

## OUR "CONSCIENTIOUS" OBJECTORS.

The conscientious objectors, it seems, have started a movement in Chicago. They are busy drawing fine distinctions between fighting at home and fighting abroad. They aver they would fight to prevent an enemy invasion, but they "refuse" to fight the same enemy in France.

The effort to make these distinctions betrays the true nature of this propaganda. It is not consistent with any logical theory of conscientious objection, but it is quite consistent, we imagine, with the wishes of Potsdam. The promoters of the movement are obviously assisting Germany, yet there may be some who are deluded by the specious plausibility of their argument.

There is only one variety of conscientious objector who is not a faker. He is the man who cannot conscientiously subscribe to fighting of any kind. No matter what the provocation, his philosophy demands absolute nonresistance. He must renounce all thought of using his fists or using firearms for self-protection. He is not entitled to shoot the burglar who enters his home or to fight off the highwayman who picks his pocket. He cannot even call a policeman to do these things for him, because it would not be right to seek another to do what he cannot conscientiously do himself.

No other kind of objector can refuse to fight without placing himself in the traitor class. If he is willing to take the consequences, that's his own business, but he can't plead that he is still loyal to his country.

As a practical proposition, we've got a chance to win the war by fighting in France. But if we waited for an invasion before doing anything we should certainly suffer a smashing defeat. It is silly to say the principles of national defense prohibit fighting anywhere except on home soil. Any one who makes this claim at this time is either un-American or a coward. He certainly has no justification to qualify as a conscientious objector.

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