
Open Letter to President Wilson.

by Kate Richards O'Hare

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Dear Sir,

Europe today is one vast charnel house, her highways are shambles and her farms are graveyards. The fields have been trampled into quagmires soaked with human blood and polluted with rotting human flesh. Practically all productive labor has for months been suspended, factories, mills and mines are closed, while the workingmen fight and die and rot in the trenches. The European supply of food, clothing and ammunition must be nearly exhausted, yet in Europe, clean of war supplies, war still rages, simply because the United States furnishes the food, clothing, horses, automobiles, and ammunition that enable the warring nations to continue the killing.

With millions of hungry Americans clamoring for bread, wheat is higher than since the Civil War, and the United States is being drained of breadstuffs. Actual bread famine and riots threaten the country unless the insane drainage of the country of breadstuffs to Europe is summarily stopped. The wheat of the nation has passed out of the hands of the farmers and into the hands of speculators, an orgy of wild speculation is taking place, and America is being starved while the hellish war in Europe is fed for the sole profit of a few speculators and transportation magnates.

The farms of the Middle West are being cleared of horseflesh necessary for the proper tillage of soil, because three years of drought, coupled with the ruinous rates of interest charged by the usurers, has compelled the farmers not only to turn their wheat and cotton crops over to the speculators, but to strip the farms of horseflesh in order to live.

With millions of Americans shivering, unclad

and unshod, the stored up labor of cotton farmers, fabric weavers, and shoemakers are being hurried across the water to clothe hostile armies while they kill.

Iron mills are busy turning out shrapnel, factories are beating plows into bayonets and reapers into rifles.

Shrapnel and dum-dum bullets that strew all Europe with dead men are the creation of the workers of the United States, and the inventive faculties of American people have been turned from the works of peace to the creation of the machines for murder.

Death and destruction, misery and suffering, despair and anguish are hurrying by boatloads from the shores of "Christian" America to add to the horrors of war-rent Europe.

Hypocritically, we rant of "militarism," piously we berate "Kaiser, King, and Tsar," blatantly we prate of "neutrality," and every one of us know we are "liars and hypocrites and the truth is not in us."

"Militarism," yes! But what is militarism but greed for profits?

Kaiser, King, and Tsar, certainly! They may have started the war, but we can stop it.

Neutrality, how Christ-like!

The neutrality of HELL, the Money Changer's pact with the War Demon, the Profit Monger's bargain with DEATH, Peace with DAMNATION, that the profits of a few capitalists may be enhanced!

The United States does not even try to hide its infamy behind a subterfuge. No patriotic passions sway us, no insanity blinds our reason, we are not honest enough to espouse the cause of the nation we think most justified. Germany or England, France or Russia, the bloodstained gold of any nation looks good to us. We will furnish the machines of Murder to ANY

nation to kill the people of ANY nation for our “pieces of silver.” The chant of American capitalism is “TO HELL WITH MANKIND, TO HELL WITH HUMANITY, TO HELL WITH CIVILIZATION, WE WANT GOLD.”

Three months ago, Mr. President, the people of this nation, soul sick with the horror of it all, cried to you to use your power to bring peace. Never had a man such an opportunity, never has it been within the power of any human being to rise to such sublime heights of human service. A world wallows in blood, nations are being laid waste, and the fruits of thousands of years of human effort are being crushed into dust and burned into ashes. Like some mighty god, Woodrow Wilson has the power to stretch forth his hand and cry “PEACE, BE STILL,” and peace would have come to a war-cursed earth.

In that hour of sublime opportunity, opportunity that in all the history of the world has never come to any man but you, Mr. Wilson, how did you meet it?

You called a prayer meeting.

You may be honest, Mr. President. I am not your judge, but to me it seems that your day of prayer was blasphemy, a pious cloak behind which you tried to screen your service to the profit mongers who demand their pound of flesh all wet with human blood.

Was it necessary, Mr. President, for you to shift your responsibility onto God's shoulders? Would it not have been more manly and Christ-like for you to have met it yourself?

The manly, Christian, statesmanlike thing would have been for you to have called the Congress of the United States into session and said, “GO TO YOUR LEGISLATIVE HALLS, FRAME THERE A LAW THAT NOT ONE POUND OF FOOD, NOT ONE YARD OF CLOTH, NOT ONE PIECE OF

AMMUNITION SHALL BE EXPORTED TO ANY EUROPEAN COUNTRY UNTIL PEACE IS DECLARED.” Had you displayed this Christian, statesmanlike courage, it might have been in order to have asked God to strengthen you in your demand, but I for one cannot think that your prayers were heard while you cringed to the command of the profit mongers who ghoulishly reap their harvest of wealth from the blood-soaked, carcass-strewn fields of Europe.

Do you never think, Mr. President, of how the children of the future will blush for shame at the memory of Woodrow Wilson calling a prayer meeting, as they exult with pride at the memory of Abraham Lincoln signing the Emancipation Proclamation? Woodrow Wilson had a world to serve and save, Abraham Lincoln only a handful of black slaves to free from chattel slavery, but Lincoln rose to his opportunity. What did you?

The womanhood of all Europe is calling to us, the womanhood of America, to save them from increasing horrors. The womanhood of America makes this demand on you, President Wilson, and the members of Congress of the United States — THAT THE EXPORTATION OF MUNITIONS OF WAR FROM THE UNITED STATES TO EUROPE, SHALL CEASE.

THE MANIFESTO OF THE UNITED WOMANHOOD OF THE UNITED STATES IS THAT PEACE SHALL BE THE PRICE THAT KINGS AND EMPERORS SHALL PAY FOR OUR FOOD AND CLOTHING, AND THAT NO SONS OF OURS SHALL DAMN THEIR SOULS MAKING MUNITIONS OF WAR.

Sincerely yours,

Kate Richards O'Hare.

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