

THE ONLY POSSIBLE PEACE

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PREFACE

It is of the utmost importance that America should know the kind of peace it wants. For America has lost her isolation. She has become a world-power. Our economic relations are as wide as the world. The peace which follows will determine our foreign policy. It will make for permanent peace or it may lay the mines of future wars.

Previous peace settlements have been interim arrangements negotiated by the ruling classes. They have been truce agreements. War has, in fact, been continuous. At times it was a war of diplomacy. At intervals it became armed conflict. But in some form or other Europe has been at war for the last fifty years. The conflict was not always between the same Powers. Alliances shifted. The points in dispute were often far apart. But the controversy revolved about the same kind of imperialistic interests; the possession of territories, strategic points and waterways, trade routes and concessions belonging to other

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people. As a result of this struggle almost all of Asia, the whole of Africa, the entire Mediterranean basin, and the islands of the seas, with a combined population of half a billion people have been made subject to the greater Powers.

That is why Europe could not make a peace that was permanent. The subject world would not remain subject, and the division would not remain satisfactory to the warring Powers. Such peace as the world enjoyed was merely a breathing-space in which to prepare for the next war. *Imperialism is war smouldering.*

This book is a study of imperialism. It is admittedly fragmentary. For the history of imperialism is the history of the diplomacy and foreign relations of Europe, as well as of the conquest and exploitation of a great part of the world. It is also a study of the economic forces responsible for imperialism; of the interests that mined the world with explosives of the most dangerous kind.

The war has created conditions in America that are making us imperialistic. Our foreign commerce has shot up to \$9,000,000,000 a year. We are building a great merchant marine. We have become a creditor nation.

We already have billions in foreign investments. We are creating the most powerful navy in the world. Dollar diplomacy is being boldly demanded; and dollar diplomacy leads to economic imperialism. Economic imperialism is the forerunner of force, of conquest, of wars. That has been the sequence of imperialism in all of the greater Powers.

That is why the kind of peace is so important to America. For the time may come when our new-born economic internationalism may challenge the monopoly of the earth, the closed doors, the spheres of influence, the trade preferences enjoyed by the European Powers. An imperialistic peace with the world distributed as in the past may close a great part of the world to our trade. Our new-born commerce and our great merchant marine may be constricted. Our expanded industry may become explosive. Unemployed men are a danger to the existing social order. They, too, may be receptive to imperialism, to a demand that no nation and no settlement shall stand in the way of their employment. That is the psychology of a state saturated with surplus wealth seeking an outlet.

We cannot assume that America is immune

from the forces that have driven Europe into the struggle for territories, privileges, and monopolies. Our activities in Mexico do not justify any such confidence in ourselves; nor do the connection of our financiers with the Chinese six-Power loan and their pressure for diplomatic support for penetration into China and Central America.

America cannot accept a short-sighted imperialistic peace that redivides the world between the European Powers. Should we accept such a peace the time may come when the imperialistic classes in America will say: "We, too, demand a share. We, too, insist that we shall participate in the monopolies, privileges, and opportunities of exploitation now exclusively enjoyed by other Powers." Or they may demand the open door, a fair field, and no favor. But the demand will come too late, should America yield its sanction to an imperialistic peace.

Imperialism is at war with democracy. Imperialism will mean a great navy, diplomatic intervention, possibly force, and a continuation of armed conflict all over the world. That has been the history of the past fifty years since

surplus wealth emerged from the great Powers and began the exploitation of the earth. To-day America is the only great Power with money to loan. We are possessed of colossal surplus wealth. Our iron, steel, copper, munition-making and banking institutions are merged into what is in effect a great syndicate, as they are in the imperialistic nations of Europe. They have not hesitated to demand recognition and guarantees for their war-made trade and profits. They have urged dollar diplomacy and a strong foreign policy upon us. They frankly avow imperialism. But imperialism means conflict. It means a standing army, a great navy and their possible use as a threat to the unprotected world.

This book is a plea for freedom, for freedom in all of the relations of states. Freedom is the alternative to imperialism, to exclusive possessions, to the closed door, to preferential tariffs and the control of trade routes or strategic places on the earth's surface. It is an attempt to anticipate and avoid war rather than to provide means for the arbitration of disputes after they have arisen. And in this is to be found the distinction between those

who would provide for a league of nations to adjust the controversies of nations and those who would remove the cause of such controversies, and by so doing prevent them from arising. A redivided world with an international police force to protect a division of the spoils is an advance on war but it is not a means of avoiding armament, militarism, fear, and the forces that make for war.

Under modern industrial conditions it is conflicts springing from economic forces that are mainly responsible for war, forces that seek the ownership or control of other peoples' lands, territories, trade, resources, or the land and waterways which control such economic opportunities. The wars of the past were largely dynastic. Those of the future will be economic. And economic wars can only be avoided by freedom, freedom in all of the relations of life. This is the big lesson of the French Revolution, of the liberal legislation that is identified with the names of Cobden and Bright, of the relations of the United States and Canada, of the smaller states of Europe. It is the lesson of nature as well.

The peace ideals of America, as formulated

by President Wilson and supported by the people, are those of freedom, of liberty, of equality of opportunity. They are ideals of autonomy to small nations and subject peoples. They are a challenge to the political philosophy which has guided the ruling classes of Europe for centuries. These ideals, and only these, offer a foundation on which to erect a durable peace.

Imperialism is at war with the ideals and traditions of America. It is at war with the freedom of the world and of civilization as well.

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