

The Nation

April 25, 1923

Admiral Sims and *The Nation*

OUR neighbor the New York *Tribune*, which makes rather a specialty of attacking *The Nation*, took up our editorial Admiral Sims Challenges the Press with a vim. The *Tribune* sent one of its bright young men, with a copy of *The Nation* in his pocket, to interview the Admiral. We suspect that the *Tribune* anticipated a withering attack upon *The Nation* as the product of the interview. The Admiral replied, however, by elaborating his statement that the submarine atrocity stories were untrue, and gave new force to *The Nation's* challenge to the press and to the Navy Department. In a remarkable interview, which we should like to quote in full, Admiral Sims said:

I do not blame the newspapers. As far as I know the newspapers printed the truth as they knew it. Their sources of information were men who had made the passage, letters from the other side, and naval officers on this side. One of the sacrifices a people necessarily must make during war time is of an accurate knowledge of events. You have got to keep many facts from your own people to keep them from the enemy. *It would be extremely unpatriotic for a newspaper to tell the absolute truth about what is taking place during a war, even if the newspaper could get the absolute truth. . . . [Italics ours.]*

Referring to *The Nation's* challenge to the Navy Department to confirm or deny his charges the Admiral said:

If they go into the Navy Department records they will have to stand behind me but if they just give the offhand impression of some officer based on what he read in the newspapers during the war they probably would not. . . .

I stated . . . that barring the case of the hospital ship *Llandovery Castle* I did not know of any case where a German submarine commander had fired upon the boats of a torpedoed vessel; that the commanding officer and two officers of the submarine that torpedoed the hospital ship in question were tried in Germany after the war and punished; that the submarine commanders generally acted in a humane manner and in some instances gave the boats of torpedoed vessels food and water, and a tow toward land, and sent out wireless signals giving their positions. . . .