

**GERMANY'S ISOLATION:  
AN EXPOSITION  
OF THE ECONOMIC  
CAUSES OF THE WAR**

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Germany's Isolation: An Exposition of the Economic Causes of the War by Paul Rohrbach

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**PAUL ROHRBACH**

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OF THE ECONOMIC  
CAUSES OF THE WAR**



# Germany's Isolation

*An Exposition of the Economic  
Causes of the War*

By

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*Translated from the German*

By

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1915

## TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

FOR some time after August 4, 1914, the writing of war literature was the fashion of the day. Perfectly respectable men and women, who in the ordinary walks of life would not harm the proverbial fly, suddenly plunged their unsuspecting pens shamelessly into the hearts of innocent inkwells and covered miles of snowy paper with sable wreck and ruin. Thundering polemics defending the cause of one or more belligerents and imploring perdition upon the opponent were hurled against suffering humanity. Peaceful citizens in public or private gatherings seemed to have forgotten their time-honored greetings of the day, and, instead, heaped such insults as "Militarism," "Neutrality," "Kultur," and "Allies" upon each other. A huge conspiracy between authors, publishers, linotypes, and binderies was unearthed. America fairly reeled with all this horror.

Now that peace has been restored—at least on this side of the Atlantic—an examination into the *status quo* reveals the curious fact that almost all ammunition employed, from the smallest to the largest caliber, had been canned in American factories. I am excepting, of course,

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such floating mines as Bernhardt, Treitschke, and Nietzsche, which had torn loose from their anchorings years and even decades ago, and are now fished up, overhauled, and again put to belligerous use, strangely enough by the enemy. But the countries at war have contributed least of all to the vast stores of literary ordnance.

In presenting Paul Rohrbach's book to the English-speaking public, it has not been my desire to disturb the tranquillity of re-assured peace. On the contrary, I have been actuated by the purer motive of permitting a voice from across the sea, a voice of reason, to outring the hues and cries of passionate partisanship. I do not wish to be misunderstood. Rohrbach's book is distinctly partisan in the sense that no expression of thought, engendered, as it were, in the very midst of the most tragic event that history has yet recorded, can or should be free from partisanship. But it is the partisanship of reason, to which, of the innumerable host of spiritual defendants, America has ever granted the fairest trial.

A word or two regarding Dr. Rohrbach. He was born in 1869 in Livland and obtained his training in the higher schools of Mitau and at the universities of Dorpat, Berlin, and Strassburg. His academic education completed, he undertook extensive travels in Asia and Africa. From 1903 to 1906 he occupied the position of

imperial commissioner in Southwest Africa. Since then he has been professor of colonial economy in the Commercial Academy of Berlin. Numerous publications, of which the present little volume is one of the most recent, attest his enormous store of first-hand information and practical knowledge of his subject, and in all of them is a note of truth and conviction which cannot fail alike to impress friend and foe. He is a fearless critic of the people no less than of the government, and the most brilliant exponent of a greater colonial Germany. Rohrbach's mind translated into American ways of thinking and doing would render the author one of our foremost fellow citizens and patriots.

The German title of the present volume is *Der Krieg und die deutsche Politik*, which translated into English reads, *The War and the German Foreign Policy*. Whatever may have been the object of the author (or publisher?) in choosing that title, certain it is that it does not adequately express the contents of the book. I have, therefore, availed myself of a privilege which is sanctioned by precedent when I substitute for the title of Rohrbach's choice the more pertinent one of *Germany's Isolation; an Exposition of the Economic Causes of the War*.

PAUL H. PHILLIPSON.

*The University of Chicago,*  
*March, 1915.*



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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THE present work was started several months previous to the Serajevo murder, and completed when the first battles on the soil of Lorraine and Belgium had been fought. In the first five chapters, therefore, the danger of war is presumed as existing in the future—though not in the remote future; in the sixth chapter the outbreak of the conflict, as the result of the Servian crime, is considered imminent; the seventh chapter treats of the war. For a time I was undecided whether or not it would be advisable, after the outbreak of the struggle, to continue and conclude the work. After mature deliberation and counsel with my publisher, I finally decided in the affirmative and resolved, at the same time, to print the chapters which had been written before the war *in their original form*. In that way I hope to be able all the more readily to point out that the crisis which had come to a sudden and violent issue was entirely in the line of the necessary development of affairs.

The war has been forced upon us, and yet we must look upon it as a stroke of good fortune that the sacrificial death of Archduke Francis

Ferdinand led to the *premature outbreak* of the great anti-German conspiracy. Two years later the war would have been far more difficult, its victims more numerous, and its outcome less certain. Today, however, it is safe to assert, in view of the results achieved at the beginning and in the more advanced stages of the war, that the victory over all our enemies, join them who may, *is less a question of military than of moral significance.* The trust in our success is fitly illustrated by an episode in biblical history. We read in the book of Isaiah about the plot of the king of Damascus and Samaria against the house of David in Jerusalem. King Ahaz, so the story runs, was told of the alliance of his two powerful opponents, and his heart and the heart of his people were moved as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind. Then the prophet went forth to meet him and said unto him, "Fear not, neither be fainthearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands; ask thee a sign of the Lord!" But Ahaz feared and said, "I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord." And Isaiah said, "Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel (that is, God is with us)." Danger will indeed pass so fast that the young mother who conceives the child in time of grief,