

INTERNATIONAL LAW AND THE WAR.

International law is now being rewritten by the war, in a manner very different from what the advocates of universal peace, of arbitration treaties and Hague conferences dreamt, though in a very simple manner. Instead of the complex mass of rules about civilized and uncivilized warfare, about contraband and private rights, all that remains is:

"Paragraph 1: There is no law between belligerents.

Paragraph 2: Neutrals have no rights which the belligerents need to consider.

Paragraph 3: Neutrals are graciously permitted to relieve their feelings by writing diplomatic notes of protest, and possibly, if it should be found convenient, some minor sums may after the end of the war be paid to some of the neutrals in compensation for alleged damaged claims."

However much we all may hope that law may once become a part of human nature, a moral issue voluntarily obeyed, it is not so today, nor ever has been, but since the days when Rome wrote the national and international laws to suit her interests, law existed only as far as there was a power ready and strong enough to enforce it. So today in Mexico law has ceased, since there is no police power to

enforce it. So "international law" is non-existent today, with all the great military nations at war, while it was scrupulously observed in the Turkish-Italian war, in the Balkan war, by the small nations - not at all as civilized as England or Germany - but at that time big nations were watching, to take advantage of any breach of law, to fall upon the offender, and now there is nobody left to enforce what had been called international law, since all the world knows that the United States, the only great neutral nation, would not do anything which would hurt business still more than it has been ^{already} hit/by the war.

After all, no nation has ever paid attention to law and treaties, when against its interests, and ^{it} could safely violate them: England, the offender of Belgian neutrality, has a record, from the destruction of the Danish Fleet in 1807, the protectorate over the sultanate of Saravak in Dutch Borneo, and the taking of Labuan as naval station, the bombardment and firing of defenseless Alexandria, not to speak of the Indian mutiny and the Boer war. Germany and Austria-Hungary have nothing to boast in righteousness in the appropriation of Bosnia, in Bismark's forcing Switzerland to expel the German socialists in 1838, and the incidents leading up to this. America's record also is very far from clear, from the violation of the Chinese treaty by the Chinese exclusion act, to the offer of 10 million dollars to the Panamonians, for starting a revolution and giving us

the Panama Canal.

A code of international law, as we believed it to exist, can never again be restored, for whatever agreements and promises may be made, today's history can not be undone, and nobody can ever again place confidence in international law, knowing that every nation, whatever protestations of morality and civilization it may make, disregards it in furthering its interests, whenever it can safely do so.

Thus the only hope for universal peace and comity between the nations lies in either of two developments, as I pointed out over a year ago: if one group of nations, closely allied racially and by mutual interest, would undertake to enforce peace and arbitration. The only power capable to do so, would be an alliance of the nations of the German race: America, England and Germany, and with the war between England and Germany, this possibility is gone, and the German race probably threatened with the loss of the leadership in civilization. The other possibility of perpetual peace is the government of the world by international capitalism, or by international socialism, and between the latter two possibilities thus lies the issue of restoring and maintaining permanent peace and good will between the nations of the world, based on identity of interest: either as slaves of international capitalism, or as owners of the world under socialism.

Charles P. Steinmetz.

March 23, 1915
CPS-SW