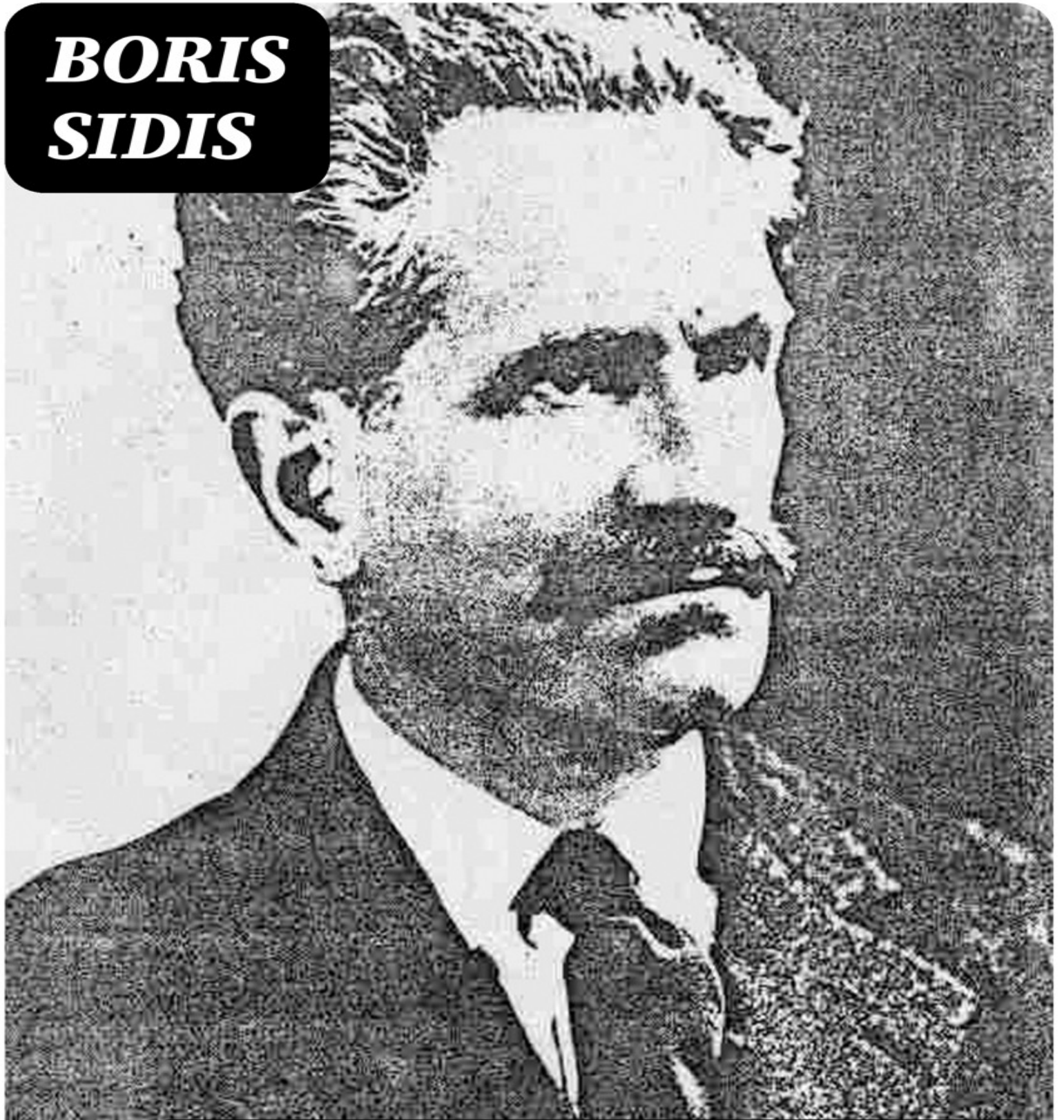


***BORIS
SIDIS***



***PHILISTINE
AND GENIUS***

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Philistine and genius

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PREFACE

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WHEN in 1909 "Philistine and Genius" was delivered by me in the form of a Commencement address before the Harvard Summer School, my prediction of the coming European war storm was regarded by everybody as dream and fancy. My best friends and sympathisers thought my foreboding unjustified and ill-founded. I was an alarmist, a Cassandra, when I spoke of the coming catastrophe which was to shake Europe to its very foundation. When "Philistine and Genius" was published in 1911 the American and European press, dealing with the views advanced in this little volume, completely ignored the following warning given by me:

"About the middle of the nineteenth century Buckle made the prediction that no war was any more to occur among civilized nations. Henceforth peace was to reign supreme. 'The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. . . . Nations shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nations shall not lift up swords against nations, nor shall they learn war any more.' This prophecy was rather hasty. We have had since the Civil war, the Franco-Prussian war, the Spanish-American war, the Boer war, the Russo-Japanese war, not counting the ceaseless wars of extermination carried on by civilized nations among the various semi-civilized and primitive tribes. Civilized nations do not as yet beat their swords into

ploughshares, but keep on increasing the strength of their 'armed peace,' and are ready to fight bloody battles in the quest of new lands and the conquest of new markets.

"In spite of the Hague conference, convoked by the peace-loving Czar, no other age has had such large standing armies provided with such costly and efficient weapons of execution ready for instant use. The red spectre still stalks abroad claiming its victims. We still believe in the baptism of fire and redemption by blood. The dogma of blood redemption is still at the basis of our faith, and, consciously or unconsciously, we brand that sacred creed on the minds of the young generation."

The present European upheaval has finally disclosed to the impartial observer the fearful state of Europe as the final outcome of its "armed peace." Instead of realizing the dangers of armed peace or of "preparedness," we are ready to become a military democracy in which every able-bodied man is a soldier or a sailor, every child is a scout, and every woman a nurse or a munition worker. We are anxious to waste our resources on preparedness rather than on the education of the young. We hanker for the greatest navy in the world at a cost of several billions of dollars. We aspire after a million headed, billion armed navy and army. We clamor for universal, compulsory, military service in which our children should be drilled for murder and slaughter at the decree of a few autocratic officials and officers. We imitate Europe slavishly, in spite of the fact that the policy of preparedness or of "armed peace" has kept Europe in a state of turmoil for generations, has brought her to the brink

of ruin, and has plunged her into the most cruel and most destructive war ever waged by man.

The recent estimate of Count von Roedern, Secretary of the Imperial German Treasury, puts the total cost of the war to date, the end of 1916, for all the belligerents, at fifty-nine and a half billions of dollars. The Mechanics and Metals National Bank of New York City figures that seventy-five billion dollars will be spent for direct military purposes, if the war lasts another year. The enormity of that expenditure can only be realized if we consider that the total wealth of Great Britain and Ireland is eighty-five billions of dollars, that of Germany eighty billions, that of France fifty billions, that of Russia forty billions, that of Austria-Hungary twenty-five billions, and that of Italy twenty billions. Such waste is appalling.

According to the figures given by Mr. Frank H. Simonds, eighteen and a half million casualties, of which deaths make up nearly one-quarter, is the toll already levied on the fighting men of all the belligerent nations by twenty-six months of war. More than any other war the present European struggle squanders the wealth of empires and sacrifices the lives of nations.

Our social status is a reversion to savagery of the most degenerate type, an atavistic lapse towards the paleolithic and neolithic man, only more brutal, on account of the greater power for evil possessed by modern man. What Hun or Vandal ever dreamt of such colossal destruction! The fame of Attila, Jenghiz Khan, Batu, and Tamerlane pales and fades before the glory of the Kaiser. In a couple of years the aggressive German "Kultur" has caused more ruin to