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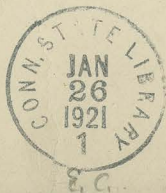
# WHY WE ARE AT WAR WITH GERMANY

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CONNECTICUT STATE COUNCIL OF DEFENSE  
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION







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## FOREWORD

This pamphlet was prepared

Under the direction of

THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION FOR THE

CONNECTICUT STATE COUNCIL OF DEFENSE.

It is prescribed by the State Council of Defense and the State Board of Education for use in all public and private schools.

It is the purpose of the pamphlet to place in the hands of the pupils of the seventh and eighth grades and also the Freshman classes of high schools throughout the state, a concise and authoritative statement of the reason for the entrance of the United States into the present European war.

It is suggested that teachers use the subject matter in the same way that an equal amount of subject matter taken from the ordinary history of the United States would be used; that after a few weeks the pamphlet be reviewed; and that the pamphlet then be taken home by the pupil with the suggestion that he interest his parents in its contents.

The pamphlet, in quantities sufficient for the needs of each school, can be obtained from the State Board of Education.





## WHY WE ARE AT WAR WITH GERMANY

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Shortly after the Great War broke out in Europe in the summer of 1914, President Wilson issued a proclamation in which he advised all American citizens to "act and speak in the true spirit of impartiality and friendliness to all concerned." This position he took because the United States had always tried to avoid taking part in quarrels arising between European countries.

But the course of events brought about a change in the attitude of the American people. For Germany, in order to find an easier and shorter route to Paris, broke the treaty by which she promised to observe the neutrality of Belgium, and invaded that country, devastating its fields, confiscating its treasure, and slaying its men, women and children.

The German Chancellor, von Bethman Hollweg, in urging Mr. Goschen, the British Ambassador to Germany, to acquiesce in the breach of this treaty, referred to the treaty as a scrap of paper. Far different was the point of view taken by others. What seemed so trivial to the German Chancellor—the keeping or breaking of a treaty—led Belgium to defend her country to the utmost, for she preferred her honor, though she lost her life, and the breaking of this treaty was one of the causes which made England declare war against Germany.

Americans then began to awaken to the character of the evil spirit which controlled Germany's over-ambitious and war-mad policy, and gradually the conviction grew among many Americans that in spite of our strong desire to keep out of the war, the arrogant and conscienceless methods of the German military rulers were certain, sooner or later, to force the United States to take up arms against Germany.

The first clash came when, about five months after the war began (January 28, 1915), an American merchantman, the William P. Frye, was sunk by a German cruiser. Our government promptly made a protest, and Germany said she would pay for the ship.

Just about a week after the sinking of the William P. Frye, Germany declared a war zone, which included all the waters

around Great Britain, and boldly asserted that in this zone she would destroy all enemy vessels. She said it might not be possible to save passengers and crews, and, moreover, that vessels of neutral nations sailing into this zone would be in danger.

Without delay our government sent to Germany a note of warning, declaring in vigorous language that it would hold that country "strictly accountable" if any American vessels should be destroyed or any American lives lost.

Germany's reply was evasive and unsatisfactory. It was, in effect, as follows: "Inasmuch as Great Britain has put an end to our trade by blockading our coasts, we are acting merely in self-defense."

During the next three months Germany insulted our nation again and again by attacking and sinking American vessels and destroying American lives. But the crowning outrage—which horrified the whole country—was the sinking of the *Lusitania*, an English vessel of the Cunard line, on May 7, 1915, near the coast of Ireland while on her way from New York to Liverpool. She was attacked without a moment's warning and sent to the bottom by a torpedo. Of the 1,154 lives lost, 114 were Americans, among the innocent victims being many women and children.

It is significant of the German method that von Bernstorff, the German ambassador to this country, advertised in the New York city daily newspapers a warning which advised against sailing on the *Lusitania*. Americans refused to believe that this advertisement of calculated and wholesale homicide was official, and sailed on the fated ship.

President Wilson again sent a vigorous note of protest against this hideous and barbaric deed, for, according to a law of long standing among nations, no merchant vessel could be sunk at sea without warning and without providing for the safety of crew and passengers. But Germany's answer was far from satisfying. In fact she showed no concern over the bitterness and indignation she had aroused in America. Her contempt for the American people appeared in her authorizing her submarines to continue the torpedoing of merchant vessels without warning and without giving crews and passengers a fair chance to save their lives.

Within three months after the *Lusitania* incident our government sent to Germany three notes of indignant protest and emphatic warning. Germany's insolent answer was to torpedo another vessel, the *Arabic* (August 19, 1915), with the loss of two American lives. Again our government protested with vigor. Within two weeks (on September 1) the German ambassador at Washington sent a letter to Mr. Lansing, our Secretary of State, in which he assured our government that German submarines



would sink no more liners without warning unless they resisted or tried to escape.

But it was a month later that the German government sent its reply, expressing regret at the sinking of the Arabic and declaring that she was willing to pay indemnities for destroying American lives. She went still further by declaring that orders had been sent out to her submarine commanders forbidding them in future to make attacks upon neutral merchantmen which put in peril the lives of crews or passengers. She added that she would sink no more liners without giving a warning before the attack.

This fair promise made a good impression upon many American people. But it was empty and ended where it began, for Germany's future acts showed that she did not intend to keep her word when the promise was given. On the 24th of March, 1916, a German submarine torpedoed and sent to the bottom the Sussex, destroying eighty human lives, among them a number of Americans. Our government sent yet another note of warning to Germany, this time threatening to break off diplomatic relations unless she put a stop to her lawless and inhuman submarine policy. Again Germany made fair promises, which we accepted at their face value, but she was only waiting for the time to draw near when it would serve her interests to renew her former methods.

Neglecting no opportunity, she was secretly acting as our enemy in many ways. She was even treacherously employing her accredited agents of friendship and good will to this country to do us injury, for, strange, as it may seem, the German Embassy at Washington was the center of plots and intrigues against the peace and well-being of the American people. Agitators were employed to foment strikes in important American industries. Desperate men were engaged to place bombs in the holds of vessels bound for England or France, and to blow up munition factories, thus killing hundreds of innocent men, women, and children. Newspapers and writers were paid to advocate Germany's cause and at the same time to misrepresent and defame the cause of the Allies. Strong attempts were made over and over again to bring about serious trouble between Japan and the United States.

But the climax of German treachery and intrigue against the American government and the American people took place in January, 1917. In a note which the German foreign office sent to the German minister in Mexico, he proposed "an alliance on the following basis: That we shall make war together and together make peace. We shall give general financial support, and it is understood that Mexico is to reconquer the lost territory in

New Mexico, Texas and Arizona." This base act, when brought to light by our State Department, aroused profound indignation throughout the United States. Many Americans who before this time had not been inclined to believe in the faithlessness and treachery of Germany, now saw her in her true colors, ready to stoop to any crime, however black and dastardly it might be, to carry out her own selfish plots and schemes.

For more than two years after the war began such high-handed outrages continued. Success being Germany's chief aim, any method that she might employ, no matter how unscrupulous, brutal, or criminal it might appear to other nations, she considered justifiable. Her point of view was that the German State could do no wrong.

The sinking of American vessels continued. Sometimes, a submarine commander, when it suited his purpose, would give warning and order passengers and crew, far out at sea, to take to open boats. Thus, many suffered almost unbearable hardship, and many died from starvation or exposure. It sometimes even happened that the boats, filled with helpless victims, were deliberately shelled, great loss of life resulting. Many examples of the brutal and savage German outrages might easily be given. They have become common knowledge. But it is enough to say here that up to April 2, 1917, Germany attacked at sea seventeen American merchantmen and twenty-three foreign vessels that had on board American citizens, thus causing the loss of 226 American lives.

Despite the repeated and earnest protests of our government, Germany only bided her time. At last, when it seemed to her that she was on the high road to victory, she became so insolent that she dared openly to defy the United States and the rest of the world. In a proclamation issued January 31, 1917, she declared that beginning on the following day, she would sink at sight and without any attempt to safeguard crews and passengers all vessels she might find in extensive areas named by her north and west of northern Europe and in the Mediterranean Sea. To make matters worse, the German Chancellor announced, in an important speech, that Germany was planning to pursue her ruthless submarine policy with greater vigor than ever before, shamelessly explaining that she had been waiting only until she should have enough submarines to mane her attacks upon the enemy's commerce and the world's shipping eective. Thus did Germany proclaim to the world once more her faithlessness.

With an air of superior authority, she notified our government that she would allow one American vessel a week to sail to the English port of Falmouth, if such vessel were striped according to instructions and followed a route laid out by Germany. No



nation could submit to such insult without forfeiting self-respect and the respect of other nations. It was not for Germany to dictate to the people of the United States where and to what extent they should sail the seas in following their peaceful pursuits.

President Wilson responded to Germany's note by at once handing the German Ambassador at Washington his passport, which meant that the United States ceased to have diplomatic relations with Germany.

Even after taking this serious step, our government was unwilling to go to war if it could be avoided without the loss of our honor and our self-respect. But Germany persisted in sending to the bottom ship after ship (between February 2 and April 2, 1917, eight American vessels were sunk by German submarines), and upon brutally murdering American citizens, until at last President Wilson, voicing the feeling of his countrymen, said, in a memorable address to Congress on April 2, 1917:

"I am not thinking of the loss of property involved, immense and serious as that is, but only of the wanton and wholesale destruction of non-combatants, men, women and children, engaged in pursuits which have always, even in the darkest periods of modern history, been deemed innocent and legitimate. Property can be paid for; the lives of innocent and peaceful people cannot be. The present submarine warfare against commerce is a warfare against mankind."

"\* \* \* \* American ships have been sunk, American lives taken, in ways which it has stirred us deeply to learn of. \* \* \*

"There is one choice we cannot make \* \* \* we will not choose the path of submission and suffer the most sacred rights of our people to be ignored or violated.

"With a profound sense of the solemn and even tragical character of the step I am taking, \* \* \* I advise that the Congress declare the recent course of the Imperial German Government to be in fact nothing less than war against the Government and people of the United States.

"It is a fearful thing to lead this great, peaceful people into war, into the most terrible and disastrous of all war, civilization itself seeming to be in the balance. But the right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts \* \* \* \*

"To such a task we can dedicate our lives and our fortunes, everything that we are and everything that we have, with the pride of those who know that the day has come when America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured. God helping her, she can do no other."

These words had only one meaning, and that was that the American people had no other choice, but to take up arms in defense of their just rights as a free people. To do otherwise was to follow the pathway which led straight to slavish submission to the autocratic power of Germany. Germany had driven us into the war, for she had made war upon us. She had not only injured our commerce, but had also violated sacred human rights and the rights of nations, which we as a free people are bound to cherish and defend. Congress, therefore, on April 6, 1917, declared that a condition of war existed between the United States and Germany.

With unprecedented patience, President Wilson had tried to avoid coming to blows with Germany. He waited until he believed the time had arrived when all his countrymen would understand that the ideals of America and her institutions of freedom were in the balance and when all true Americans, of whatever race, would give to the war their united and earnest support.

Four or five years ago almost any intelligent American would have considered fanciful the suggestion that Germany wished to get control of the United States and make this great nation a dependency. But there is no longer the slightest doubt, there is even proof, that such was the purpose of that ambitious and unscrupulous country.

"World power or downfall." This was the German watchword at the outbreak of the great war in 1914. The German plan, in popular phrase, was "to lunch in Paris, dine in London, and spend the night somewhere in America." In other words, by making a rapid attack, the Germans hoped to crush France, after which they purposed to turn their attention to England and overwhelm her. As the natural fruits of their triumph they would break up the British Empire, annex the English colonies, and force England to give up all her war vessels.

Having made these conquests, the pathway to world dominion would be easy. The new German Empire would then be so powerful that the United States and all the rest of the American continent could easily be brought under its control. On October 22, 1915, the Kaiser insolently remarked to Mr. Gerard, then the American Ambassador in Germany: "America had better look out after this war. I shall stand no nonsense from America after the war."

It is, therefore, quite evident that America is fighting for something more than freedom of the seas, or even the rights of a freedom-loving people. She is fighting for the rights of all nations, large or small, powerful or weak. It is an accepted fact that Germany's supreme ambition is to impose her will, her Kultur, her ways of thinking and of doing things, upon Europe and



America alike—indeed upon the whole world. It is the Kaiser's will to become the supreme ruler with Berlin as the capital of his world empire. If he should succeed in his ambition all that is best in modern life would be lost—democracy, justice, freedom, humane sentiment, and those other precious possessions that go with the free life of democratic peoples.

The eloquent appeal of one of our early patriots, "Give me liberty or give me death!" rings as true as when first spoken by Patrick Henry in 1774, and may well be our watchword to-day. Death itself is better than slavery to Germany with her lust for power and her motto that might makes right.

If we pass in review some of the acts by which Germany condemned herself and revealed her true character, we shall find very definite reasons that explain why we entered the war. The following are worthy of special mention:

1. We realized that German defiance of our rights to the "Freedom of the Sea," which belonged to us by the law of nations, was a making of war upon us, since each violation of our rights was a cause of war recognized by international law accepted as binding by those nations. Germany having thus treated us for a long time as an enemy nation (since the sinking of the William P. Frye in January, 1915), we took action, not by declaring war against Germany, but by declaring that a state of war existed.

2. In the bullying and sacrifice of Belgium and later of Serbia we saw that Germany would stop at nothing in her campaign for world dominion.

3. Her renewal of submarine warfare (February 1, 1917) in more offensive form than before and in violation of her assurance to the contrary which she had made to our government in the spring of 1916, compelled the American people to believe that the national interest and the national honor required us to fight for their preservation.

4. We could reach no other conclusion than that Germany was repudiating and would continue to repudiate, at her will, all of the accepted principles of international justice and of humanity which all civilized nations respected. We believed that Germany was an international desperado, "running amuck," who could be made to respect the rights of nations and of humanity only by force.

5. We came to see clearly that for years Germany had sought to build up in America a following more loyal to herself than to the United States. To that end she had lavished money on German societies, alliances, and associations. She had honored our professors and flattered our universities. She has pushed her pro-

paganda everywhere and inserted even in our school text books praise of Germany and the Kaiser. Her spies and her system of espionage were universal.

Germany passed a law which made it possible for naturalized citizens of the United States of German birth to maintain their citizenship in Germany, although they had sworn allegiance to the United States and had forever renounced allegiance to the German Kaiser.

6. After the war broke out in 1914, the highest German officials in our country treated the United States as if she were an enemy. By the assistance of these officials and by vast sums contributed through the German government, Germany tried to mould public opinion in America to her will. German officials in America sought to cripple our industries engaged in making munitions for the allies—work which these industries had a perfect right to do under international law—by organizing strikes, by blowing up factories, and by injuring these industries in other ways. They carried on plots within our borders against nations with whom we were at peace. They placed bombs in ships which were about to sail from American ports. They tried to embroil us in war with Mexico and also with Japan. These grave offenses against the sovereignty of the United States had much to do with uniting our people in support of the war, which is more complete and whole-hearted than any that has ever been given in all the wars of our history.

7. We saw that the purpose of Germany was the subjection of the world to German ideas, German method, German "Kultur," and the German power. World dominion was her aim. As a consequence, our own independence and sovereignty were at stake, and the Monroe Doctrine was in peril.

8. As the years of the great conflict passed on, we came to see that at bottom it was a life-and-death struggle between democratic nations and democratic ideas on the one hand, and autocracy on the other, and that between these opposing forces there could be and there ought to be no compromise.

Having become convinced that our own liberty and our democratic institutions were in danger, that the great principles of justice and faith and mercy and love were despised by Germany and her leaders, it became our high privilege and sacred duty to fight in order to keep these principles potent in the affairs and in the lives of our men and women. America fights to defend herself and her liberties, and in so doing she fights that all the other nations of the world may know and enjoy a like liberty.

America's thought and purpose in going to war with Germany President Wilson well expressed in a Flag Day address on June 14, 1917:



"It is plain enough," he said, "how we were forced into the war. The extraordinary insults and aggressions of the imperial German government left us no self-respecting choice but to take up arms in defense of our rights as a free people, and of our honor as a sovereign government. The military masters of Germany denied us the right to be neutral. They sought by violence to destroy our industries and arrest our commerce. They tried to incite Mexico to take up arms against us and to draw Japan into a hostile alliance with her—and that, not by indirection, but by direct suggestion from the foreign office in Berlin. They impudently denied us the use of the high seas and repeatedly executed their threats that they would send to their death any of our people who ventured to approach the coasts of Europe. The war was begun by the military masters of Germany, who proved to be also the masters of Austria-Hungary. These men have never regarded nations as peoples; men, women, and children of like blood and frame as themselves, for whom governments existed and in whom governments had their life. They have regarded them merely as serviceable organizations which they could by force and intrigue bend or corrupt to their own purpose. They have regarded the smaller states, in particular, and the people who could be overwhelmed by force, as their natural tools and instruments of domination.

\* \* \* "The great fact that stands out above all the rest is that this is a people's war, a war for freedom and justice and self-government amongst all the nations of the world, a war to make the world safe for the people who live upon it. \* \* \*

"For us there is but one choice. We have made it. We are ready to plead at the bar of history, and our flag shall wear a new lustre. Once more we shall make good with our lives and fortunes the great faith to which we were born, and a new glory shall shine in the face of our people."

Turning now to methods of fighting, the undisputed proof shows that the Germans have waged war with as much ruthless cruelty as any savage people ever did. They have summoned to the aid of their policy of cruelty and frightfulness every resource of learning and science, and with these aids they have endeavored to injure and terrorize to the uttermost those upon whom they made war by every form of atrocity and savagery they could devise.

They have violated the rules and practices of warfare as agreed to by the civilized nations of the world. As noted above, they have followed the submarine policy of sinking the ships of neutrals "without warning and without thought of help or mercy for those on board." They have sent to the bottom hospital ships even though they bore in plain view the Red Cross emblem. They

struck a medal in honor of the sinking of the Lusitania and publicly rejoiced at the crime. They have introduced into modern warfare poison gas, liquid fire, flame, and the explosive bullet. They have bombed and bombarded defenseless cities and towns by Zeppelins, airplanes and cruisers, and have killed with wanton slaughter thousands of unarmed men, women and children in England, France and Belgium. They have deliberately bombed hospitals flying the Red Cross standard.

They have systematically destroyed whole villages, homes, vineyards, and fruit trees, in pure wantonness. They have demolished churches and cathedrals, even when there was no reason for so doing from the standpoint of military necessity. They have destroyed historic works of art, such as the famous library at Louvain and the Cathedral of Rheims. The destruction of these monuments of men's genius has gone on wherever the German army has gone, in Belgium, France, Poland, Serbia, Russia, Rumania and Italy.

They have disseminated disease germs in order to destroy the cattle as well as the armies and non-combatants of their enemies in countries which they have overrun. They have practiced the systematic destruction or removal of hundreds of thousands of civilians, partly to prevent or punish resistance, and partly, as their own generals have frankly admitted, to make way for German colonization. They have treated the civilian population of the countries occupied by them practically as slaves, and have forced them, in Germany and elsewhere, under conditions which have been so harsh as to cause the death of many thousands, to do all manner of work, including the making of munitions and the building of military works in shell-swept zones. They have levied contributions upon Belgian and French towns and cities, and wherever their armies have gone, east or west, have pillaged and robbed so that the civilian population have been reduced to a condition of actual starvation. It is estimated that Belgian cities and towns have been compelled to pay German exactions to the value of more than a billion dollars.

They have treated their prisoners of war with studied inhumanity, crucifying some, and frequently killing both the wounded and the unwounded. They have used civilians, including women and children, as screens for their advancing forces. They have sanctioned wholesale execution of Belgians, Poles, Bohemians, Servians and Slavs. They have incited Mohammedans to a Holy War.

They not only stood behind the Turks but aided them in practically exterminating the Armenian nation. In carrying out this plan of wholesale destruction more than 1,000,000 Armen-



ians were victims of slaughter, of hardship, exposure and starvation.

Germany does not wage war; she intrigues, assassinates, massacres, poisons and tortures. She violates every provision of international law and every rule and practice of humanity, and she commits at will every felonious crime, such as murder, rape, systematic incendiarism, pillage and theft.

All these cruel things she does, without compassion or pity, that she may terrify her enemies and thus weaken their power of resistance. No sense of morality or honor holds her back.

Her great aim is to force her rule upon the rest of the world. For many years the Germans have been fed upon the belief that Germany would achieve this aim, and now military success has robbed her of her reason. Three wars, the first with Denmark in 1864, the second with Austria in 1866, and the last with France in 1870-71, made the present German Empire possible. Its founding was the result of Bismarck's famous policy of blood and iron, or the policy of brute force. That policy has worked out, thus far, even better than that able and crafty statesman could possibly have hoped. It has been followed so faithfully that war has become the leading industry of Prussianized Germany.

The present Kaiser, who from the allied point of view is one of the greatest criminals history has ever known, has frowned upon the settlement of international disputes by peaceful methods and also upon the reduction of armies and navies. And this simply because he wished to build up an army and a navy powerful enough to wrest from other nations what Germany wants. It is Germany's hunger for land, for trade, for material wealth, and her lust for power that drove her into the war. She desired her "place in the sun," which meant that she wished to attain world empire by robbing, as an international pirate and outlaw, the other nations of their rightful possessions. With this dastardly purpose in view, she spent forty years in the most scientific preparations for the war which she deliberately caused to break out in 1914.

As already noted, the war is now openly recognized as a war between democracy and autocracy. It is a war whose issue will determine whether the world shall be free or live in abject slavery to Germany.

"The demands made by Austria upon Serbia," said President Wilson, "were a mere single step in a plan which compassed Europe and Asia, from Berlin to Bagdad." \* \* \* "Their plan was to throw a broad belt of German military power and political control across the very center of Europe, and beyond the

Mediterranean into the heart of Asia." \* \* \* "From Hamburg to the Persian Gulf the net is spread."

Until Germany is thoroughly beaten there can be no guarantee against her plunging the world into another war with increased resources, greater preparation, and added population to put in the field. America has reached the settled opinion that Germany must be stripped of all the territory she has won; that her grip on adjoining territory, nations, and the peoples must be loosened; that her hold upon the Berlin to Bagdad railroad must be forever given up; and that the Slav peoples must be made into independent nations, standing between Germany and the East.

Justice demands from Germany and the German people reparation for the past, adequate assurances for the future, and lawful liberty for all. Until by the force of our arms or our power we can assure the fulfillment of these objects we shall disregard every suggestion of peace. America is against a peace of conciliation, negotiation, or bargaining, because such a peace would imperil her future and the future of all civilization.

More and more the American people are saying: "Let us fight on until we can impose the terms General Grant imposed at Vicksburg: 'Unconditional surrender.'"

Lloyd George has thus epitomized our problem:

"Our real enemy is the war spirit fostered in Prussia. There will be no peace in the world until the shrine of the war spirit in Potsdam is shattered and its priesthood is dispersed and discredited forever."

Believing all this, the American people are willing to make any sacrifice, even to the extent of billions of their treasure and millions of their young men, to crush the power of Prussian militarism and Hohenzollern autocracy. We believe that until this is accomplished there can be no enduring peace. We seek no territory, and no material gain of any kind. We are fighting in a holy cause. Alive to the danger that threatens, we will wage war with patience and courage and stern determination until the hour of victory. Never were we as a people so firmly united. Confident that our cause is righteous, that we battle for justice and for freedom, we are in the struggle until we "make the world safe for democracy."