

First and foremost, because I cannot acknowledge the right of the War Office to prevent me from expressing my opinions on political subjects. If I say anything which they think prejudicial to the conduct of the war, they can imprison me under the Defense of the Realm Act, but that is a proceeding to which I am not a party, and for which I have no responsibility. If, however, I enter into a bargain by which I secure certain advantages in return for a promise, I am precluded from further protest against their tyranny. Now it is just as imperative a duty to me to fight against tyranny at home as it is to others to fight against Germans abroad. I will not on any consideration, surrender one particle of spiritual liberty. Physical liberty can be taken from a man, but spiritual liberty is his birthright, of which all the armies and governments of the world are powerless to deprive him without his cooperation.

Apart from this argument of principle, which is hardly of a kind to appeal to military, there are other more practical reasons for not giving such an undertaking as is required. It is impossible to be absolutely certain what one will say when one speaks extempore; and it would be obviously absurd, in reply to an awkward question, to say "I am under an honorable undertaking not to answer that question." Even if these difficulties could be overcome, it is utterly impossible to know what would be covered by such an undertaking, since there is no precise definition of the propaganda to be avoided, and no indication as to whether only certain conclusions are forbidden, or also the premises from which they can be deduced. May I say that I consider homicide usually regrettable? If so, since the majority of homicides occur in war, I have uttered a pacifist sentiment. May I say that I have respect for the ethical teaching of Christ? If I do, the War Office may tell me that I am praising conscientious objectors. May I say that I do not hold Latimer and Ridley guilty of grave moral turpitude because they broke the law? Or would such a statement be prejudicial to discipline in His Majesty's forces? To such questions there is no end.

If the authorities at the War Office were capable of philosophical reflection, they would see an interesting refutation of militarist beliefs in the terror with which a handful of pacifists appears to have inspired them. They have on their side the armed forces, the law, the press, and a vast majority of the public. The views which we advocate are held by few, and expressed by still fewer. To meet the material force on their side we have only the power of the spoken or written word, of the appeal from passion to reason, from fear to hope, from hate to love. Nevertheless, they fear us—such is the power of spiritual things even in the present welter of brute force.

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#### THE MYTH.

Some time ago I received the printed copy of an almost fanatical pro-Ally speech in which the Belgians are represented as martyred saints while Germany is denounced in strong terms as inhuman and barbarous. The general attitude of the speaker is high handed and his utterances come in the name of a higher morality as if dictated by the spirit of humanity. The next morning mail brought me a sonnet from an Anglo-American friend which apparently refers to the same leaflet and sees in the orator's interpretation of current his-

tory a revival of the old solar myth in which the dying sun-god is the victim of the powers of darkness. Here is the sonnet:

The prophet speaks: "Behold the Shining One,  
Who bleeds for us, for righteousness, and law;  
We hail thee, Belgium, with a holy awe,  
And God will crown thee with the moon and sun."  
The prophet speaks: "Behold Dominion,  
The abhorred Lust, the Foe with flaming jaw;  
We curse thee, and the host of heaven will draw  
Thee down, Germania, to the pit—undone."

Is it "the prophet's" "hail" and "curse" have pith?  
Teach they true politics and God's own plan?  
Will they suffice us, as they have sufficed?—  
Is it they but reshape an ancient myth  
In the sick fancies of a good old man—  
Primordial Devil and primordial Christ?

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#### TO UNCLE SAM.

BY GEORGE R. DEAN.

Are you neutral, Uncle Sam,  
In this foreign strife,  
When you're aiding, all you can,  
In destroying life?

On the Sabbath you are heard,  
In the halls of Peace,  
Praying, in a pious tone,  
That the war may cease.

While you pray, and by your leave,  
Powder, shot and shell,  
From your "friendly shores," prolong,  
Mars' destructive hell.

Widows, orphans, shattered men,  
Cry to you in pain!  
"I am neutral," you contend,  
While they plead in vain.

All the world finds fault with you,  
In your greed for pelf,  
Pointing out, you're serving Death  
For your selfish self.

Moral law condemns your course,  
And, adds Holy Writ,  
He who bears a double face  
Is a hypocrite.