaty of Versailles made a fiasco of their hopes, they felt personally deceived and betrayed.

Two men acutely afflicted by this anger and resentment were Sigmund Freud and William Bullitt ...

The authors’ basic premise [in *Thomas Woodrow Wilson: Twenty-Eighth President of the United States—A Psychological Study*] is that the Treaty of Versailles was the Great Betrayal, from which the world has suffered ever since; that as such it was the result of Wilson’s failure to make the Allies live up to the promise of the Fourteen Points

SINCE AMERICANS ARE NOT, by and large, a people associated with tragedy, it is strange and unexpected that the most tragic figure in modern history—judged by the greatness of expectations and the measure of the falling off—should have been an American. During the two climactic years of one of the world’s profound agonies, 1917–19, Woodrow Wilson was the receptacle of men’s hopes. He personified the craving of men of goodwill to believe that some good would come of it all, that the immense suffering, turmoil, and disruption would not be for nothing, that the agony must prove to have been the birth pangs of a better world. In a series of pronouncements that seemed to pluck out men’s best desires and give them shape, Wilson supplied the formula for that better world

and other Wilsonian principles; that he had the power to do so but exhibited a moral collapse and “mental degeneracy” at Paris which were the outcome of his inner psychological conflicts; ergo, that all of us thereafter have suffered from Wilson’s neuroses ...

THE CENTRAL NEUROSIS, unearthed by the authors, which established its deep unconscious grip on the whole course of Wilson’s life ... was his fixation on his father ...

His tyrannical superego could never be satisfied with any success. No rung up the ladder was high enough, not even the presidency of the United States; he had to become Savior of the World ... Wilson *had* to gain the League [of Nations] to save his soul, yet in the fight with [Massachusetts Senator Henry Cabot] Lodge, he himself set up the conditions which made the gain impossible. In Freudian terms this becomes the death wish ... The terrible truth in his heart that the treaty, even including the League, was not the peace he had promised the world, was enough to destroy any man. On October 2, 1919, came the paralytic stroke ...

The bell rings here. One feels that Wilson, himself so like a queer dream, is explained ...

We come now to the gaping hole in the argument. It is the assumption that in the conditions prevailing after the armistice, in the passion of anti-German feeling, in the wounds of the victors, in the antagonisms and nationalisms released by the breaking up of three empires, an ideal peace was possible; that, in short, Wilson had the power to dictate a just peace and failed to exercise it.

All he need have done, the authors announce, was to have ... threaten[ed] to leave the conference, to publicly denounce the Allies as the “enemies of peace,” and to withdraw American financial and economic aid. In fact, as Wilson well knew, to have risked such an open rupture was impossible, if only for his own sake, for with it would have gone glimmering any hope of the League ...

It was not only Wilson’s psyche that failed ... nor his fault alone that the Treaty of Versailles was less than ideal. The fault was humanity’s. **A**

★ Woodrow Wilson returns from the Versailles Peace Conference on July 9, 1919.

WHEN UTOPIA LOOKED REAL

Creating a League of Nations looked like a fool’s errand until the American president had his say.

BY ALBERT THOMAS

★★★★★

NOVEMBER 1918

Originally titled “*The League of Nations*”

WHEN the League of Nations was a new phrase, those persons who welcomed it enthusiastically heard themselves dubbed fools by those who were known as skeptics and as wise men.

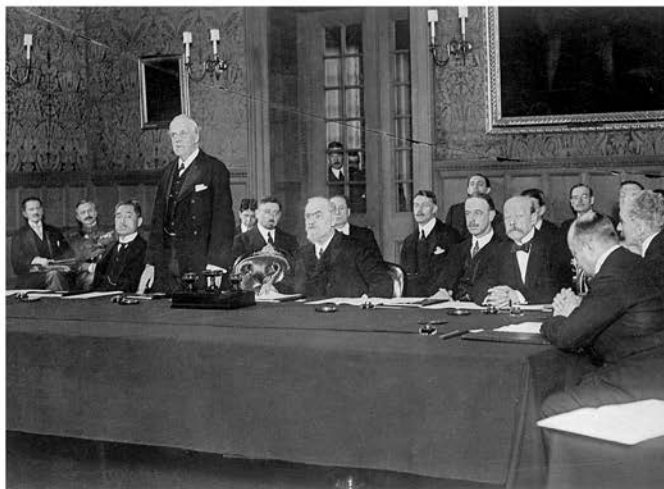
At that time the skeptics were, as they are always and everywhere, in the majority; for faith is a rare quality, whereas doubt is the most eminently judicious attitude—the attitude in which one runs the least risk of compromising one’s self.

“A League of Nations!—Tell me, do you believe in it?” said a French statesman ... To him, the idea was

a Utopia—nothing more ...

One day there arrived in France a message sent by a man who had labored alone and had reflected profoundly in his White House, on the other side of the ocean: it was the noble message of President Wilson concerning the League of Nations.

From that moment the idea began to make headway. The fools have become so numerous that they are now regarded as sensible folk. Now that the heads of the governments of the United States and Great Britain have pronounced in its favor, and the principle has been accepted from the tribune of the French Chamber, ... no one would venture to call the League of Nations a Utopia. **A**



★ Arthur Balfour, representing England, addresses the League of Nations Council at St. James’s Palace in London in early 1920.

REDRAWING THE MAP OF EUROPE

After the postwar treaty scrambled boundary lines across Europe, Germans would resent their nation's "mutilation."

BY CHARLES DOWNER HAZEN

★★★★★

APRIL 1919



THE MAP OF EUROPE has not simply been scorched by the consuming heat of our time: it has been, in large measure, destroyed. Only a few remains are left ...

From the Atlantic Ocean to the Urals, from Archangel to Salonica, modifications are demanded, modifications are in process, which will introduce, if not a new heaven, at least a new Earth. In only a few instances, and those relatively unimportant, will the nation frontiers of the future resemble those of the past. Spain and Portugal may emerge unaltered from the Conference of Paris, as they did, for that matter, from the Congress of Vienna a century ago. Norway may remain the same, and so perhaps may Sweden and Switzerland.

But where is there another European state which will issue from the impending readjustment unchanged? The boundaries of the British empire,



CORBIS

★ Germany's representative at Versailles, Johannes Bell, signs the document that his countrymen later found humiliating.

— Sir William Orpen, oil on canvas, *The Signing of the Peace Treaty in the Hall of Mirrors, Versailles, 28th June 1919*



of France, of Germany, of Austria-Hungary, of Italy and Russia, of Serbia and Greece and Roumania and Bulgaria, of Albania and the Turkish empire, all these are to be sketched anew by the consulting draftsmen in Congress assembled upon the banks of the river Seine. For the dividing lines of the past have joined the snows of yesterday. The boundaries of Belgium and Holland and Luxemburg and Denmark will probably undergo rectifications.

And we must become familiar, not only with a new Europe, but also with a new Africa and a new Asia and a new Pacific Ocean ...

Whatever amputations may be made in Germany herself, in Alsace-Lorraine, Schleswig, the Polish provinces, the one ineluctable fact that will remain will be this: Germany, with approximately 70 million inhabitants, will have as neighbors on the east and south numerous small states, several of them new and of uncertain viability. Formerly she had two great states as neighbors—Russia and Austria-Hungary. Both of these states have been broken into fragments. Germany has not been. Her potential role in Eastern and Central Europe has been improved as a result of the war ...

The defeat Germany has sustained may abate somewhat her contempt of other nations. It is not likely to diminish her hatred of them. It is far more likely to intensify that hatred. Men do not love their enemies any the more because their enemies have compelled them to bite the dust. What we know about the Germans does not lead us to believe, either that they have changed in essentials, or that they are changing, or that they are likely to change and to give the world the spectacle of the miracle of a new psychology ...

And this further fact should be faced. The overwhelming mass of Germans will resent any mutilation of the fatherland, whether the fatherland be monarchical or republican; and mutilated it will be, since Alsace-Lorraine is going back to France and Poland is to be restored. It is far safer and more sensible to assume that Germany will permanently resent these changes, than to suppose that she will admit their justice and accept the altered situation in good faith. The world should make its plans accordingly. ■

THE FAILURE IN VERSAILLES

The unprincipled peace bore
little resemblance to President Wilson's
idealistic hopes.

BY GUGLIELMO FERRERO

★★★★★

MAY 1920

Originally titled "The Crisis of Western Civilization"

THE PEACE concluded at Paris in 1919 did not, like that concluded at Vienna in 1815, undertake to reorganize Europe, according to a plan mutually agreed upon by victors and vanquished:

it attempted to reduce to impotence the enemies of the victorious alliance by territorial amputations, by imposing disarmament upon the vanquished, by the creation of a certain number of new states, whose duty it shall be to hold in check the powers which were responsible for the world war, and especially the most dangerous of them—Germany. This peace resembles those which were made by Napoleon during the last years of his reign (and which lasted so short a time) far more closely than it resembles the peace of Vienna, which was based on the principle of legitimate sovereignty ...

It is clear that such a peace, however excellent it may be in itself, bears very little resemblance to a peace based upon such principles as President Wilson and the idealists had in mind ...

The Congress of Vienna discovered one principle which

was capable of bringing a little order into war-ravaged Europe. The Congress of Paris has not discovered such a one, because all those of which it tried to make use were vague expedients of the moment ...

Western civilization [needs to] find some principle of union—a common language, an Esperanto of the spirit if not of the flesh. Now such a principle can be found only in the principle of nationality, understood and loyally applied in its strict, definite signification, as a principle of right, after the style of the principle of legitimacy; or in universally accepted doctrines—supra-natural, so to speak—which will make it possible, and even desirable, for different races and peoples to live under the same government.

This is what the Bolsheviki are trying to do in Russia, when they seek to maintain the unity of the empire by substituting for the dynastic principle the idea of the fraternity of the proletarian masses; that is to say, by substituting one universal idea for another. The attempt will probably fail; but it is not, in itself, so mad as people seem to think. ■



★ *Top:* Woodrow Wilson (right) sought forbearance toward the defeated Central Powers at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, but he could not soften the views of the victors who had lost so many young men, represented by (left to right) Prime Ministers Vittorio Orlando of Italy, David Lloyd George of Great Britain, and Georges Clemenceau of France. *Bottom:* Vladimir Lenin, as the post-revolution ruler of Russia, pulled his nation out of the war.

EUROPE'S FUTURE: ECONOMIC UNION

A prominent British historian predicted that Europe would become more politically fragmented but more economically united.

BY ARNOLD J. TOYNBEE

★★★★★

FEBRUARY 1926

Originally titled "The New Map of Europe"

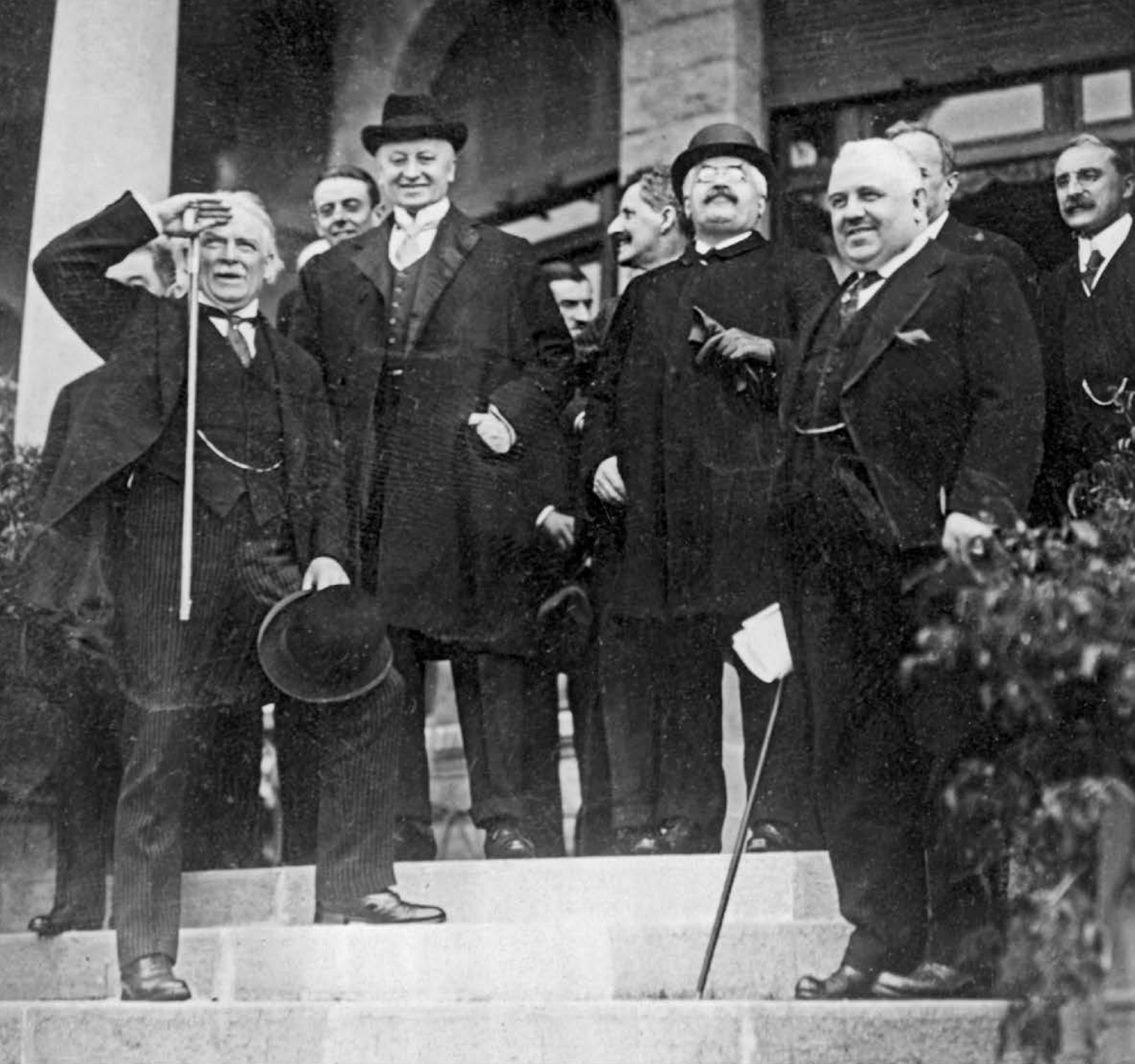
THERE ARE several maps of Europe between which we must distinguish. There are the political, the linguistic, and the economic, and—running through them all—there is the map of feeling, of those subjective sympathies and antipathies which often cut sharply across the maps based on objective criteria. For practical purposes this map of feeling may be the most important, yet its subjectivity, complexity, and sensitive variability make it the most difficult of all to plot on paper or describe in words ...

On the linguistic map—to consider that first—there is a marked contrast in degree of change between Western Europe and Eastern Europe. In the West, the linguistic map has not changed perceptibly since the late war, or indeed since the Dark Ages. In a general way it still displays the distribution of languages which prevailed in the last days of the Roman Empire ...

In Eastern Europe, on the other hand, the distribution of languages has changed enormously during the past century and a half, and during the last 10 years this process of change has culminated in wholesale massacres of minorities and wholesale exoduses of populations: of Muslims from Europe into Asia, of Greeks and Armenians from Asia into Europe, of Bulgars from Macedonia into a truncated Bulgaria ...

In the redrawing of the political map, the declared principle of the statesmen who presided over the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 was to make it coincide with the linguistic map of nationality in so far as the exigencies of the economic map permitted. The divine right of nationalities was a dogma which governed their decisions as powerfully as the divine right of dynasties had inspired their predecessors at the Vienna Conference a century before ...

The economic map of Europe next claims our attention, and here we observe an increasing tension between two incompatible tendencies—a tension which has not yet been resolved, but which is bound to find its resolution sooner or later, and perhaps, in doing so, to revolutionize the European situation. The first of these two contrary forces is the tendency for the effective unit of economic activity in the modern world to increase in scale progressively. The second is the tendency for the acceptable unit of political life to decrease in scale under the influence of a



more and more minutely articulated consciousness of nationality ...

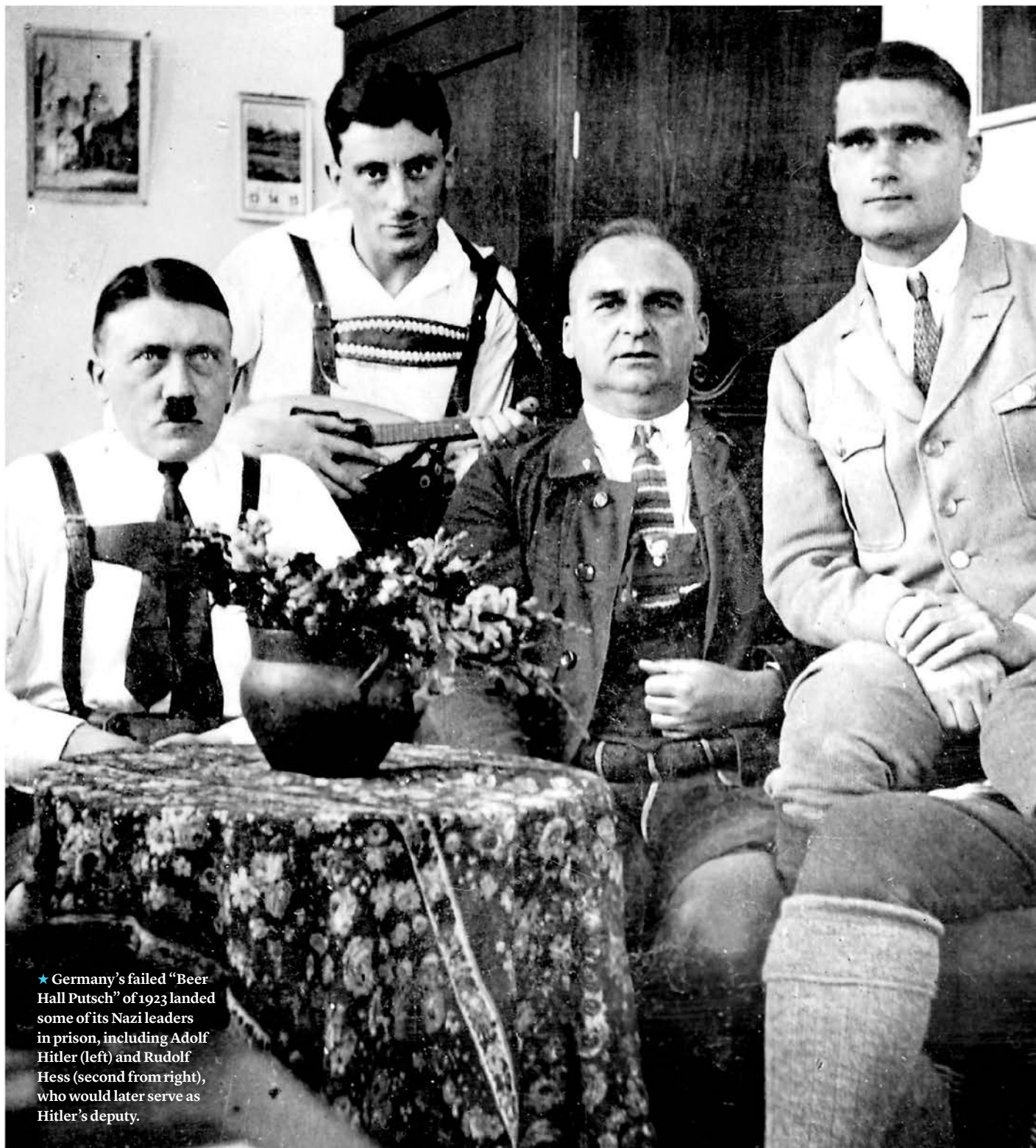
Evidently the way to a solution is to be found, not in altering the new political frontiers, but in leaving them where they are and then gradually making them fainter. We can hardly expect that they will ever become so faint as are now the boundaries between the 13 once sovereign states which were the historical nucleus of the present United States of America ...

As far ahead as we can foresee, a United States of Europe cannot be discerned on the horizon; but a European *Zollverein* [customs

★ **The Great War victors meet in San Remo, Italy, in 1920, to assign the League of Nation's mandates to rule former Ottoman lands. Left to right: British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, British Foreign Secretary George Curzon, French President Alexandre Millerand, and Italian Prime Minister Francesco Nitti.**

union]—or, short of that, a European economic entente, on a scale comparable to the economic unit constituted in America by the United States—seems much less unlikely to arise in a not too distant future ...

Otherwise Europe cannot possibly retain, or rather recover, her parity with the United States of America in the economic life of the world; and it is desirable in the economic interest of America, as well as in that of Europe herself, that this parity should be reestablished, since the economic decline of Europe would deprive America of her chief natural field for foreign trade. ■



★ Germany's failed "Beer Hall Putsch" of 1923 landed some of its Nazi leaders in prison, including Adolf Hitler (left) and Rudolf Hess (second from right), who would later serve as Hitler's deputy.

HITLER, REDUCED TO IMPOTENCE

The political division within postwar Germany produced a “noisy right wing,” led in part by a Great War veteran named Adolf Hitler.

BY REINHOLD NIEBUHR

★★★★★

JUNE 1925

Originally titled “Germany and Modern Civilization”



THE POLITICAL SITUATION in Germany reveals a triangular conflict between three economic and political groups, none of which is powerful enough to gain permanent ascendancy in the nation. These groups may be roughly designated as the Nationalists, the Industrialists, and the Socialists. Each group has a quarrel with the other two, but also some affinity of interest or inclination with the second against the third ...

The Nationalists represent the old traditional Germany which hewed a place for itself in Europe by military power. They exhibit all the vices and virtues of the kind of patriotism which fashioned the modern nation out of the wreck of the Roman and the medieval empires. In them the traditional patriot is the more clearly typified because he is slightly caricatured. They imagine themselves cold-blooded *Realpolitiker* who deal ruthlessly with the hard facts of *Machtpolitik* [power politics]. As a matter of fact they are naive romanticists whose sentimental attachment to the nation places them in opposition to

the internationalism of “big business” as much as to the internationalism of the workers. Their patriotism is hopelessly anachronistic in the new Europe of economic interdependence ...

The Nationalists naturally abhor all the political and economic arrangements which ... are for the time being preserving peace in Europe, at the price, of course, of the political and economic servitude of Germany. Momentarily in power at the head of a coalition, they refrain from doing violence to these arrangements only because the Industrialists, whose support they need, are committed to them. Naturally the Nationalists are monarchists. They have convinced themselves that the revolution [that turned Germany into a republic] was the cause and not the consequence of the defeat in 1918; by incessant reiteration they have raised the idea of a Socialist “stab in the back” to a political dogma.

A noisy right wing of the monarchists detached itself from the party some time ago under the leadership of Hitler and [General Erich] Ludendorff, but was fortunately reduced to impotence in the last election. ■

GERMANY'S LOST GENERATION

The Germans who came of age after the Great War cursed their ruined economy and the stigma of war guilt.

BY WILLIAM C. WHITE

★★★★★

JULY 1932



THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS in Germany have come and gone, but my friend Schmidt and my other friends of “the lost generation” are not satisfied.

It was from Schmidt that I first heard the phrase, used to designate the generation of German youth which has come of age since the war—a generation of serious young men and women whose political opinions and views of life have been brought to maturity, not by years, but by fatigue, disillusion, and despair. “We are a lost generation, a generation without a future,” said Schmidt. “A normal generation inherits a future to which it can look forward. That, our rightful inheritance, was taken from us by the war” ...

The aspirations of the younger generation have met defeat in the recent presidential elections. It has been decided that there is to be no immediate change; Hindenburg will continue to govern Germany. But, unless the government can reach some understanding with France and find some way to force a revision of the Treaty of Versailles, opposition to the republic is bound to increase. It must not be forgotten that Hitler, in 1932, doubled his 1930 vote; and in the [local] elections of April 24, held in five German states, Hitler’s National Socialists became the strongest political party in four of them, including Prussia.

Even if Hitler were to die, and his party to go to pieces, the point of view of the lost generation would not change ...

RIGHTLY OR WRONG, the Hitler group blames all of Germany’s troubles on the Treaty of Versailles, which has placed upon the German people the burden of reparations, the restriction of the nation’s boundaries, and the stigma of war guilt. Whenever that document is mentioned it is usually called “the Slave Treaty,” and it is a common occurrence to hear it said, “We are a people held in bondage.” In Danzig, which was German before the war but is now a free city more or less under the dominance of Poland, I heard a fiery speaker at a meeting of young Hitlerites proclaim, “What was German *will be* German, and no treaty can change it.” These things are not isolated instances; the traveler in Germany encounters them on every hand. They are symptoms

BETTMANN/CORBIS



indicating the new mood of the nation.

But it would be a mistake to suppose that the reparations requirements and the other material aspects of the treaty are the sole causes of Germany's discontent. In one of Hitler's headquarters in Berlin I overheard a furious discussion in which an unemployed bricklayer took the leading part. "Until we have wiped out this thing which weighs upon the German people," he said, "we can have no spiritual progress." He had been speaking of the treaty, and I thought he was referring particularly to the clauses on reparations; but he continued violently: "Until we have removed the blot of having to bear the sole responsibility for the war, we are a slave people. It must be removed immediately!" There was something sardonically irrelevant, albeit impressive, about a young man who, uncertain where his next meal was coming from, could work himself into a passion about a matter so intangible, so involved and impersonal, as the question of war guilt ...

★ More than 1 million German soldiers went missing or were captured as prisoners of war.

NATURALLY ENOUGH, there is a resurgence of bitter feeling against France. Ancient hatred grows inflamed. Since the war much has been done to promote a better understanding between France and Germany, but nothing can bring the two nations together so long as the Treaty of Versailles divides them. Thousands of young Germans look upon France as the guardian of the treaty, and hence as the fundamental cause of all their current difficulties ...

I heard the same resentment expressed even more dramatically by a young German salesman who shared a compartment with me on the Berlin-Cologne express ...

"I have often been in France," the young man said, "and I find that the French make one mistake about Germany. They mistake cries of pain for cries of revenge, and they forget that a man can strike out more wildly and blindly from pain than from any other cause." ■

PROBABILITIES OF WAR IN EUROPE

A decade after the war, dictators still ruled, and more men were under arms than ever before.

BY FRANCESCO NITTI

★★★★★

SEPTEMBER 1928



WHAT ARE the probabilities of war in Europe? First of all, we must take into account the complete failure of the last European war, materially and morally—especially morally. During that war, half of Europe claimed that it was fighting the other half in the name of liberty and democracy. We were told that it would be the last great conflict. We saw, to be sure, the disappearance of the empire of Austria-Hungary, followed by the formation of new states that were called nations, and the end of [Germany's] Hohenzollern monarchy—these conditions being highly favorable to the cause of peace.

But the failure was complete. Ten million men had been killed, more than 30 million had been wounded, and a considerable part of the wealth of Europe had been destroyed, with pitiable results. Before the war one

Austria-Hungary existed—that is to say, one nation composed of widely differing populations—where now four or five nations exist. Before the war there was just the Alsace-Lorraine question, only one piece of contested territory, whereas today there are at least nine or 10 such pieces of territory. There was only one great absolute monarchy, Russia, and two great authoritarian empires, Germany and Austria-Hungary. The war reduced all Continental monarchies almost to nothing and extended the republican form of government everywhere. Yet liberty has almost completely disappeared. There is red tyranny in Russia and white dictatorship of the most violent,

BERLINER VERLAG/ARCHIV/
PICTURE-ALLIANCE/DPA/AP



sanguinary description in Italy, Bulgaria, and Hungary. The dictatorships in Poland, Roumania, Lithuania, and other countries are less cruel, but they are all thoroughly bad, and there are a number of absurd, comic dictatorships such as those in Spain, Portugal, and elsewhere.

Not only has Europe been transformed from a creditor continent into a debtor continent, but she is no longer the center of world power. She is not only in debt—she is discredited. The Great War was chiefly a civil war among Europeans, and all the European countries—vanquished, victors, and neutrals—are weaker than they were before the war.

The least one might have hoped for after

★ After the treaty was signed at Versailles, in 1919, a man with a pickax destroys implements of war. The German army was limited to 100,000 volunteers, its navy was left with only six cruisers, and an Allied committee was created to supervise further disarmament.

the war was a diminution of armaments. As a result of the peace treaties, the four beaten countries—Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Bulgaria—have been compelled to destroy their fortifications, abolish armaments, and promise not to manufacture any military weapons. They are allowed only very limited equipment to maintain domestic order, and they are virtually stripped of all artillery and airplanes. Since so large a part of Europe has disarmed, one might at least expect a proportionate limitation of armaments all around.

But the exact contrary is the case. Europe now has more men under arms than she had before the war. 4

FROM POSTWAR TO PREWAR

Not long after the League of Nations failed, Europe and the United States again found themselves bracing for war.

BY FRANK H. SIMONDS

★★★★★

JANUARY 1934

Originally titled "Consequences: The Sequel to the League's Collapse"



THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS was established upon the assumption that the World War had brought about a complete change in the nationalistic spirit of peoples, that they were all equally ready to submit their respective aspirations and ambitions to international adjustment as the sole means of escaping the horrors of another universal catastrophe. From the very outset it was obvious that if all peoples were not similarly ready to accept what existed, then the League could only become a combination of the satisfied powers to restrain the discontented. And as such it was doomed to lack moral authority in the eyes of peoples thus forcibly restrained.

For 14 years the struggle was carried on at Geneva and elsewhere to

create an institution which would substitute international agreement for national rivalry. But during those 14 years, although an enormous mass of machinery was created and pacts without number were signed and ratified, not the smallest progress was made in establishing international authority in a world in which nationalistic sentiments and emotions were ever visibly on the gain. While Germany was weak and at first outside the League, the semblance of unity and progress there existed.

ASSOCIATED PRESS; KEYSTONE/CORBIS



When Germany entered the League, while her statesmen and people still believed the League was a way to the recovery of lost provinces and departed prestige, that illusion still prevailed.

But the success of the League of Nations always turned on the ultimate consent of the German people to surrender their hopes or of the neighbors of Germany to cede their territories. When the German people clearly and definitively declared for the restoration of their Polish [claims] and for union with Austria, while

★ Nazi enthusiasts rally in Berlin in 1934.



★ Adolf Hitler embodied Germans' resentment of their military defeat and of the harsh peace and the economic despair that followed.

their neighbors with equal clarity indicated their resolution to resist all such aspirations, by force if necessary, and to keep Germany disarmed while she nourished these ambitions, then the League was finished for precisely as long a period as these various peoples were in their present state of mind ...

For peace, like all else in this world, turns upon what men do and not upon what they say; upon what their purposes reveal and not what their phrases conceal. And nothing that Germany or her neighbors might sign would change the basic fact that their purposes are irreconcilable and their spirits intransigent ...

Europe is now going back to a system of balance of power with the purpose of restraining German ambitions, which menace various states not only individually but collectively, for the realization of the program of the Nazis would restore the [Central Europe] of the war period and give Hitler a power in Europe which Napoleon never enjoyed ...

With the rise of the National Socialists to power, Europe has passed from a postwar to a prewar period ...

The machinery of peace of the postwar era having collapsed, Europe has returned to its traditional methods, and the United States has now to retire to its similarly traditional isolation or to take sides in a new Continental war to preserve the balance of power. In a word, Europe is back in 1914, and America is facing the problems which confronted it two decades ago. ▀

HOW THE GREAT WAR SHAPED THE WORLD

The trauma of 1914–18 forever changed geopolitical boundaries, the science of killing, and the meaning of war.

BY JAY WINTER



THE FIRST WORLD WAR, George Kennan wrote decades after it ended, was the ur-catastrophe of the 20th century. The first conflict among industrialized global powers killed 10 million soldiers and mutilated over 21 million more.

Both the war and the peace that followed have marked our world in indelible ways. Especially Europe. The deaths of more than 110,000 Americans in uniform, half to the Spanish flu, were equivalent to just one-quarter of the death toll in the French army alone during the first four months of the war. Europe suffered a bloodbath such as the world had never seen. Two million German soldiers died, along with about 1 million British troops, counting those from the colonies and dominions. Proportionately higher losses were suffered in Russia, Serbia, and Ottoman Turkey, where a war of 20th-century firepower was fought under 19th-century sanitary conditions.

The contrast between American and European perceptions of the world order in the 20th and 21st centuries is incomprehensible without considering the catastrophe of 1914–18. Ever since, Europe has felt an underlying pessimism, a sense of danger and disorder that the United States hasn't shared. Americans have continued to believe that progress is built into history. Most Europeans, other than Marxists, dropped this notion once the Great War began.

EUROPEANS STILL CALL IT the Great War—not only because it was huge and momentous, but also because it changed the nature of war itself.

How so? First, by obliterating the distinction between civilian and military targets. After the early battles of 1914 resulted in a bloody stalemate, the conditions of civilian life behind the lines of occupying armies deteriorated. The Great War created internment camps all over Europe and beyond, to house enemy aliens in the wrong country at the wrong time. Still worse was the treatment of ethnic minorities suspected of disloyalty. After a series of defeats in 1915, the Russian army sent hundreds of thousands of Jews in Galicia from the battlefield to the interior, in case they might welcome German invaders. Armenians in Turkey fared still worse; more than 1 million died in the 20th century's first European genocide.

The bombardment of cities by artillery and



aircraft also brought the war to civilians. The German naval warfare against civilian shipping ultimately drew the United States into the war. The Allied blockade of European ports, which continued after the armistice in 1918, was a clear violation of international law.

And consider the changes in mood the war wrought in the United States. The 20 years before the war had seen waves of immigrants arrive from central and eastern Europe, inspiring the use of an epithet—"hyphenated Americans"—that intensified in the course of the war. The loyalties of German Americans, in particular, were thrown into question. The intolerance of wartime continued and grew more vitriolic once a prosperous peace returned. Government witch hunts conducted after the war, such as the so-called Palmer raids against suspected radicals and anarchists, many of them foreign-born, had their origins in the war itself.

★ The owners of a farm in northern France return to their land, devastated by the war, in 1919.

NINE MONTHS AFTER the war broke out, the fighting turned even uglier. In April 1915, modern chemical warfare was born on the battlefields of Belgium, and soon became a tolerated (although never legalized) form of weaponry used by all combatants on a frightening scale. In 1918, one of every four shells fired on the western front contained poison gas.

The clouds of chlorine, then phosgene, then mustard gas did not bring any tactical or strategic breakthrough. For one thing, their effectiveness depended on the wind's direction and the absence of precipitation. When it rained, as it did frequently in Flanders, the gas never rose above ankle level, meaning a soldier could survive if he stayed on his feet. But gas warfare changed the rules of engagement. Gas masks were rudimentary, and left men (and animals) in no-man's-land without adequate protection. Gas didn't change the balance of power, but it did change the balance of horror that soldiers faced on the battlefield.

Later, poison gas was used outside Europe—allegedly in Iraq as early as the 1920s, then in Manchuria and Ethiopia in the 1930s. Fear of retaliation, stemming from military leaders' firsthand experience of gas as soldiers themselves during the Great War, apparently deterred its use against soldiers in World War II, although the Nazis employed Zyklon B, previously known as a powerful pesticide, in concentration camps.

Might gas warfare have come into widespread use without the Great War? Perhaps, but the huge investment in weapons of mass destruction in 1914–18 left a precedent that could not be eradicated. The use of poison gas is with us still, notably in Syria.

THE PEACE TREATIES signed at the end of the war left a damaged world with an impossible legacy: they handed over control of German colonies in Africa and the Pacific to the victorious powers and inspired hope around the world that Woodrow Wilson's notion of self-determination for subject peoples would lead to the end of empires. Not quite. Self-determination was the property of the former nations, such as Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Serbia—all predominantly Caucasian—embedded in the German, Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman Turkish, and Russian

empires. Populations of color would have to wait until, under the mandate of the imperial powers, they reached the “maturity” needed for self-government. When would that be? Nobody could say.

Besides, no matter what was decided during the postwar peace conference at Versailles, the imperial powers had already made their own plans for the Middle East. In 1915, the British high commissioner in Egypt promised the keeper of the holy sites in Mecca independence for Arabs in return for their participation in fighting the Ottoman empire. Two years later, Britain’s Balfour Declaration promised Zionists the opposite: a Jewish homeland in Palestine. And these incompatible promises were complicated even more by the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement in 1916, which divided the post-Ottoman Middle East between French and British spheres of influence and drew arbitrary borders—in Iraq, for instance—that have caused instability and conflict ever since.

As a result, violence exploded outside of Europe in 1919–21, when people who had served the Allied cause militarily and otherwise discovered that their recompense would be pious words and nothing more. This happened first in Egypt, then India, then Korea, then China. The wartime collapse of the Ottoman empire brought down its sultan, the all-powerful caliph, and created a crisis in Islam, which lost its spiritual center; Muslim-dominated countries remained colonies ruled (often poorly) by imperial powers under the aegis of the League of Nations. The Muslim Brotherhood, founded in Egypt in 1928 to counter Western exploitation of the Islamic world, was the precursor to al-Qaeda.

The Great War cast its geopolitical shadow across the Far East as well. The extent to which the war fueled the continuing hostility between China and Japan is rarely recognized. The problem arose from the Treaty of Versailles. Both nations, traditionally rivals, were among the victorious delegations. China, however, was the weaker power, plagued by internal strife after its 1911 revolution. Japan had helped the Allies during the war, by convoying Australia’s and New Zealand’s troops across the Indian Ocean and by sending naval cruisers to protect the west coast of Canada. At Versailles, Japan tried to exploit

its newly acquired leverage, proposing that the charter of the League of Nations include a commitment to racial equality. President Wilson, as a southern-born politician, knew that any such language would ensure the treaty’s defeat in the U.S. Senate. To prevent the Japanese from walking out of the peace negotiations once their request was turned down, the leaders of Britain, France, and the United States backed Japan’s proposal to grant it temporary control—until 1922, as it turned out—of the Chinese province of Shandong, south of Beijing, which the Germans had controlled during the war.

So much for the principle of self-determination. When push came to shove, Wilson chose to reward Japanese naval power and ignore political justice. When Wellington Koo, a Chinese delegate in Paris, sent home the decision on Shandong, students in Beijing responded with shock and outrage, quickly calling for a mass demonstration at Tiananmen Gate to protest the treaty. At a rally the next day, they formed a new organization called the May Fourth Movement, out of which emerged China’s Communist Party. Ponder this: Woodrow Wilson was its godfather.

Next year, China will host the 22nd Congress of the International Committee of Historical Sciences. Where? In the city of Jinan, the provincial capital of Shandong, a choice likely intended to remind historians that both Japan and the West have a history of humiliating China. Those days are over, but the memories linger.

BEYOND THE ADVANCES in the science of murder and the geopolitical reworkings, the Great War created a deep shift in the public attitude toward war itself. The Great War discredited the concept of glory, a word that many Europeans simply could not swallow. The British poet Wilfred Owen, killed late in the war, wrote that anyone who witnessed a soldier suffocating slowly from poison gas would never repeat “to children ardent for some desperate glory / the old Lie” that it was noble to die for one’s country.

The “old Lie” had been told time and again in the popular press and public rhetoric. The use of literature and painting in the service of war was mocked mercilessly in the nonsense verse of the Dada movement and in the nightmare paintings of the surrealists. To clean away



THE WAR OBLITERATED THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN CIVILIAN AND MILITARY TARGETS.



the damage that propaganda had done to the literary arts—and indeed to language itself—radical steps were necessary. No longer could dismembered or mangled corpses be sanitized as “the fallen,” nor the butchery of the trenches portrayed as heroic. Artists throughout Europe denounced the obscenities of a war fought for what the poet Ezra Pound called a “botched civilization.” The millions of men slaughtered deserved more than elevated prose; they deserved the unadulterated truth.

At the same time, the arts saw a counter-revolution, a movement back in time that highlighted the power of classical, religious, and romantic forms to memorialize the dead. Modernism excited, shocked, and stimulated, but it did not help people mourn. For that, a bereaved generation turned to the classical art of Edwin Lutyens’s cenotaph in London, the religious art of Rouault, and the sculptures and lithographs of mothers mourning their dead sons created by the German artist Käthe Kollwitz, whose own son had been killed in Belgium in 1914.

After the war, a generation of soldiers wrote their memoirs, which sold by the millions. The story they told was binary—the jarring contrast between innocence and experience, between hope and disillusionment. It depicted the unimaginable awfulness of the war, during which the millions of men in the trenches entered a world as inhospitable and desolate as the dark side of the moon. There they encountered artillery fire—the great killer of the Great War—on a scale the world had never seen before.

As a consequence, 5 million of the men who died in the war have no known graves. The stale-mated war on the western front meant that unceasing bombardments pulverized the corpses buried in makeshift cemeteries. On the eastern front, the war was so fluid and covered such distances that finding bodies, let alone identifying and burying them, wasn’t possible. In effect, war had been transformed from a killing machine into a vanishing act.

For fully half the men who were killed in the war, nothing was left but their names. That, and the scarier, shakier, more intolerant world that the war to end all wars created. **A**

Jay Winter is a professor of history at Yale and the author of several books about World War I.

THE LINES ACROSS THE MIDDLE EAST

The boundaries that the Allies’ mapmakers drew during the war created conflicts that persist a century later.

BY CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

★★★★★

MARCH 2003 and MARCH 2011

*Originally titled “The Perils of Partition”
and “From Berlin to bin Laden”*

IF ASKED TO discuss some of the events of that period that shaped our world and the world of Osama [bin Laden], many educated people could cite T. E. Lawrence’s “Arab Revolt,” the secret Anglo-French Sykes-Picot Agreement portioning out the postwar Middle East, and the [1917] Balfour Declaration, which prefigured the coming of the Jewish state ... [The war brought] the collapse of the Islamic caliphate—bin Laden’s most enduring cause of rage—and ... the extermination of the Armenians ...

Osama bin Laden refuses even to call Saudi Arabia and Iraq by their political names, regarding the “Land of the Two Holy Mosques” and the “Land of the Two Rivers” only as sacred constituents of a future restored and enlarged caliphate ...

In the modern world the “fault lines” and “flash points” of journalistic shorthand are astonishingly often the consequence of frontiers created ad hoc by British imperialism ...

Most of the lines or gashes would not have been there if the map hadn’t been colored red in the first place ... Sir Mark Sykes (with his French counterpart, Georges Picot) in 1916 concocted an apportionment of the Middle East



★ The demise of the Muslim caliphate in the wake of World War I fueled Osama bin Laden’s rage at the modern world.

that would separate Lebanon from Syria and Palestine from Jordan. Sir Percy Cox in 1922 fatefully determined that a portion of what had hitherto been notionally Iraqi territory would henceforth be known as Kuwait. The English half-spy and half-archaeologist Gertrude Bell in her letters described walking through the desert sands after World War I, tracing the new boundary of Iraq and Saudi Arabia with her walking stick. The congested, hypertense crossing point of the River Jordan, between Jordan “proper” and the Israeli-held West Bank, is to this day known as the Allenby Bridge, after T. E. Lawrence’s commander. **A**

LIFE AFTER DEATH

Comrades remain comrades, said an American pilot, even after they fall.

BY CHARLES BERNARD NORDHOFF

★★★★★

SEPTEMBER 1918

Originally titled "Aerial Tactics"



IN PEACETIME, death seems a vitally important thing, to be spoken of with awe and to be dreaded, perhaps as the end of the game, if you chance to be a materialist.

All that is changed now. You go to Paris on leave, you spend two or three days delightfully with Bill or Jim or Harry, a very dear friend, also in on leave from his battery, regiment, or squadron. A week later someone runs up to you with a long face. "Bill got crowned on Thursday" he says; "joined a [German] patrol by mistake and brought down before he saw the crosses. Poor old cuss." You sigh, thinking of the pleasant hours you have passed with Bill—your long talks together, his curious and interesting kinks of outlook, the things which make personality, make one human being different from another. Somehow

your thoughts don't dwell on his death as they would in peacetime—a week or a month later your mind has not settled into taking for granted his nonexistence. Next time you visit Paris, you hasten to his former haunts—half expecting to find him absorbing a book and expounding his peculiar philosophy.

Is there a life after death? Of course there is—you smile a little to yourself to think you could ever have believed otherwise. This, I am confident, is common experience nowadays. The belief that individuality ceases, that death is anything but a quick and not very alarming change, is too absurd to hold water. It is a comforting thought and gives men strength to perform duties and bear losses which in ordinary times would come hard. **A**

★ A century later, along the western front, a graveside memorial

FOR THE FALLEN

This poem, first published in 1914 by *The Times* of London and later by *The Atlantic*, is still read at remembrance services in Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

BY LAURENCE BINYON

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

M A R C H 1 9 1 7

With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,
England mourns for her dead across the sea.
Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit,
Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill: Death august and royal
Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres.
There is music in the midst of desolation
And a glory that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs to the battle, they were young,
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted,
They fell with their faces to the foe.

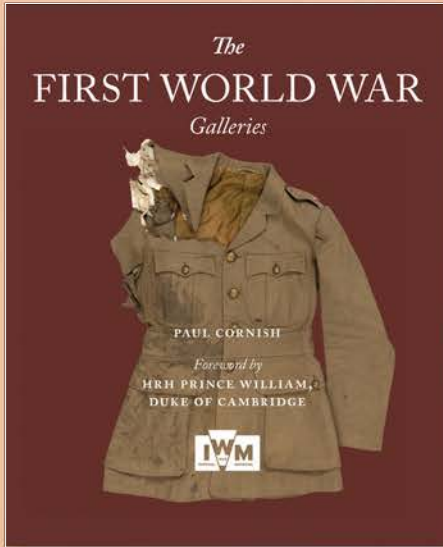
They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

They mingle not with their laughing comrades again;
They sit no more at familiar tables of home;
They have no lot in our labor of the daytime;
They sleep beyond England's foam.

But where our desires are and our hopes profound,
Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,
To the innermost heart of their own land they are known
As the stars are known to the Night;

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain,
As the stars that are starry in the time of our darkness,
To the end, to the end, they remain.

WORLD WAR I



THE FIRST WORLD WAR GALLERIES

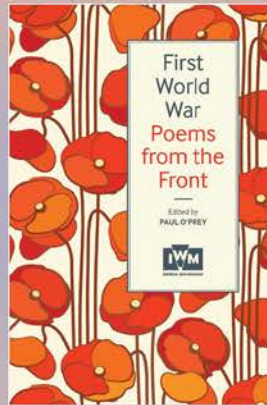
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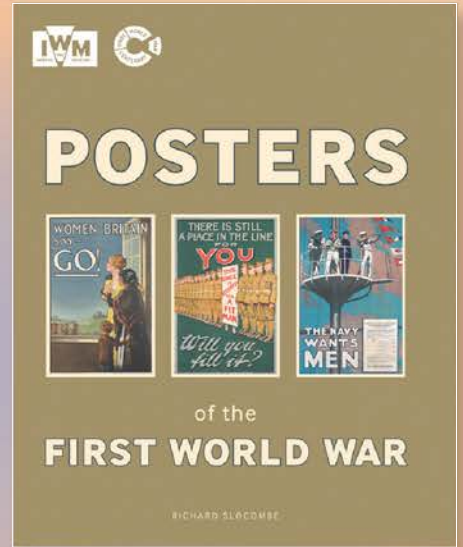


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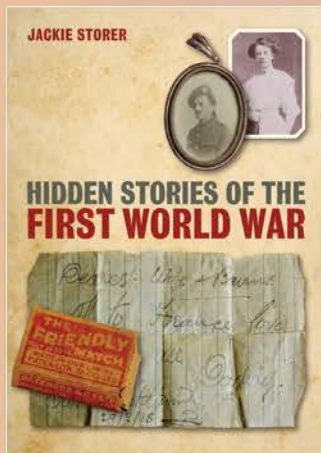


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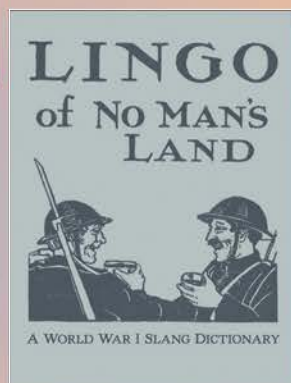
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A World War I Slang Dictionary

LORENZO N. SMITH

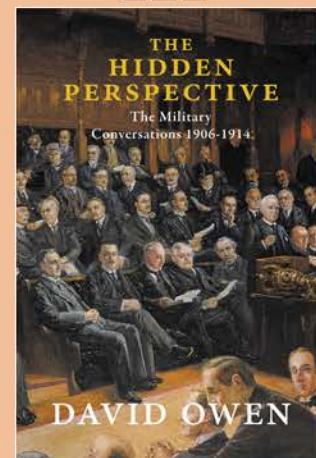
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