Voices Which Were Loud Last Summer have Been Few by a Few Months of War—How the Leaders Came to Realize the Futility of Their Old Arguments

By GEORGE MACADAM.

The plight of the idealist who, his eye on the stars, is rudely brought back to earth is, I suppose, a familiar one to the reality, is strikingly shown by the present condition of the pacifist party in the United States. Before our entry into the war the peace movement, because of the many people of standing and influence who were among its most active workers, seemed large as an obstacle to aggressive action. Today, in the language of a Federal authority whose business it is to know, "the movement has petered out, and even a man in the hills has bolted down to the professional gasbag element."

Before the war, in every "advanced" intellectual movement, there was a striking laxness of moral distinctions. "Broadmindedness" was a virtue. Views of very different feathers locked together on the same nest so long as they were all in the same nest. In the gasbag element, like all the rest of us, in catching one particular egg. The advocates of peace were no exception. The dove cote was open to all—talking heads were not barred, nothing more was asked than that while around the cote the dove song be warbled and assistance given in catching the peace egg.

And so in those ante-bellum days philosophers and prophets, as they were called, and idealists, forerunners of the peace movement, were fitted for warfare with men who would break down and destroy all government.

But today the great majority of the altruists are out of the peace party; they recognize the reality of war, and at least want an end to it and quiet idealism for humanity. Some of the altruists are still in the party, but they "are singing low," to quote one of the most influential who, according to the license of the party, which is the only license that they have, would lead us to establish the habits and purer form of enlightenment which they have, and are fitted for warfare with men who would break down and destroy all government.

The sudden shriveling of the peace movement is one of the most striking things in the history of this war. History. Let us take a tally of the organizations that were working for peace, either formal or informal. If you take that magnificent movement, the American Peace Society, which was organized in the early days of the war and which did such excellent work, you find that it has shrunk to a small fraction of its former size.

The American Peace Society, the American Union Against the War, the International Peace Secretariat, all of them are but shadowy memories. The Young Men’s Christian Association, which did so much good work, is now nearly dead. The Young Women’s Christian Association, which did so much good work, is now nearly dead. The Women’s Peace Party, the Women’s Peace League, the Women’s Convention, the Women’s Peace Conference, all of them are but shadowy memories. The Young Men’s Christian Association, which did so much good work, is now nearly dead. The Young Women’s Christian Association, which did so much good work, is now nearly dead. The Women’s Peace Party, the Women’s Peace League, the Women’s Convention, the Women’s Peace Conference, all of them are but shadowy memories.

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large quantities of literature, but I can't tell you how much. Funds? Yes, I can tell you where they come from. It's a dollar down and a dollar a month.”

A man who had been sitting beside him interpolated: "There is no pro-German money."

"No, not a cent," continued the press agent. "It's all raised from the dues of our members. We'll have an office open in Washington not later than the first of the year. Then if you don't think there'll be things doing, just watch the columns of the newspapers."

This may be press agent camouflage, but it is none the less interesting to remember that the Germans are now massing tremendous bodies of troops on the western battle front, that they are about to make a supreme effort, that Secretary Baker has warned the country to prepare to hear of reverses, and that in certain quarters it may have been decided that it would be good strategy to have a loud-voiced cry for peace sounded throughout the American Nation.

No less interesting than the sudden shriveling of the activities of the peace societies is the declension of the pacifist ranks brought about by America's entry into the war. The list is a long one, and only its general character can be here indicated.

Because of the emotional methods of his peace advocacy, the name of Henry Ford stands out. Mr. Ford spent $400,000 in his expedition to "get the boys out of the trenches by Christmas." Upon his return to this country he announced that he was ready to spend $25,000,000, or as much more as might be necessary, to prevent any improvement or expansion of the naval or military establishment of the United States. Four months after we declared war he said that "we must prepare to go the limit for the struggle." A little later, in taking $5,000,000 of Liberty-bonds, he said that the United States, in making war on Germany, did "the best thing that ever happened for the world." He has also come out for universal military training, and now he has himself joined the staff of the Shipping Board.

William Jennings Bryan was another worker for peace who stood very prominently in the public eye. No sooner was war declared than he sent this telegram to President Wilson: "Believing it to be the duty of each citizen to bear his part of the burden of war and his share of its perils, I hereby tender my services to the Government. Please enroll me as a private whenever I am needed. Assign me to any work that I can do until called to the colors."

Dr. George W. Kirkwey, formerly dean of the Law School of Columbia University and recently Warden of Sing Sing Prison, long an advocate of peace, was elected Chairman of the Emergency Peace Federation on its organization. Within a week he resigned. When President Wilson sent his war message to Congress Dr. Kirkwey said: "The only road to peace is war, and that is good pacifist doctrine from now on. Lots of us have hoped that war might be avoided, but we have seen that it could not be for long. The only thing to do is to fight and fight, and fight hard. One can't play at war."

George Foster Peabody, another pacifist who took a prominent part in the pre-war activities of the Emergency Peace Federation group, came out loyally for the Government. His point of view is shown by the following extract from a letter that he sent to the People's Council in reply to that organization's efforts to enlist his aid: "Citizens believing in the majesty of the moral order are called upon to prove their faith in their fellow men by due reverence and respect for the opinions of others as well as the expressed will of the peace movement."

This thought that the present is not a time to speak of individual creeds, but only of our united purpose and the ardent desire to do everything we can to help our country, has been the guiding principle followed by Katrina Trask, (Mrs. Spencer Trask of Saratoga Springs) of Dr. Charles Herbert Levermore and many other prominent pacifists.

"Loyalty to the United States Government in this crisis is loyalty to every ideal of improvement to which we have subscribed and a lack of support is treason to every article of every creed of reform," said Charles Edward Russell, turning his back on the anti-war article in his creed as a Socialist. William E. Walling, J. G. Phelps Stokes, John Sparago, W. J. Ghent and Upton Sinclair are numbered among the many other Socialists who, in this day of the Hun, recognize a higher loyalty than that which can be given to a political party.