

# Why America Is Fighting

By JOSEPH W. FOLK, Former Governor of Missouri, Now Chief Counsel of the Interstate Commerce Commission

We are at war with Germany because there is an irreconcilable conflict between the ideals of this republic and the dominating purposes of the German autocracy. If our ideals do not prevail, then the German autocracy will prevail over us. . . . We are fighting Germany because the success of Germany would mean the end of freedom here and everywhere. America cannot remain free if kaiserism wins.—Joseph W. Folk.

**A** GOOD American can question the justice of our entering the war with Germany, unless he be ignorant of why we did so. We have viewed for years the preparations for war being made by Germany, little dreaming that they might concern us, though occasionally there was apprehension as to the ambition of the German rulers to be to the modern world what the Roman rulers were to the world of their time. When the day came for which Germany had been so long preparing she suddenly hurled her tremendous military forces at the adjoining nations. Americans read with amazement of the ruthless violation of the rights of neutrals and the reckless disregard of treaty obligations on the part of Germany, but the war in its beginning seemed remote from our affairs and not necessarily to affect American rights. There were advocates of each of the contending nations among us, and a strict neutrality was maintained. The cruel treatment of the conquered and enslaved Belgians excited our sympathy and aroused our resentment, but there was no certainty then that these acts had the approval of the German rulers, so the American people hoped against hope that America might not become involved.

As events followed events and the frightfulness of the German military policy became more and more evident those among us who sympathized with the German cause were little by little alienated. There was still an undercurrent of hope that we might not be drawn into the terrible conflict. President Wilson endeavored in every way possible, consistent with the national honor and dignity, to avert the disaster of war. On May 27, 1916, he urged the warring nations to state their peace terms, and pledged that the United States would become a partner in any scheme of lasting peace. The answer of Germany was evasive and unsatisfactory. Then came the sinking of the Lusitania and the wanton murder by drowning of hundreds of noncombatant American men and helpless women and children. This act was so conscienceless and inhuman, so contrary to all the rules of civilized warfare, that a shudder of horror ran throughout the American republic, and the few remaining sympathizers with the German cause saw they could no longer continue their friendship for any nation guilty of such deliberate acts of brutality and savagery.

### President Was Patient.

The demand came from end to end of the nation to declare war against this monster which was running amuck among the nations. The president, however, was patient. He hesitated to lead the nation into the awful vortex of war and endeavored to save the national honor without that dire necessity. He wrote a note of protest to the German rulers. They promised they would sink no more merchant ships without warning, and for a time it was thought that the crisis might pass, but it was only a hope to those who realized the German purpose of world domination. The president calmly waited, ignoring the malignant criticism and bitter attacks of some of those who insisted that we could no longer honorably remain out of the conflict.

As late as January 22, 1917, the president addressed the senate, urging a plan of lasting peace among the nations through international arrangement. A few days thereafter it became known that on January 16, 1917, the German rulers had sent a secret note to Mexico and Japan, attempting to unite them in a war against the United States, and promising to give Mexico in turn a part of the United States. Then Germany notified our government that it would no longer keep its promise not to sink merchant ships without warning. By plain implication it admitted that it had given this promise merely to gain time for preparation for a warfare of hideous frightfulness. What was to be done? Every effort of diplomacy had been exhausted. American ships were being sunk without warning, the American flag was being insulted and fired upon, American men and women were being butchered, the mangled fist of Germany's war lord was being shaken at American institutions. German spies infested our country, endeavoring to incite discontent, strikes, and even civil war. It was plain that the German autocracy regarded this republic with contempt, and its entrance or non-entrance into the war as a matter of indifference. National honor and national safety demanded that something should be done. Submission to such wrongs would have been unpardonable national cowardice. Only one thing could be done, all other means having been exhausted. The American people then realized that, if the German autocracy should overcome the European allies, our turn would be next. We had to fight to save our honor, to save our national existence, and to save democracy throughout the world,

for democracy and autocracy cannot exist side by side. A state of war was recognized by congress, and thus reluctantly we were brought into the world conflict, after the president had done everything that could fairly be done to avoid the catastrophe. Now that we are in the war we see, with clearer vision, that it was inevitable that we should go in, for it is our war as much as the war of England and France. It is a war to preserve our rights and our liberties as much as theirs.

### Fight is Universal.

It is now evident to all thinking Americans that Germany must be conquered or else Germany will conquer us along with the rest of the world. There have been many fights for freedom since the beginning of history, but they were merely local, while this is universal. There have been many wars for the liberty of a race, while this war is for the liberty of all mankind. Other wars have been waged to free one people, while this war is not only to keep ourselves free but to make free humanity of every race and of every creed. The outcome will determine whether the world will be all democratic or all autocratic, whether government of the people and by the people shall obtain throughout the earth or shall perish everywhere. We are at war with Germany because there is an irreconcilable conflict between the ideals of this republic and the dominating purposes of the German autocracy. If our ideals do not prevail, then the German autocracy will prevail over us. We are fighting Germany because of outraged Belgium, invaded and enslaved; because of France, unjustly and barbarously assailed and attacked; because of Russia, just emerging into the light of democracy and just freed from the shackles of tyranny; because of England, from whence came our laws and civilization, and whose early entry into the conflict prevented that victory for



Joseph W. Folk.

German arms which would otherwise have been certain, thus saving us from the terrors of German militarism. We are fighting Germany because the success of Germany would mean the end of freedom here and everywhere. America cannot remain free if kaiserism wins. If Germany should triumph over our European allies, we would have to battle single handed with a victorious Teuton autocracy, determined to conquer and subjugate the world.

For 40 years Germany has been building up a military machine, the central thought of which has been world domination, and this terrible world calamity of blood and misery is the result of this aim of the German autocracy.

### Outlaw Among Nations.

Germany's method of warfare, in the sinking of merchant ships without warning, in the drowning of helpless women and children, in bombarding undefended cities, in lurking like assassins beneath the waters and in the air, ready to strike and murder the unarmed, the unsuspecting, and the helpless, has evidenced a savagery and brutality such as the world has never known before. Humanity will find it difficult to forgive and history impossible to forget. Germany is the outlaw among the nations, trampling under foot every obligation of international law, threatening every ideal dear to the hearts of freemen; and the world will not be a safe place for liberty until the German autocracy is overthrown and crushed forever.

We would have lost the respect of mankind and our own self-respect had we failed to take up the gauntlet so insolently thrown in our face by the German rulers. We are fighting for our own freedom and for the freedom of all men during all the years to come. It takes fighting to make the people free and more fighting to keep the people free. We want no conquered territory, we desire no indemnity. The mission of America in this

war is to free mankind by enthroning justice and brotherhood in the hearts of men everywhere. We are fighting Germany in order to secure the permanent peace of the world, which is impossible as long as the German military system is allowed to exist, for there can be no enduring peace until further criminal aggressions against the other nations by the German autocracy have been rendered impossible. The same reason which impelled us to enter the war must force us to keep up the war until its objects have been accomplished, for an inconclusive peace now would merely mean a death struggle later on between American ideals and an unconquered German autocracy.

### No Compromise Possible.

A truce now would be compromise, and there can be no compromise between liberty and tyranny. A truce now would be surrender, and surrender would be defeat. James Russell Lowell wrote these words in the long ago, and they come to us in the present crisis with a new and deeper meaning:

Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide  
In the strife of truth with falsehood, for the good or evil side,  
Hast thou chosen, O my people, in whose party thou shalt stand,  
Ere the doom from its worn sandals shakes the dust against our land?  
Careless seems the great avenger, history's pages but record  
One death struggle in the darkness 'twixt old system and the word,  
Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne,  
Yet that scaffold swings the future, and behind the dim unknown  
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own,  
List the ominous stern whisper from the Delphic cave within,  
"They enslave their children's children who make compromise with sin."

Before we entered the war Americans had a right to be neutral as between other nations. Now that we are in, no American can be neutral. The American who is neutral now is guilty of treason to the Republic. The American who is not for his country in this war must be counted as against his country. Whatever our internal differences may have been, in such a time as this we must be one people, loyal to a common country and devoted to a common flag.

### Must Support Armies.

Millions of America's sons have answered to the nation's call. They should have the full support of heart and soul and spirit of all American men and women, for, in the name of America and in behalf of America, they are going forth to battle in order that American honor may be sustained, American freedom preserved, to make the world safe for the common man, and to make international justice supreme. The withholding of such support by any individual or organization is disloyalty to the government and treason to the flag.

This is the supreme hour in the life of this republic and the world. A new economic and social order is emerging in every land and a new internationalism is being produced by the blood and suffering of mankind. The ending of the great war, in the only way that it can rightly end, will mark the beginning of a new epoch of world cooperation for the advancement of the common good. The public will no longer be the people of one section or of one nation, but all mankind and the principles of humanity will then be applied between nations as they have long been applied between individuals. And why not? The inventions of the past few years that have annihilated time and space and brought distant parts of the earth in touch with each other have created new obligations in the relations of the nations. The civilized countries are nearer together in point of time and communication than were the states of this Union a century ago. No nation can live to itself and for itself alone. The time of the hermit nation is past.

### Rule of Right May Come.

Men now living may see the day when the world will be ruled by right instead of might, by justice instead of selfishness. Men now living may see the time when the ideal of public right will be supreme throughout the world. Out of the black clouds of war that now envelop the earth may come a greater realization of the necessity for an international court of arbitration, with power to enforce its decrees. Then will dawn that day foretold of old, following the last great battle of the world, when there will be peace on earth and good will in the hearts of the children of men. The mission of America is to educate the world to this desired consummation. To fulfill this mission there must be loyalty and devotion to the ideals of America among the people of America.

The democracy that we are fighting for is the religion of brotherhood among men; the religion that says, "Thou shalt not lie; thou shalt not steal;" the religion that demands the application of the Golden Rule in public and private life everywhere; the religion that does not array class against class but preserves the rights of all by causing each to respect the rights of the other; that equalizes conditions, not by dragging down those who are up but by lifting up those who are down; that does not attack wealth honestly acquired, but wages unending war against conditions that create poverty; that protects property rights, but recognizes the fact that property rights should never be inconsistent with human rights; that seeks more government by the people; that gives to each man an equal opportunity to live and to labor upon the earth that God has given to all, and to enjoy untrammelled and unrestricted the gains of honest toil; the religion that means more of service and less of selfishness.

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"So do I. It puts one in such a trying position."  
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Examine carefully every bottle of CASTORIA, that famous old remedy for infants and children, and see that it bears the *Signature of J. C. Fletcher* In Use for Over 30 Years. Children Cry for Fletcher's Castoria.  
There is a market in India for cotton belling.  
Fairview, Ky., monument to Jefferson Davis is delayed by labor shortage.

**"REALLY, NOW—"**  
"I can't take that. I must have Red Cross Ball Blue. I have used it for more than ten years. My white dresses, linens and lace curtains are snowy white. I simply can't do without Red Cross Ball Blue. You will get it? All right, I'll wait."—Adv.  
**Mixed.**  
Peggy, aged three, is a very appreciative little soul, but she has a language all her own.  
One afternoon the sun went down in a blaze of glory and Peggy stood gazing at it with blinking eyes.  
"Oh, mother," she gasped, "What a granddaddy skyset!"  
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**In a Bad Way.**  
"What do you know of the character of this man?" was asked of a witness at a police court the other day.  
"What do I know of his character? I know it to be unbleachable, your honor," he replied with much emphasis.—Christian Register.

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"Hearing about Doan's Kidney Pills I used them and four boxes cured me. My kidneys became normal, my back got well and strong and all the other troubles disappeared."  
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The Experience of These Women Prove That There is a Remedy for Your Illness.  
Aberdeen, Idaho.—"Last year I suffered from a weakness with pains in my side and back. A friend asked me to try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and I did so. After taking one bottle I felt very much better. I have now taken three bottles and feel like a different woman. Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound is the best medicine I have ever taken and I can recommend it to all suffering women."—Mrs. PERCY PRESTIDOR, Aberdeen, Idaho.  
Kingfisher, Okla.—"For two years I suffered with a severe female trouble, was nervous, and had backache and a pain in my side most of the time. I had dizzy spells and was often so faint I could not walk across the floor. The doctor said I would have to have an operation. A friend asked me to try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. After taking ten bottles I am now well and strong, have no pain, backache or dizzy spells. Every one tells me how well I look and I tell them Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound did it."—Miss NINA SOUTHWICK, R. F. D. No. 4, Box 33, Kingfisher, Okla.  
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will quiet your cough, soothe the inflammation of a sore throat and lungs, stop irritation in the bronchial tubes, insure a good night's rest, free from coughing and with easy expectation in the morning. Made and sold in America for fifty-two years. A wonderful prescription, assisting Nature in building up your general health and throwing off the disease. Especially useful in lung trouble, asthma, croup, bronchitis, etc. For sale in all civilized countries.—Adv.

**Long Distance Cry.**  
Mamma—Now be a good little girl and stop crying.  
Ruth (three years old)—Me won't stop crying till papa hears me.  
Mamma—But he can't hear you; he's in New York.  
Ruth—Den me'll dest have to cwy frou ze telefome.

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**Fast Runners.**  
She looked with some apprehension over the gingham spread before her. "These don't look like fast colors to me," she said.  
"Indeed they are, ma'am," answered the shepherd. "You just ought to see them when they begin to run."

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