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A Permanent Alliance of the English-Speaking Peoples, December 1917

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BULLETIN NO. 38

DECEMBER, 1917

THE AMERICAN RIGHTS LEAGUE

For Upholding the Duty of the Republic
in International Relations

2 WEST 45TH STREET, NEW YORK

A PERMANENT ALLIANCE OF THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING PEOPLES

BEST FOR AMERICA, BEST FOR THE BRITISH EMPIRE,
BEST FOR THE WORLD

Reprinted
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** Am. Rts. League)*
BY

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A PERMANENT ALLIANCE OF THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING PEOPLES

A permanent entente or alliance of all the English-speaking peoples will be the greatest event and the most far-reaching good, not only to America, but to the world at large, that can arise out of our association with the civilized powers of Europe and elsewhere in the task of sweeping the Teuton menace forever from the path of civilization. A little thought will convince the overwhelming majority of the American people of this fact. A wise leadership in our Government will see and act upon it. But in a democracy the degree to which wise leadership dare outrun the positive and active conviction of the mass of voters is, in a good cause, almost always too small for the country's good. Thus it is that political expediency and opportunism, based on lack of faith in the people, has been the most fruitful cause of disaster in democracies. Even when the necessity of a policy is clear, if it is outside the focus of intense popular interest and desire, it may not gain cogent governmental advocacy. Witness the twin crimes of British military unpreparedness in 1914 and our own prior to 1917. This Anglo-American affinity in the shortcomings of democracy is the very reason why there should now be made clear to the American people the facts of all the other worthier affinities and of all the common-sense considerations of policy and self-interest which point undeniably to a permanent close accord of the English-speaking peoples. If these facts be not made clear to the American people, another great national advantage may go by default.

To state the obvious with fiery zeal is a gift vouchsafed sometimes to successful politicians; but to simpler minds it is as difficult as "defying a mutton chop" in fine dramatic form. The stronger the case, the greater the restraining distaste for hyperbole. This is another reason why democracies are in danger of missing their obvious advantage.

Those of us whose education has not been too "practical" to allow them to stray even so far as the common sense of Cæsar's *Commentaries* will recall one thing—that Cæsar classified the people of the north according to their resemblance or difference in "language, institutions, and laws." A better criterion has yet to be found. It is this leaven that molds and this cement that holds to us our own newer populations. It is this that gives us our national entity. The same bond is just as unailing in the potentiality of its interplay between America as a whole and the British Empire as a whole. Better than any others can the English-speaking nations say to one another, "All the world is queer save thee and me—and thee's a little queer"—which is as near the ideal relation as we are likely to get in international relations!

Perhaps the crowning impertinence of the German and German-American propaganda, in the blindness of its pan-German conceit, was the bland announcement that "Anglo-Saxonism must be vigorously combated in this country!" It is funny as well as stupid and malevolent. If Anglo-Saxonism stands for anything it stands for liberty, for self-government, for fair play; it stands for truth, justice, and kindness. It is precisely what our citizens of German descent came here in order to embrace when they fled from the Prussianism

of 1848. Prussianism has never changed. Anglo-Saxonism, thank God, has not changed. And it is a heritage to be jealously guarded.

British blood, so largely Celtic in the British peoples as a whole, still easily predominates over any other strain in the American nation. We all know too much of biology and heredity to dismiss the fact lightly or to be willing to see it cease to be the fact. With the blood came the bases of our national life. No German schloss nor Grecian temple, however fair, can sit well upon our old Colonial foundations. If America ever ceases to be an Anglo-Saxon nation, if Americans ever cease to be intellectually and spiritually the close kinsmen of the other English-speaking peoples, then either America will have ceased to be America or else the British peoples will have lost their identity. The preservation of our priceless common heritage of political, moral, and social ideas—of liberty, steadfastness, chivalry, and kindness—is the essence of the continued existence of America and of the British peoples. Who better suited, then, to covenant for the joint upholding and defense of the precious thing that gives to each its identity, its distinction, and its reason to continue in the world?

Safety for continued development, gained by joint defense, then, may be set down as the paramount aim of an alliance of the English-speaking peoples. To all of them there are many adventitious advantages. Although this war has shown how much more fancied than real is our security, still, in the last resort, we are somewhat less exposed to attack than is Great Britain, on whose side the defensive advantage may be thought the greater. For this reason some few of the peculiar advantages to America may be emphasized. For example, we should no longer stand exposed to the danger of having to vindicate the Monroe Doctrine alone in the face of a strong combination of hostile Powers. The joint use of coaling stations throughout the world could be arranged. Our tenure in the distant Philippines, Hawaii, Alaska, Samoa, and Guam would be doubly guaranteed against challenge—far more than doubly guaranteed if the relative size and location of the British and American fleets be considered. Our paramount position in Panama and the zone of the Caribbean, with the protectorates and quasi-protectorates we are obliged to maintain there, would be far freer from possible anxieties. Indeed, it is not unlikely that in a post-bellum adjustment of war debts England would have no objection to certain territorial readjustments to make sovereignty conform more logically to responsibility, strategy, neighborhood and economic interest in that region.

An Anglo-American alliance would go far to consolidate the interest of the West in equality of opportunity and the "open door" in China. The alliance would make even more unassailable the common position of all the English-speaking peoples in regard to any future immigration questions. However liberal, all of them recognize their absolute obligation to allow no emigration to the serious economic detriment of their own workers. After the war all of them, and especially the United States, certainly ought to recognize the necessity to restrict immigration to a point where it can never threaten the distinctive character and the solidarity of their peoples. If the Chamberlain idea of a customs union of the British empire is revived it will be important to the United States to enjoy, as an ally, special benefits. As one another's best customers, the English-speaking peoples should have no difficulty in making excellent commercial

arrangements. In the carrying trade and in some other affairs they might define respective spheres.

Examination will show all these examples of advantage through an Anglo-American alliance to be mutual ones. How would such an alliance affect the world? The answer is the open record of what the two Powers stand for today—fairness to all, free institutions, truth, justice, and humanity, peace with honor, and evolution along the lines of the highest human progress under nature's laws. An Anglo-American alliance would be the strong fortress of these ideas in generations to come. It would be the rallying point and sure defense of worthy nations imbued with these principles. Already we see nearly every spirited people arrayed with us against those who would turn high civilization's clock back to a time before its dawn. Already we have a league fighting to enforce peace. An Anglo-American alliance will perpetuate its framework. It will stand ready for the rally of the honest and high-minded nations of the world if ever again the tocsin calls to defense against the ruthless, the treacherous, the unjust. So it would be good for the world as a practical safeguard of peace.

Our noble French ally would surely join us in a general understanding for the promotion of peace and possibly for other purposes. So, too, would other like-minded peoples. With the French we have the Celtic tie, and many a bond of admiration of their glorious qualities—bonds which we wish ever to preserve. The world is not ripe for internationalism any more than the nation is ripe for the abolishment of the family. An attempt at a really universal league to enforce peace would be impracticable and too likely to prove an incubator of group intrigue. The practical league to enforce peace for our kind of civilization is to be found in a league of those who believe in it—a league to keep the preponderance of might in the hands of those who believe in and practice right. Here the Allies may well all fall in line together. An Anglo-American alliance would facilitate this post-bellum world aim—a league to prevent recurrence of the horrors that have racked humanity since 1914.

The argument for a concurrent but distinct alliance of the English-speaking peoples, rests, as has been indicated, upon special bases and would have special objects and effects, aside from its convenience as a strong block in the world's peace party. The importance of those special bases—in our common language, institutions, and laws and in our strong blood relationship—cannot be overrated, and, on this side of the Atlantic, it seems to be thoughtlessly very much underrated. To emphasize it is to state plain facts, not opinions. Quite likely the very obviousness of the grounds for our sympathy with the British peoples accounts for the fact that our sympathy with France has seemed continually to receive far more official encouragement. The subject under discussion, as well as the above fact, makes it needless here to praise France, which is beyond praise, or to stress the reality and warmth of American sympathy for the glorious republic, or, indeed, for others of our Allies. Rather is it necessary here to invite cool common sense and reasonable judgment to consider the practical policy of Anglo-American relations. And the better to clear the way for this consideration there is preliminary work to be done.

Of course we are now in *de facto* alliance with Great Britain, and our honor has been pledged, we understand, in a manner as binding as the national conscience itself is binding upon us to see this war through to victory. That there is no formal treaty, ratified by the

Senate, is of course a quibble too small for the most meticulous mind and one that would revolt the heart. Two great peoples, of common language, of common institutions, of common laws, of common literature, philosophy, morality, and aspirations, are allied for a common purpose. Is their association and comradeship being made as intimate and cordial as it should be made? Is a unique opportunity for a lasting entente, invaluable to both and logical in every way, being availed of to the full? Those who have time to think of the future would like to feel surer that they are.

Reports from Washington often sound almost forgetful of the fact that we are coöperating as only a very late arrived ally and not acting independently. Problems that must be old ones to the British (whose case most fits our own) are occasionally referred to with a disquieting air of novelty, when, next to trying a thing ourselves, a British experience is naturally the most instructive possible and the most easily imparted to us. We hear far more of French instruction, French conference, French fraternization than we hear of any of these with the ally who speaks our own language. We do not even know that comradeship in arms in actual contact with our British cousins is contemplated. We do know, from the public press, the fine tact and generous frankness with which British coöperation has been placed at the disposal of the Government and the army of the United States.

Conceivably the President so values the delicate growth of Anglo-American good feeling and has such great schemes for its florescence that he seeks to shield it from even the hazard of rough contact. But surely the peoples concerned are too sensible and their feeling for one another is much too strong to admit of that hypothesis. Can it be that the dregs of a more than moribund tradition, or the feeling, now become effectively anti-American, of certain groups of our population is given a serious thought as a political obstacle to Anglo-American rapprochement? Surely such considerations are too small to avail at all when the world is in cataclysm and when the makings of a policy to bring blessings upon future generations are involved.

Nevertheless, it may be well to indicate the task of sweeping away the cobwebs of historical misappreciation and of silencing group prejudice that lies before a single-minded leadership of American opinion. Any "German-Americans" who oppose British-American accord may just as well drop "American" from their ambiguous title. Such opposition is opposition to the very nature of this country. If they do not like a land of Anglo-Saxon language, institutions, and laws, by all means let them return to Germany. They cannot love us and hate those most like us. They cannot love our institutions and hate our alliance for the protection of those institutions with the land from which they came. They cannot dedicate themselves through vereins, clubs, and German-language press to the fostering of the solidarity of Germanic tradition and at the same time remain true to a nation that rests upon and stands for its opposite Anglo-Saxon tradition. There are no two ways about this.

Then there are some few among Americans of Irish descent who seem to set Ireland above America in their hearts and to set their hatreds above Ireland's true interest. Happily they are quite exceptional. The wiser majority will feel rather today that her irreconcilables and fanatics are Ireland's worst enemies and that now that the Irish people have at least been given the fullest opportunity

to solve their problem in a reasonable way, that violent extremist minority, so far from serving Ireland, is in danger of depriving the Irish people of the world's sympathy. Wise Irishmen will see that an Anglo-American alliance would double America's influence for a liberal policy toward Ireland, that it would tend to be a solvent for ancient ill-feeling. As to the insensate pro-Germanism of a few misguided Irishmen, it is peculiarly grotesque in view of the absolute antipathy between the real Irish nature and the whole reality of Germanism. Indeed, very likely it is the faint Saxon trace in the Anglo-Saxon that has made sympathy so difficult between the Irish race and certain English types!

If America is to survive as a nation, she must build a much hotter fire under her melting pot and must be much more careful about putting new materials into it. We must not be betrayed into a liberalism, or sort of *dementia liberalis*, too broadly international to condescend to concern for America's own interests. Group solidarities, counter-indicated for healthy, vigorous nationalism, must be frowned upon. Even the victims of *dementia liberalis* must have almost learned this lesson from the war. In the question under discussion group prejudice would appear to present no serious difficulty. An honest mind will find its defense difficult.

There remain the esoteric fallacies of Anglophobia and of the "no-entangling-alliances" dogma. Where these obsolete conceptions still darken the modern American mind, they are symptoms due to wrong methods of teaching history and to the work of the quack doctors of our body politic. Charles Altschul, an American, in a small book called *The American Revolution in Our School Textbooks: An Attempt to Trace the Influence of Early School Education in the Feeling toward England in the United States*, concludes of our haphazard educational system in the past that "the public mind must thereby have been prejudiced against England." Of the present teaching he adds that "the improvement is by no means sufficiently marked to prevent continued growth of unfounded prejudices against England." As Mr. Altschul's study shows, the somewhat dramatic exaggeration of Colonial wrongs, with the suppression of adequate portrayal of conditions in England and the slighting of the great efforts of many leading Englishmen on behalf of the then colonies, has been too long allowed to inculcate and preserve a baseless Anglophobia. This is a situation our educational authorities have too long neglected.

In his farewell address Washington opposed permanent and entangling alliances. He said we might "safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies." He feared "sympathy for a favorite nation, facilitating the illusion of an imaginary common interest in cases where no real common interest exists." He said: "An attachment of a small or weak toward a great and powerful nation dooms the former to be the satellite of the latter." He referred to our "detached and distant situation." All this, too, had for its background Washington's strenuous opposition to our alliance with France to make war upon England. Now there is nothing illusory in the common interest of the English-speaking peoples to defend their common form of civilization. There is nothing ephemeral in the need to be prepared to do so. There is no dangerous inequality of power between the United States and the British empire. And this war has sufficiently demonstrated, it may be hoped, that we no longer enjoy a "detached and distant situation." The lesson of

Washington is the lesson of wise statesmanship, and it is not wise statesmanship to allow a nation grown beyond all semblance to its infant size and placed in entirely different circumstances in a vastly different world to be debarred forever from exercising the sovereign attribute of making alliances. Wise sayings of the past, wrenched from their context, are too often abused as a cloak for shrinking from progress in politics. We forget the wisdom and recall the words.

The question of an Anglo-American rapprochement is not to be disposed of by facile dogmatizing. It may range, in result, all the way from a limited entente to consult together in case of threatened attack through the limitless nuances of diplomatic engagements to a treaty with many specific engagements. That a lasting accord and good understanding shall be implemented between the English-speaking peoples is the main thing. The details of degree and scope of the alliance will require wise and deliberate consideration. The immediate question is whether our war policy is now being so shaped as to lay the groundwork for the great event.

As Washington so well understood, sentimentality and favors without consideration between nations are a hollow and unreliable thing. The real service the English-speaking peoples can and have rendered one another would give exceptional solidity to their accord. Other nations have befriended us in the past because it suited their specific interest at the moment to do so. The British have stood by us on general principles. Who but they gave us their ungrudging moral support in the Spanish-American War? What but the British fleet has kept Germany off our backs? What but the attitude of Britain has made our enforcement of the Monroe Doctrine until now an easy task? Who but our British forbears blazed the way for France and for the world and have ever stood for political and intellectual liberty, constitutional self-government, and free institutions? To whom better than to their British kinsmen can Americans turn, in any crisis, assured of substantial sympathy of instinct and of idea, on the sure basis of a common tradition, a blood relationship and common language, institutions and laws? We love France. We are allies of France. We always remember Lafayette and Rochambeau. Are we not in danger of forgetting other and very profound truths of our international relations?

Our Government has most abundant powers and has the faith of citizens. In prosecuting the war to victory wise constructive action will be expected of it upon all policies incidental to the war. High among such politics stands that of Anglo-American relations. It is most earnestly to be hoped that the American Government and the American army and navy will act with vision in order that both at home and abroad our course may be laid always in ways conducive to the great consummation so clearly favored by the course of events—a firm accord of the English-speaking peoples.

An Englishman said this of 1776: "There happened to be on the English throne a German gentleman named George. Over in Virginia there was an English gentleman named George. Now the German George started in to deny the rights of the English George. Being an English gentleman, of course, he would not stand that. So he went to war and defeated the German George." May it be recorded by history that in 1917 a German ruler brought the British and American nations into firm and enduring friendship, and was himself confounded in the process!