

Smith, Nov. 8, 29

Do we want peace?

In a few days this country is going to celebrate Armistice Day again. Although ~~of being considered an~~ ~~participation~~ I must confess, that I cannot work up any particular enthusiasm about this year's celebrations. I cannot forget that while we fetch out the banners, strike the hands march up & down <sup>our</sup> the streets, men are dying in Spain - in Europe. Women & children are killed by the most deadly agencies of destruction. Unold misery is in store for millions whose economic & social life has been disrupted. It seems a poor moment to celebrate.

There is of course some cause for rejoicing in the fact that the American people are holding on to their Armistice day. It testifies to their will to peace. ~~of the hour~~ But then, has it ever struck you that throughout all these 20 years since the last war we have never had a peace-day? No, all we were able to celebrate, ~~where~~ the preliminaries to peace - armistice, an armistice which has now come to an end, ~~expresses~~ The War of the Twentieth Century continues.

None knows how long this war is going to last, none knows whether there will be <sup>merely</sup> another armistice or whether at long last there will be real peace. None knows, whether any of us will live to see a state of the world, in which the arts & the sciences will flourish freely throughout the civilized ~~countries~~, in which the time & the pond & the beautiful will not be destroyed by insidious propaganda or brute force. Will there ever be a time in this generation when the most

elementary human decency, a desire for understanding, for sympathy, any manifestation of sympathy for people of other languages & other complexions will not be considered high-bloom, a crime to be punished by death or the concentration camps? Shall we ever be able to transform our war-peaked economies into instruments for the improvement of standards of living under which the least of our citizens will be able to live a life worth living?

~~Or let us leave the high-sounding phrases~~

Or, quite simply, shall we ever be able to sit in a sidewalk cafe in Paris, looking at the stream of human beings passing by, shall we ever be able to enter St. Stephens Cathedral in Vienna without wondering whether in a few years hence bombs will rain again on men & buildings?

We do not know the answer to these questions - & yet, the answer rests with us.

Nests above all with this country - I know of course that Americans are disillusioned to-day. They went out in 1917 to make the world safe for democracy. And instead of democracy, we have Hitler & Mussolini & Stalin and old imperialists like Chamberlain or Winston Churchill & the war continues.

But let there be no mistake - you did not lose in the war, you were victorious. You failed in the peace. It is my profound conviction, for which I could give chapter & verse, that if America had come in on the peace in 1919 instead of listening to pre-war isolationists who

failed to see that a new world was about to be born there would be no war to-day. There would be a democratic regime in Germany and Hitler would still be painting his pictures.

And I am equally convinced that even to-day this country is in a position to bring a desirable peace to this world. What is more: that this country in its own interest must help to establish a lasting, a real peace.

I said it a few weeks ago & I say it again to-day: If this war lasts a long time America is almost certain to join the it, neutrality legislation or no neutrality legislation. Just wait until Germany <sup>some weeks</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> defeated ~~in~~ <sup>by</sup> the Allies & you will see that no efforts will be made <sup>again</sup> to prevent America from coming to their rescue. Or, if this war, which is likely to be a war of attrition results in the gradual exhaustion of all combatants to the point where Stalin alone will be triumphant I can see even Father Compton's present another holy crusade to be fought by Americans in Europe.

The only protection against war is to end war. And America more than any other country is in a position to do it.

✶ America alone amongst all the great powers has no territorial aspirations - if I may discern the extraordinary ideas of such men as Senator Henderson.

America alone has the economic & material power to be an effective help in the rebuilding of the world.

4

America alone - provided she acts in time to keep  
out of the war - can be expected to <sup>maintain</sup> keep a level head, to  
muster the necessary moral strength which will be needed  
at the peace conference if a reputable, a just peace is to  
be achieved.

And finally, America embodies in her own nation-  
al life those principles of collaboration ~~within~~ <sup>between</sup> states,  
the regard for local rights & the rights of the individual  
which are to be at the basis of lasting peace.

The time is not yet, but it will come one of these days -  
once a stalemate has been reached in Europe - when  
the President of this country will be able to send out a  
call to the rulers & the peoples of the world to settle  
their conflicts around the conference table.

The overwhelming task for everyone of us is to get ready  
for that supreme moment.

Our best brains will have to work on actual peace plans.  
They will have to investigate the causes which led to the break-  
down of the last settlement. Weakness in our ideas on the  
system of collective security, on international trade & finance,  
on mandates & similar problems will have to be remedied.

Red Runday I attended in N.Y. the first meeting of the Commission  
on N.Y. which is pursuing exactly these ends. Since I am not  
a member of it I can say that it represents indeed some  
of the most outstanding experts on international questions  
in this country. It is a commission - I'm sure you'll be  
glad to hear it - which is to be chaired by President Wilson.

And to elaborate our plans is not enough  
they will be futile & ineffective as long as the Am. people  
are not behind it.

What does this mean?

1) It means, first of all, that we have to work for a  
profound change in attitude. And here I'm thinking  
particularly of some of our peace activities.

We have been all too negative in the past.

Always against something - war, conventions  
makers, armament, ROTC, this, that & another  
thing. We didn't work for peace, we went on  
strike for peace.

We have been isolationist, where we ought to have  
been co-ops.

We have been destructive rather than constructive  
negative, rather than positive.

And we persist in this attitude despite the fact  
that it should be obvious to a blind bat that there will  
be armaments & ROTC's & preparedness campaigns  
as long as the world persists in the present precarious  
state.

All anti-war pamphlets we are shuffling down the  
streets of an unwilling populace will not change the  
situation.

2. Our principles by which to direct our actions must be  
firm & unshakable. There is too much wishy-washy  
sentimentalism in our camp - too many attempts to

paint the devil white.

Let us keep our minds open, by all means, as long as it means keeping our sense of perspective & seeking our understanding of the forces which mould the world.

~~And as a Christian just said~~ But don't keep your minds so open that your brains fall out.

There are still things in this world which are true & things which are false, acts which are right & acts which are wrong, even if there are statesmen in Engl. & France & not only in Germany & Russia who hide their imperialist designs under the cloak of high-sounding phrases.

3) The third point is so obvious that it hardly needs any elaboration: We have to apply our principles of justice & equity first of all at home - social peace in America, real opportunity for every American within his own country will not only immeasurably strengthen America's position abroad, but it will act as the strongest possible bulwark against the lines of fascist & communist attack.

Every one of these points is a challenge to every individual American.

We as students & teachers, however, carry particular responsibilities.

Of our first & foremost task I spoke a few weeks ago from this platform & I shall not repeat myself. I spoke then of the twilight of time looming which has descended upon the world, of the gradual destruction of man's noblest possession, of the abdication of the intellect of man. Through our studies & researches it is up to us to make reason prevail

over ignorance & superstition, to erode a balance of sympathy & understanding against the rising tide of ill-will & blind hate.

However, we can't keep our noses in <sup>our</sup> boots all the time. There are other things to be done, <sup>in each thing we can do to prepare for a lasting peace.</sup> In speaking here there are in the front of Row the roads of little children, potential builders & artists of a new world, who are slowly perishing. They are the victims of the Spanish, <sup>not</sup> from the French, with a war of their own on their hands, cannot help. Do you realize that the Institute for Girls in Spain, which was founded with the help of former Smith students is making valiant attempts to save these children & that this Institute is in desperate need of your help?

Or take another case. Do you know the work of the Int. Student Union in N.Y. which was set up to assist foreign women students in this country & which has done more than ten colleges combined to introduce these foreign visitors to American life, to plan their holidays, to place them in summer camps & to assist them in every possible way. I happen to know of more than one student from totalitarian countries who thanks to the work of that Union have thrown off their totalitarian shackles & who have become pioneers in their own countries for a different world, the first and best of which they received in America.

Needs of this Union increased - should student and then there is the I.P.P. an other org. created with the help of Smith College. Known to many of you for its relief work - work which has tremendously increased while resources diminished (Britain & France, hand-labor)

has been called upon to help Polish students who some day will have to rebuild their country.

Rately, embarked on particularly valuable service - given permission to work among student prisoners of war. Delicate work, but of immense and of immeasurable importance for the future.

Through this channel you & I are able to show them that the democratic world is still alive, we are able to give Dr. Griebels the lie, who has hammered it into these young people that there is nothing for them but to fight.

And finally, there is Girding College in China which in spite of Japanese bombs & Japanese oppression is continuing to produce some who some day will take their place at the side of Mrs. Chiang Kai - Shek in her struggle for a free China. That college will not survive without your help.

There are a few examples of what we as a college can do. I selected them because all these are chances to which you will be asked to contribute through the South Community Chest. Every one of them is demanded to stand on the blazing flame of humanity.

It is not my job to appeal to you for the Community Chest. And I will say this:

Unless you give twice, three times, four times as much in this year of '45 as you have given in past years, there is something fundamentally wrong with you. This is no ordinary year - we are in the midst of a life & death struggle for everything that's worth living for.



And unless you double & triple your efforts I'm afraid there is also something wrong with some of us teachers. For it would be proof that we let you sleep while the house was burning down.

Gil, After the many chapters on Engl. & German & French, & Am. Wars a new chapter is to be written in the book of history.

It has to be written by you as much as by anybody else.

And its title is to be: The America Peace.