

## STOP THE WAR!

### AN APPEAL TO NEUTRAL NATIONS,

It has come as a painful surprise to many people that a war waged on such a large scale as the present one, is possible in this enlightened twentieth century. It was hoped that with the invention of so many terrible engines of destruction there had come also a desire for international amity that would successfully prevent their use.

It is not necessary to describe any of the awful scenes that have been and are being enacted : the heart and conscience of mankind has become developed so that even those who only hear casual details of the war are shocked and scandalised. John Bright's description of war is only too true in the present case : "In a short sentence, it may be summed up to be the combination and concentration of all the horrors, atrocities, crimes, and sufferings of which human nature on this globe is capable".

While the appeal from the humanitarian standpoint is the strongest, possibly this may not be deemed to afford sufficient justification for interfering. But there are also economic and international aspects of the situation which in themselves quite sufficiently prevent the wish to intervene from being denounced as meddling interference. No war of any magnitude can be waged now without it having a detrimental effect on the commerce of the whole world; and the present colossal struggle has caused and is causing serious dislocations of trade, with consequent widespread financial loss among nations in no way connected with the war. These are not altogether sordid considerations, for they result in much poverty and distress, which join in the humanitarian appeal.

What can be done? The governments of neutral nations can affirm that the present war is a disgrace to civilization, a negation of Christianity; that it is upsetting trade and business arrangements throughout the world to the extent of being a general nuisance; that to attempt to settle disputes by force is absurd when other means are possible. They can demand that the whole entanglement be submitted to the Hague Tribunal. If the demand be refused by all the belligerent nations, the only thing to do would be to wait a few months and then repeat the demand. But it is most unlikely that all the belligerent nations would return an unfavorable

answer; several courses of action would then be possible. Pressure could be brought upon the dissenting nations: the responsibility for all the barbarisms of the battlefield, and for the general dislocation of trade, could be brought home to them. If this were insufficient, a distinction could be made in the neutrality shown: that towards the assenting nations could become distinctly benevolent, while towards the dissenting nations it could become rigorous and peremptory. Continued obstinacy could be met by the withdrawal of friendly relations, an "interdict", practically a boycott; all assistance being prohibited, whether in finance, or trade, or harborage. This would almost certainly be sufficient. If not, however, it might even be that force would be resorted to, to compel the recalcitrant nation or nations to fall into line, and have the matter decided in a civilized manner. Although this would be something new in the history of the world, it is only what many people regard as a certain step in the evolution of civilization, sooner or later — for war to stop by several nations binding themselves together to prevent war.

It must be clearly understood that what is proposed here is quite different from an offer of mediation. The negotiations connected with mediation are mostly based on the actualities of "might" rather than any abstractions of "right" — the questions that led to war breaking out are but little touched on: how have the ~~facts~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~war~~ ~~been~~ ~~decided~~? which side has the prospect of continuing the war with success? — these are the factors that count in mediation. In the intervention suggested in this appeal, however, "might" would be ignored, and only questions of "right" considered.

The magnitude of this terrible war makes the individual seem insignificant, and the recipient of this appeal may feel that his "sphere of influence" is too limited for his efforts to be of any value. But our obligation and responsibility is to do what we can. Those who sympathise with this appeal are requested to make it their own by remodelling and improving it; and to do their utmost to propagate a "Stop the War" agitation. An appeal inserted in newspapers will reach a larger number than any other way.

Neutral nations *can* stop the war if they so *will*, and negotiations to this end should be started at once, and conducted with all possible speed.

Chungking, West China  
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G. W. S.

