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TEN years ago the American people reversed its national tradition against entangling alliances and participation in the political struggles of Europe in order, as it fondly believed, to make the world safe for democracy, safeguard the rights of small nations and the principle of self-determination, and establish the reign of law by waging a war to end all war. Had our entrance into the war been excused upon the ground that as guardians of the rights of neutrals we could not permit international law to be violated, it would have been necessary to defend these rights against the equally grievous and ultimately more serious violation of neutral rights by the British Orders in Council. Sagacious minds in 1917, familiar with the development of European struggles for political and economic supremacy, were loath to permit the United States to throw itself into the cauldron merely to aid one party to a traditional European war. They were unconvinced that the grounds of intervention alleged were sustainable by the evidence involved in the issue, or achievable by war.

In November, 1916, the American people had fairly well recorded its insistence on non-intervention. President Wilson in December, 1916, had declared that the struggle involved no moral issues and ought, therefore, to be brought to a sensible close. Unfortunately, by his condonation of Allied violations of the rights of neutrals he had so weakened the force of his proposals for peace that Mr. Lloyd George felt no need for heeding them and demanded a knock-out. Lloyd George ultimately got it with our help, and future generations of Europeans, and of Americans as well, must pay the penalty for the mistake.

From January to April, 1917, a press campaign, the like of which has never been witnessed in the United States, wrought the East into a state of mind where the Wilsonian formula of the moral issues seemed to be accepted by a considerable number of our people. A show of unity was achieved; but it was always a show only. Actually, the country was divided, and while opposition was suppressed in the way that governments can suppress it, the opposition was silenced rather than convinced. The mob spirit, an artificial exultation, ruled supreme, and that is good neither for leaders nor for led.

If the causes and justifications for our intervention were based on facts, some evidence of their truth ought now, after ten years, to be apparent. At least, we have now, in the calmness of reflection, an opportunity to take stock and to determine whether the policy of intervention was wise or not. What do we see? By abandoning the rights of neutrals we threw international law into chaos; the refusal of our State Department to press our neutrality claims against Great Britain was a further blow at international law. The theory of the League of Nations, that neutrality is an undesirable and improper status, is likely to find support in the fact that neutral rights have been put at the mercy of any powerful belligerent. Another most effective blow on behalf of anarchy was given by the Treaty of Versailles, in which the trustees of civilization began a raid on some of the most fundamental principles of international law because they saw in it a momentary gain. We refer, primarily, to the confiscation of private property under Article 297, a precedent which may be dangerously ex-

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tended. This example, destroying what little progress international law had made, has thrown us back toward the days of anarchic barbarism.

The disarmament of Germany was to have been the first step in general disarmament. Who can read the news of the Geneva "Disarmament Conference" with any belief that the Allied Powers, masters of Europe's fate, have any serious intention of disarming? They have made such a mess of European political and economic conditions that even with the best intentions the problem is one of enormous difficulty. In the course of our quixotic intervention, we contracted a national war debt of twenty-five billions, and have apparently incurred, in addition, the enmity of our European debtors, notwithstanding the cancelation of billions, for continuing to suppose that their signatures were genuine.

In our own administration of the war policy we debauched the national traditions. We are now among the most distinguished confiscators of private property of which history has any record, notwithstanding President Coolidge's unctuous remark that we have "scrupulously observed" the principle of international law that private property is immune from violation or confiscation. Someone should call the President's attention to the Chemical Foundation case before he makes further charges against Mexico. Public and private morality seem to have gone into eclipse; after the emotional debauch of war days we are no longer capable of rousing ourselves to end real evils at home. We smile at corruption in high places; we are content to see the government become the tool of those who least need its aid; we sneer at every effort at reform as an outbreak of "bolshevism." We, who preached so nobly about "the rights of small nations" ten years ago, pay no attention to them in our own back yard but play the strutting bully ourselves.

And Europe? Well, look at it. Is there any sign there that the last war is over, that the next is not on its way? Have the trustees of civilization made an arrangement under which Europe can live in peace? We doubt it. At the moment, we see the most dangerous diplomatic struggles in Italy, Jugoslavia, France, England, Poland, Russia. Have they promoted democracy or the will to peace? The predictions and promises of 1917 are sad reading today. The United States might have led in liquidating the war had our leaders seen and understood it in the light of past history. Instead they greeted it as a "different" war, a holy crusade, prolonged it to its bitter conclusion, and made inevitable a treaty of peace as sadistic as any treaty that has disgraced the pages of recorded history. Our President and our people were betrayed by that treaty, but, unhappily, not many have yet realized the fact. It dashed every hope of a regenerated world, and not even the League of Nations can make much impression on the forces which it set in motion. It is not unfair to say that American intervention in the war made possible the Treaty of Versailles and its horrible consequences. The lapse of ten years can hardly give a thrill of satisfaction to those who brought us into the war, who commemorate it with pride while handing its bleak heritage of burdens and hates to the generations coming after.