THE MENACE OF MILITARISM

By SCOTT NEARING

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"I have come to have a great and wholesome respect for the facts."—Woodrow Wilson (Waldorf-Astoria, New York, Jan. 27, 1917).

"If there is one thing that we love more deeply than another in the United States, it is that every man should have the privilege, unmolested and uncriticised, to utter the real convictions of his mind."—Woodrow Wilson (Soldiers' Memorial Hall, Pittsburgh, Jan. 29, 1916).

"I believe that the weakness of American character is that there are so few growlers and kickers amongst us."—Woodrow Wilson (School Review, Vol. 7, p. 604).

"One thing this country never will endure is a system that can be called militarism."—Woodrow Wilson (Waldorf-Astoria, New York, Jan. 27, 1917).

"We have forgotten the very principle of our origin, if we have forgotten how to object, how to resist, how to agitate, how to pull down and build up, even to the extent of revolutionary practices, if it be necessary to readjust matters."—Woodrow Wilson (School Review, Vol. 7, p. 604).
MILITARISM

"Militarism consists in preparing a great machine whose only use is for war."—WOODROW WILSON (New York, Jan. 27, 1916).

"The spirit and temper which exalts the military virtues and ideals and minimizes the defects of military training and the cost of war and preparation for it."—WEBSTER’S INTERNATIONAL DICTIONARY.

"A futile and wicked statecraft which, in every land, has held up before the peoples the foulest of idols—material security resting upon bayonets."—E. D. MOREL, "Truth and the War," p. 42.

"The prevalence of military sentiment and ideals among a people."—NEW ENGLISH DICTIONARY.

"The giving of undue prominence to military training and military glory; the maintenance of government by military force; warlike or military spirit; used now mostly in reference to the European policy of maintaining great standing armies."—NEW STANDARD DICTIONARY.

"The maintenance of national power by means of standing armies."—CENTURY DICTIONARY.

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I. What Is Militarism?

Militarism is the sway of might, organized for destruction.

The militarist applauds the martial virtues; urges military preparedness and military training; glorifies war; deifies victory; preaches that right must depend upon might; and thus makes the "war-man" a greater benefactor to his race than the "peace-man."

The militarist is always busy preparing for war. He insists that the real purpose of his battleships, cruisers, destroyers, submarines, battalions, regiments, batteries, machine-guns, shrapnel, hand-grenades, gas-tanks and bayonets is the preservation of peace; but no sane man, after seeing the desolation of Europe during the present war, can argue that preparedness makes for peace. Grant that Germany was more thoroughly prepared than any of the other European nations—that fact has not prevented the loss of millions of her sons, and billions of her treasure. Face the fact, honestly, and admit that all Europe has been preparing, feverishly, these forty years—preparing for what? For peace? Read the answer in the record of the first three years of the war. The militarist governments of Europe prepared for the war that the people are now fighting.

Preparedness and militarism, established for the avowed purpose of maintaining peace, defeats their own ends, by making peace impossible, defeat war inevitable. History shows that the great military nations are the
great warring nations—warring for dominion, power, aggrandizement, and world empire, only to fall a prey to the devouring monster they had created to subjugate their enemies.

Worse than the self-destructiveness of militarism is its denial of everything held most precious by the disciples of democracy. Militarism and democracy are contradictory terms.

Militarism stifles democracy.

Militarism is the despotic sway of organized might. Democracy is the co-operative activity of fellowship and brotherhood. Militarism and democracy cannot exist side by side. Where militarism thrives, democracy sickens. When democracy flourishes, militarism is impossible. The founders of the American Republic had learned this fact from their bitter experiences with the European cess-pool of armaments, diplomacy, intrigue, entanglements, preparedness, and incessant military conflict. Therefore, they insisted that the United States should have no standing army, no great navy, and no alliances with European powers.

An army cannot be democratic. It must be controlled by a despot. A militarist nation, building its life upon its army, will fall a victim to the same despotic authority that holds the army in its grip.

The militarized nation forgets the language of democracy—forgets “liberty,” “equality,” “justice,” and “fraternity.” In their place appear such phrases as—“Germany first”; “My country, right or wrong.” The militarist nation announces itself the guardian of the world’s virtue, and prepares itself to preserve and propagate that virtue at all hazards. The militarist nation
regards itself as the salt of the earth. It considers its cause the most righteous cause and denounces its enemies as the enemies of justice and truth.

The militarist nation makes extensive preparations for war, because armies and navies are the only arguments that the militarist considers effective. Militarism is always inaugurated for the avowed purpose of defending freedom at home, or preserving it abroad. Invariably, it blights and throttles liberty.

2. Militarism an Involuntary Servitude

Militarism establishes involuntary servitude.

The free people who accept militarism accept the death warrant of their most precious liberties. At the moment when they admit militarism into their councils, they adopt a system of involuntary servitude that is abhorrent to every principle of human freedom. There is no longer any choice. All of the people—peace-men and war-men alike, must prepare for war. All of the sons, brothers, husbands and fathers, whether they believe in it or not, must be trained to fight. All of the daughters, sisters, wives and mothers must be prepared to sacrifice and suffer. The nation has substituted militarism for democracy and its citizens must pay the price.

There are some men who like war—who enjoy a fight. Upon them militarism imposes no hardship; it rather affords a welcome opportunity.

The vast majority of men are opposed to war. They love their homes and enjoy their families. Their interests lie in the paths of quietness and peace. War they hate. They abhor slaughter, destruction, and the mis-
ery and anguish that trail in the wake of a military campaign. Militarism conscripts the peace-man as well as the war-man. Both must learn the art of war.

The peace-man finds militarism a three-fold slavery. First of all, it is slavery of the body; again, it means slavery of the mind, and in the third place, it involves the slavery of the soul.

The "goose step" is the symbol of the body slavery which goes with militarism. All young men, reaching the "military" age, are sent through a certain kind of training which develops habits of physical obedience by the constant repetition of certain orders and forms. When the commander calls "attention," the conscript straightens up; when the commander says "forward," the conscript advances; when he says "fire," the conscript shoots. The soldier learns to do what he is told, mechanically. Furthermore, all of these young men are trained in the same way. Militarism makes little allowance for the individual. It provides a universal mill through which all personalities must be ground.

One of the officers, whose duty it is to train the American Militia, put the matter in this blunt way—"We must get our men so that they are machines, and this can only be done as the result of a process of training." The logical result of militarism is a physical slavery which makes all of those who have been subjected to the discipline machine-like automatons.

The physical slavery of militarism is merely incidental. More serious is the mind slavery which it involves. Mental discipline, like physical discipline, is good so long as it produces growth. It is dangerous and disastrous only when it results in action without thought.
A democracy expects that its citizens will act only after mature consideration and discussion. The very spirit of militarism makes both consideration and discussion impossible. The object of military training is to produce "unquestioning, absolute obedience." An American military authority writes: "I want a young man, when he is spoken to by some one in authority, to stand up, and look him in the face, and then do what he is told without question." Tennyson, eulogizing the Light Brigade, so carelessly sacrificed at Balaklava, stated the matter admirably:

"T'hirn not to make reply,  
T'hirn not to reason why,  
T'hirn but to do and die."

One of the great kings of Europe said to a group of conscripts: "It may happen that I shall order you to shoot your own relatives, your brothers, or even your own parents—which God forbid—and then you are bound in duty implicitly to obey my orders." The soldier does not think, nor does he choose—he obeys.

Infinitely worse than the body slavery and mind slavery which is involved in militarism, is the slavery of the soul. If there was one thing that the early Americans held more dear than another, it was the right of freedom of belief. For centuries Europe witnessed the struggle that was waged by men who insisted upon the right to follow the dictates of their consciences. Yet under militarism there is an utter denial of the right of belief.

Many men believe in fraternity. To them brotherhood is the truest fact in the world. Democracy is founded on such a faith, and the whole structure of modern demo-
ocratic thought is built upon the principle of universal brotherhood.

The conscript is called and trained for war—to obey orders; to destroy; to mutilate; to kill. "The utmost damage to the enemy" is the rule of war, and the conscript must follow the rule against an enemy that he has never seen; against an enemy that he may not even hate. Face to face with a fellow-man of whose very existence he was until this moment ignorant, he must slay at the word of command.

The "conscription of conscience" is a menace to fundamental democratic life. "Freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and freedom of the press are all opposed to military effectiveness and must disappear step by step if freedom of conscience, the advance trench of democracy, is carried by the militarists. The new political persecution, represented by the adoption of conscription, differs from the old religious persecution in this: Whereas, in the middle ages the heretic could save his life by keeping his mouth closed and his opinions to himself, in the modern political persecution of Twentieth Century militarism, the heretic who may believe that an aggressive foreign policy is unjust, or a war which his country has declared is unprovoked, is compelled not only to keep his opinions to himself, but is forced to go out and 'kill his fellow-men against whom he may have no cause for enmity whatever."

It is sometimes mistakenly asserted that militarism calls upon all men to die for their country. That statement is

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Militarism is the sway of might, organized for destruction. It negates democracy, sweeps aside brotherhood, shackles liberty, and finally destroys its victim. For the individual who is not a lover of war militarism means the slavery of body, mind and soul. It is a scourge to the nations; a tyrant of the human race. Militarism sums up the despotisms and oppressions of the old world. It comes to us out of the ignorance, superstition, prejudice, bigotry, fear and hate that blighted the earth during the dark ages. It should have been discarded a thousand years ago, when centuries of experience had demonstrated its futility, but, like many another outworn institution, it still persists, in various forms, the world over.

3. Militarism in Germany and America

We Americans have always associated the idea of militarism with Germany. For years we have read and spoken and thought of Prussianism and militarism as the same thing. The public press and the public men of the nation have insistently held up the German military system as a menace to the peace, happiness and prosperity of the world.

Bearing in mind the fact that Germany is emerging from Feudalism, while we Americans believe that ours is the premier democracy of the world, let us compare the situation in the two countries. In order to do this successfully we must go back to the years in which both
nations were at peace. Germany in 1913-14 demanded universal military service. Practically all men between certain ages were compelled to spend an apprenticeship period in the army. During this period they learned the ways of army life and prepared themselves for the defense of the fatherland against the rest of the world.

The German conscript, like any other conscript, was not always militaristically inclined. Despite the patriotic training in the schools, and the militaristic training during the service period, hundreds of thousands of Germans left Germany in order to escape the unintelligent servitude demanded by the military system.

The German army was supreme in Germany. Army officers were privileged characters. The press, the school and the pulpit united in praising German military efficiency, and in commending to the people the spirit of German militarism—but always as a means of defending and protecting the Fatherland.

A growing Socialist minority insistently warned and protested against the impending danger. Nevertheless Germany went on her way unheeding.

The Krupps and the other great war makers were meanwhile feeding on preparedness. The building of a new battleship by the British meant increased activity among the Germans. The adoption of improved field artillery by the French forced the Germans to discard their old field pieces. Legislatures were urged, and public opinion was tantalized by preparedness stories. Military and naval programs were joyously proclaimed by the agents of the gun-makers, while the business grew by leaps and bounds.

It might be remarked in passing that the Krupps have
manufactured munitions of war for more than fifty nations, among them most of the present enemies of Germany. That, however, is a mere detail of the business side of munition making. Gun factories exist to produce guns, and guns are made to be sold.

Percy, Mackaye characterized the munition makers in these trenchant words:

"Crowned on the twilight battlefield there bends
A crooked iron dwarf and delves for gold
Chuckling: 'one hundred thousand gatlings—sold!'"

Meanwhile the diplomatic corps was plotting and scheming, always manipulating, always under cover, always enshrouded in darkness, never bringing their nefarious traffic to the light of day. Note how Alfred Noyes describes these international politicians:

"Each was honest after his way,
Lukewarm in faith, and old;
And blood, to them, was only a word,
And the point of a phrase their only sword,
And the cost of war, they reckoned it
In little disks of gold.

"They were cleanly groomed. They were not to be bought.
And their cigars were good.
But they had pulled so many strings
In the tinselled puppet-show of kings
That, when they talked of war, they thought
Of sawdust, not of blood;

"Not of the crimson tempest
Where the shattered city falls:
They thought, behind their varnished doors,
Of diplomats, ambassadors,
Budgets, and loans and boundary-lines,
Coercions and re-calls."

11
Like the munition makers, the diplomats were doing their day's work. They wished harm to no one. They were no more vicious and no more hateful than the rest of mankind. But they made it their business to play nation against nation in preparation for the savage game of war.

More important than conscription, or the army, or the munition makers, or the diplomats, in the system of German militarism were the business interests—the financiers, bankers, editors and manufacturers—who were pushing their foreign markets, placing their foreign investments, building their merchant marine, and constantly insisting upon the expansion of the navy and the maintenance of the army as a protection to their commercial ventures.

The leading statesmen of Germany were involved in the business game. The German system of government, the German organization of diplomacy, the German navy and the German army were at the disposal of the business interests of Germany, and these interests were insisting in season and out of season upon overthrowing the commercial, industrial and financial supremacy of the business men of Great Britain.

The preparedness program was costing the German nation about 400 million dollars a year before the outbreak of the European war. The spirit of the German government was in it, and the hands and bodies, if not the hearts and minds of the German people, were behind it, and they were taught to shout vehemently, "Deutschland Uber Alles."

During the year 1916-17, the United States was still at peace. In what important respects did the militia-
rism of America at peace in 1916-17 differ from the militarism of Germany at peace in 1913-14?

Conscription had not been adopted in the United States, but the demand for universal military service was strong. In fact, a number of States had passed laws looking toward universal service, and the military bill signed by the President in the summer of 1916 carried a provision which practically gave him the power to draft men in case of war. The air was full of rumor, however. The volunteer system of raising and maintaining an army was being discredited and condemned. Throughout the land there had been a persistent clamor for a more drastic scheme of military service. The plans differed, but the business interests were united in their insistence that we have an army. Anyone who suggested the possibility of peace in Europe was immediately denounced, and the energy and thought of the American people were turned actively toward preparedness for war—a war of defense against the danger of a foreign invasion that was staged five times daily in movie houses throughout the land.

Then the President, after having taken the position that there could be such a thing as a "nation too proud to fight," and after assuring the American people (New York City, January 27, 1916) that "no one seriously supposes that the United States needs to fear an invasion of its own territory," made a tour of the country, urging preparedness, and insisting on a large increase in the army and navy.

Meanwhile American junkerdom was getting to its feet. For years it had been looking forward to "the day" when it would come into its own, and "the day" evidently
had arrived. Patriotic fervor glowed through speeches and printed articles. Throughout the country there was a paean of praise for the glory of arms and the satisfactions of war.

At one time the rising war-spirit of the people was directed to Mexico, at another time to England, at another time to Japan, and at still other times to Germany. At all times, however, the slogan was the same. Whether a merchant ship was sunk by the Germans; or a cargo confiscated on the high seas by the British, or a mining property burnt in the hills of Mexico—in any and all cases, the honor of the United States was at stake. The jingo spirit was abroad in the land, and the press, the pulpit and a myriad of men in public life did their utmost to fan it into a war-flame.

The startling charge made by the President of the United States in a statement to the American people (released for Sunday, March 26, 1916) verified even the most extreme statements regarding the interference of business interests with the Mexican situation: “It is my duty to warn the people of the United States that there are persons all along the border who are actively engaged in originating and giving as wide currency as they can to rumors of the most sensational and disturbing sort which are wholly unjustified by the facts. The object of this traffic in falsehood is obvious. It is to create intolerable friction between the Government of the United States and the de facto Government of Mexico, for the purpose of bringing about intervention in the interest of certain American owners of Mexican properties.”

Perhaps the most astounding thing about the whole
situation was that the bankers, journalists, manufacturers, railroad magnates, gas-company officials, and the other direct beneficiaries of special privilege had become, over night, the leading patriots. They developed a sudden and deep devotion to the flag. They loved old Uncle Sam like a brother, and they were prepared to go to any lengths in his defense. Miraculously, to the observer, the people's leading enemies had become the nation's staunchest supporters.

As in Germany, so in the United States, there was secret diplomacy and political scheming. America is nominally a democracy, but the American people know no more about the diplomatic relations and the diplomatic intrigue in which the Government takes part than did the people of Germany before the present war. Daylight diplomacy is no more a reality in Washington than it is in Berlin.

Meanwhile the Bethlehem Steel Company, the DuPont Powder Company, and other munition manufacturers were busy reaping their huge profits, multiplied many times since the outbreak of the war. There was a danger, however, that when the British war contracts ran out they would not be renewed. The American business interests, led by the House of Morgan, which was acting as the American representative of the allied governments, together with the traders in steel, copper, wheat, cotton and other necessaries of life, were growing fabulously wealthy. Their vast profits, stacked up in the form of large dividends and great undivided surplus funds, were being invested in the West Indies, and in Central and South America. American investors were busy. Our business men were making profits while the war lasted.
But when the war was over there would be need for an army and a navy to defend their recent economic conquests, hence, as Congressman Tavenner showed in his speech on the "Navy League Unmasked," these financial agents were liberal in their support of the preparedness propaganda which was sweeping the country.

Picture Germany and America side by side. Universal service a fact in Germany, and soon to be realized in the United States; the army held up for admiration and protected against criticism; the great munition makers making millions out of preparations for war; the secret diplomats carrying on their frightful game, and the great business interests issuing their requests and commands.¹ In both Germany and America there existed all of the earmarks of militarism. The cost of the army and navy to Germany in 1913-14 was 390 millions. The cost to the United States is 1916-17 was 662 millions. In Germany they cried "Deutschland Uber Alles"—in America, "My Country, Right or Wrong!" and "America First."

The parallel favors the United States, only because this country has had less time to develop militarism. The Germans have been before us. For a hundred years they have been building this barbaric structure. We have been busy for only a few months, and yet the extraordinary facility with which we have turned toward militarism during that time warrants the belief that it may not

¹ For an excellent summary of this situation see "The World Wide War Trust," a speech by Congressman Clyde H. Tavenner (Feb. 15, 1915), and "Why War?" Frederic C. Howe, Scribner's, 1916. Mr. Howe writes (p. viii): "It is the struggle of high finance bent on the exploitation of weaker peoples that has turned Europe into a human slaughter-house."
be long before we have introduced into the United States as complete a system of militarism as Germany has ever known.

4. Organized Mendacity

They lied to us!

Consciously, deliberately, with premeditation and malice aforethought, they lied to us! The shepherds of the flock, the bishops of men's souls, the learned ones, the trusted ones—with fear in their hearts and a craven falsehood on their lips, they betrayed us.

Not all of them!

There were some who believed sincerely that they were in the right; there were some who knew no better; there were some who should have known better and were duped, and there were some, oh! so very, very few, who kept the faith—all through the bitter years—and who were reviled, maligned, attacked and jailed—but we had trusted them all and most of them betrayed us.

First of all—most conspicuous and most notorious there were the newspapers—the channels of information that reached the greatest number of American people—that shamelessly and almost without exception, threw their news-columns as well as their editorial pages on the side, first of preparedness and then of war. A meeting called to advocate war would be heralded beforehand in blazing type across the page, and would be reported in elaborate detail. A meeting of the same number of people, addressed by speakers of equal ability, called to consider peace, would be treated with indifference or ignored. Every device that could be relied upon to stimulate fear and to arouse hate was resorted to—the papers
seeming to vie with one another in their efforts to lash American public opinion to a state of war fury.

My life has brought me into contact with many newspaper men. I sat in the office of one managing editor recently, discussing this very matter. At first, by way of defense, he insisted that there was only one side to the question. Then, when I asked him whether he, as a newspaper man of long experience, was willing to state that there was only one side to the greatest public issue that had confronted the world for a generation, he protested, shamefacedly, that the owner of the paper, a business man of prominence, was for war, "and that settles the matter as far as this paper is concerned," he said.

So far did the papers carry their propaganda that in some cases they not only refused to print anti-war stories, but declined to accept paid advertisements carrying anti-war sentiments.

There is no necessity for referring at length to the charge, reiterated on the floor of Congress, and not denied, that a number of the leading American newspapers were subsidized by the Morgan interests for the purpose of lying about the war. Mr. Callaway (Texas) asked unanimous consent to insert in the Record ¹ a statement of the way in which "the newspapers of this country have been handled by the munition manufacturers." Here is the statement:

"In March, 1915, the J. P. Morgan interests, the steel, shipbuilding, and powder interests, and their subsidiary organizations, got together 12 men high up in the newspaper world and employed them to select the most influential newspapers in the

¹ Congressional Record (Feb. 9, 1917; pp. 3220-3221).
United States and sufficient number of them to control generally the policy of the daily press of the United States.

“These twelve men worked the problem out by selecting 179 newspapers and then began, by an elimination process, to retain only those necessary for the purpose of controlling the general policy of the daily press throughout the country. They found it was only necessary to purchase the control of 25 of the greatest papers. The 25 papers were agreed upon; emissaries were sent to purchase the policy, national and international, of these papers; an agreement was reached; the policy of the papers was bought, to be paid for by the month; an editor was furnished for each paper to properly supervise and edit information regarding the questions of preparedness, militarism, financial policies, and other things of national and international nature considered vital to the interests of the purchasers.

“This contract is in existence at the present time, and it accounts for the news columns of the daily press being filled with all sorts of preparedness arguments and misrepresentations as to the present condition of the United States Army and Navy, and the possibility and probability of the United States being attacked by foreign foes.

“This policy also included the suppression of everything in opposition to the wishes of the interests served. . . . They have resorted to anything necessary to commercialize public sentiment and sand-bag the national Congress into making extravagant and wasteful appropriations for the Army and Navy under the false pretense that it was necessary. Their stock argument is that it is ‘patriotism.’ They are playing on every prejudice and passion of the American people.”

Ample opportunity was given for the denial of these charges. On February 17, 1917, Congressman Moore of Pennsylvania introduced a resolution calling for an immediate investigation of their truth or falsity. Had the American newspaper or the business interests involved wished such an investigation, they could easily have
pushed it through Congress at that time, but the investi-
gation was never made.

After all, the truth or falsity of these charges is of little moment. The great, outstanding, bitter fact is that the newspapers, instead of informing us, lied to us—consistently.

But the newspaper is a private business, and if it wishes to be a propaganda sheet for this or that cause, no one need object, provided there is a clear understand-
ing that the paper in question does not propose to tell the truth. When the European war began, millions of Americans still looked to the newspapers for the facts upon which they should base their opinions as citizens of the democracy. They trusted the newspapers as sources of information on a vital public issue, and they were betrayed.

The newspapers were not alone. Others lied to us whose conduct is far less excusable than that of the press. There were the scientists, teachers, research-men—who have given their lives to study; men charged with the sacred duty of seeking out the truth and telling it to the people. And they lied to us.

Bertrand Russell, a professor of logic in Cambridge University, and one of the foremost scholars of England, says: “I cannot but think that the men of learning, by allowing partiality to color their thoughts and words, have missed the opportunity of performing a service to mankind for which their training should have specially fitted them. The truth, whatever it may be, is the same in England, France, and Germany, in Russia and in Austria. . . . Men of learning, . . . might have at-
tempted at this time to make themselves the mouthpiece
of truth, to see what was false on their own side, what was valid on the side of their enemies. They might have used their reputation and their freedom from political entanglements to mitigate the abhorrence with which nations have come to regard each other, and to help toward understanding, to make peace, when it comes, not a mere cessation due to weariness, but a fraternal reconciliation, springing from a realization that the strife has been a folly of blindness. They have chosen to do nothing of all this. Allegiance to country has swept away allegiance to truth. Thought has become the slave of instinct, not its master. The guardians of the temple of truth have betrayed it to idolaters, and have been the first to promote the idolatrous worship.”

What more can be said?
What more is there to say? Except that the same thing that happened in Europe has happened also in the United States and that the college halls and class rooms, almost without exception, have been ringing with a note of partisanship, antagonism, and hate that is not met even in the recruiting station or the training camp.

Then there are the churches. Here and there a minister has raised his voice for peace and brotherhood, but his has been merely one voice, crying in the wilderness of militaristic propaganda

When I think that these men of the cloth, sworn servants of God and followers of Jesus of Nazareth, the men trusted as the spiritual advisers of the people, have been among the most ardent propagandists of hatred and bitterness, I think that I may be pardoned if I simply

1 Bertrand Russell: Justice in War Time, pp. 2-3.
remind the reader that their Leader, after commanding purity, meekness, justice and peace, said: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you," and to note that, in this immense world crisis, most of the clergy have escaped reviling and persecution.

The mighty ones—the masters in the land—the favored, trusted leaders of American public opinion turned militaristic, and after denouncing German jingoism, developed a jingoism of their own, more vicious, because more unjustifiable than that of the Germans. And the great mass of the common people of the land, who relied upon these elect ones and trusted them, have turned away empty, or else with the bitterness of gall and wormwood on their lips.

Shepherdless—for the moment leaderless—the common folk of America are turning this way and that, in an effort to extricate themselves from the network of falsehood that has enmeshed their minds and poisoned their souls. Perhaps, in seeking they may decide with the common people of Russia that the only sure way to have a thing done right is to do it for themselves.

5. The Rape of the School

Is there any limit to their audacity? Not content with militarizing public life; not satisfied to have debauched the press, the rostrum and the pulpit, the militarists everywhere have laid their hands on the public schools, in order to fasten the brutalizing influence of the militarist
spirit on the immature minds and souls of little children, and thus warp them for life in the direction of organized brutality.

Be it remembered, first of all, that the American business interests—the same interests that clamored most loudly, first for preparedness and later for war, control the schools.

A study of the boards of education in 104 of the leading cities, containing one-fourth of the total population of the country, showed that the vast majority of school board members were successful business and professional men. About six-sevenths of the people in an industrial city are wage earners and clerks. All of the business men, bankers, real estate men, doctors, lawyers and teachers, and all other professional and business men constitute only a tiny fraction of the industrial population. Yet this small group in the community dominates the public school system almost completely. In the cities covered by this study less than one school board member in ten was a wage earner.

Throughout the United States to-day the school children are being militarized in as thoroughgoing a manner as the children in Germany were militarized before the war. In the first place they are taught to regard America as the greatest, freest and best nation on earth. Such misrepresentation, carried on under the guise of patriotism, was very finely rebuked by Woodrow Wilson in a speech on "Spurious Versus Real Patriotism": "Any teacher who teaches a child that the flag of the United States is the only flag that stands for self-government and liberty and equality is teaching a radical falsehood."  

There are other nations in the world besides the United States. Any system of education which denies this fact, which tends to make American children regard their own country as the only important country in the world, colors their point of view, and makes for a spirit of intolerance and bigotry that has always proved the staff and stay of the militaristic spirit.

The children are further militarized in the schools by being taught to revere military heroes. History is presented to them as though the chief occupation of the human race during the past had been a military one, when, any people—even a great military nation like Rome—devotes only a small portion of the time to actual military operations. Nevertheless, the great general is exalted; the glories of war are proclaimed, and the children grow into maturity believing that the greatest service they can perform for their country is to kill for it.

The people of the United States have devoted practically all of their time during the last 200 years to the arts of peace. Their conquest of a continent has been built on science, not on military tactics. Yet American history is so taught in the schools as to fill the children’s minds with the details of war, the discussing of battles and of military exploits, without giving them even a remote idea of the important economic and social changes which far overshadowed the military activities in their importance to the American people.

Not content with these activities, directed toward what is described as “patriotic training” in the schools, the educational authorities are everywhere introducing military training among the boys, in spite of the protest voiced by the most prominent educators in the United States.
A report from the Committee on Military Education of the Department of Superintendents of the National Educational Association, presented at Kansas City, March 2, 1917, after a careful analysis of the whole subject, reviews the evidence; shows that in foreign countries military training for boys has been tried and failed; quotes Generals Wood, Goethals and Young and other leading authorities of this country as being opposed to military training for boys; refers with approval to the Special Commission on Military Education for Massachusetts (1915) and the Commission on Military Training in High Schools for New Jersey (1917); cites the experience of Massachusetts, where for many years military drill has been maintained in the schools of a number of cities with the result that "the overwhelming weight of opinion from school teachers, military experts, officers of both the regular army and the militia, and the general public is against military drill," and finally insists that "health, strength, vigor, alertness, endurance, self-reliance and self-control can be taught more effectively by a well graded course in physical training than by any other form of so-called military training." The report of the New Jersey Commission concludes that "while military drill is acknowledged to be inadequate for military purposes, advantage is claimed for it as a means of character development . . . and as a means of furnishing exercise or physical training, . . . no evidence has ever been presented which demonstrates that members of school cadet corps are better morally or more free from defects than other boys. As a sole means of physical training it is condemned almost universally by experts in that subject."

The children in the schools might be taught truly
enough that war is a social disease, vice and crime combined; that it is a disease because it disturbs the normal life of society; that it is a vice because the nations that indulge in it destroy themselves, and that it is a crime because through it one nation destroys another. The children might be taught that war is morally inexcusable, legally unnecessary and socially preventable. In order to have this point of view forced upon their attention, they might have the causes of war analyzed and explained to them just as the causes of physical disease are analyzed and explained.

The children come out of the schools with an unintelligent acceptance of war as a matter of course. Many of them come out feeling that war is a grand, fine, splendid thing. Most of them look upon war as unpreventable and therefore inevitable. They are prepared for war just as they are prepared for death and taxes.

Any nation which hopes to maintain its supremacy in the modern world, any group of people who desire to play an effective part in shaping the life of the 20th Century toward human brotherhood and social reconstruction, cannot expect to play their part by taking so shortsighted a view of the situation. The kind of emphasis now laid in the American schools upon war and military training is bad for the children and bad for the nation, nor is it of any particular value in creating the basis for successful army or military life. It is jingoistic and militaristic in the cheapest sense in which these terms may be used.

During these many years we have been deploiring the fact that the German children were militarized in their cradles—were taught to love the Fatherland above all
else, and were thus made ready tools for the army camp
and ready dupes for autocracy. Now, in a twinkling, we
Americans have adopted the worst phases of the Ger-
man system and ignored the best.


Liberty is very dear to the American people. It is
also quite commonplace.

Americans have come to look upon liberty as a matter
of course, just as they regard the showers of April and
the snows of December. They had forgotten that the
price of liberty is eternal vigilance.

The founders of the American democracy struggled
manfully for their liberty and they prized it highly. John
Adams, defending the Declaration of Independence, is
supposed to have said, "Live or die, survive or perish—I
am for the Declaration." Then came the long bitter
struggle for liberation from the despotism of George
III. Woodrow Wilson, in describing that struggle, says
of the American flag: "That flag was originally stained
in very precious blood, blood spilt, not for any dynasty,
nor for any small controversies over national advantage,
but in order that a little body of three million men in
America might make sure that no man was their mas-
ter."¹ On the same evening he said: "America is noth-
ing if it consists merely of each of us, it is something only
if it consists of all of us, and it cannot consist of all of us
unless our spirits are banded together in a common enter-
prise. That common enterprise is the enterprise of lib-
erty and justice and right." A moment before he asked,

¹ Soldiers Memorial Hall, Pittsburg, January 29, 1916.

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"Do you never stop to reflect just what it is that America stands for? ... She stands as an example of independence, as an example of free institutions, and as an example of disinterested international action in the maintenance of justice."

These views, voiced so eloquently by the President, were shared by millions of his fellow-countrymen. They were reiterated and emphasized in his address to Congress on April 2, 1917, when he insisted that: "Only free peoples can hold their purpose and their honor steady to a common end." In his condemnation of the German despotism, with its schemes and intrigues, he insisted that such plots "are happily impossible where public opinion commands and insists upon full information concerning all the nation's affairs." "We shall fight," he added, "for the things which we have always carried nearest to our hearts—for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own government."

These utterances, on April 2nd, were followed by the deluge. A little handful of men in Congress, acting, as they declared, up to their convictions in the matter, opposed administrative policy. Among them were men like LaFollette and Sherwood, who, for years, had championed the rights of the people. If these men had been traffickers in blood they could not have been subject to more savage abuse. Representatives of the people—some of them elected to Congress because their party had kept the country out of war—who persisted in opposing the war were branded as traitors, cartooned, lampooned and insulted in every conceivable way. They were pursuing their constitutional duty in scrutinizing public acts.
They were, in a number of cases, obeying the direct mandate of their constituency. Yet they were villified more foully than the men who have bought and sold their country for cash in its legislative halls.

For weeks before the second of April, freedom of speech had been restricted throughout the United States. In some cities the police had prohibited regular meetings, called in private halls by reputable, responsible citizens. Street meetings had been interrupted and broken up by the police in many localities. This proved but a foretaste of what was in store for those freeborn American citizens who exercised their inalienable right to express themselves on public matters.

The chief question before the people, in those days, was the war. Despite protest meetings and petitions, the Administration seemed to be unwilling to put the question of war or peace up to popular vote.

In August, 1914, the American people lamented because the unfortunate, militarized citizens of autocratic Germany were forced into war without their consent, but in April, 1917, the citizens of democratic America were forced into war without their consent. Nor did our government have the excuse of the German government—invasion. There was ample time. A referendum might have been taken and a precedent in popular control set for the whole world—but no referendum was held.

The war was the big issue of the day. Millions of American citizens opposed America’s participation in the war. The people, who had, five months previously, returned a party to power because it had kept the country out of war, now found themselves involved in a war for which their consent was never obtained. Yet the war was
forbidden as a subject of discussion all over the United States.

Freedom of assemblage was denied in numerous instances. Halls were refused to citizens when they mentioned the word "Peace." Freedom of speech was further curtailed and the whole country thrown into panic by two "administration" bills—one providing for censorship on speaking and printing; the other carrying with it conscription.

The American people were dazed. They had imagined their liberties secure. They had told themselves that their rights would be endangered only in case the Kaiser or the Mikado crossed the Seas, but in a few short weeks, free speech and freedom of assemblage—two of the basic rights of democracy—had been shamelessly denied.

Then came the fight over the Conscription Bill. Opposition developed in Congress. There were vigorous protests against it from the people in all parts of the country. The bill involved a principle contrary to that generally accepted by the American people. The volunteer system was not to be tried at all. Instead the young men of America were to be compelled to enter the army and to cross the ocean to wage a war more than four thousand miles from home. People felt that the bill would not—could not pass, but it did pass, with but a scattering handful of opposing votes.

Again the people had demanded that a referendum be taken and that they be heard. Again they had been brushed aside and the bill passed in the face of vigorous popular disapproval.

Meanwhile the police and secret service agents had
inaugurated a reign of terror. Not content with the ferocious newspaper denunciations of all who presumed to stand for peace after the American government¹ (not the American people) had engaged in the war, the government agents hounded the advocates of peace, arrested them on the slightest pretext and lent an atmosphere of militarism to American life that the people of the present generation had not thought possible.

7. Conscription

The word "conscript" has always been uttered with contempt by the people of the United States. Conscription has called to their minds kings, emperors, kaisers and czars, making wars upon one another for such petty reasons of dynastic difference or national controversy as might affect their personal, social or economic interests.

The traditions of American life have been the traditions of volunteer service. America has been democratic, and a part of that democracy is the spirit of freedom in the rendering of public service.

When the Conscription Bill came up in Congress, it was vigorously denounced by some of the most influential Representatives and Senators.

The President himself had declared only a year before that such a measure was in his estimation un-American as well as unnecessary. When he was discussing his plan

¹ "I sometimes think that it is true that no people ever went to war with another people. Governments have gone to war with one another. Peoples, so far as I remember, have not, and this is a government of the people, and this people is not going to choose war."—Woodrow Wilson (Milwaukee, Jan. 31, 1916).
for volunteer reserve forces, he said in Convention Hall, Kansas City (February 2, 1916): "There are men in Congress asking, 'Can you get the five hundred thousand men? Will they volunteer?' Well, I believe you could get them out of any one State in the Union." Two days before in Chicago, he ridiculed the idea that volunteer service might fail. "I am sorry for the sceptics who believe that the response would not be tremendous; not grudging but overwhelming in its abundant strength."

Congress rang with the conscription debate. Champ Clark on April 25th said: "If the President had, a day after the war was declared, asked Congress to authorize him to call for 500,000 volunteers, or even a million, both houses would have passed the bill in forty-eight hours and by this time we would have had thousands of volunteers in camp and in training." Mr. Clark quoted a letter, dated February 10, 1916, from the President to Secretary Garrison: "As you know, I do not at all agree with you in favoring compulsory enlistment for training." Again, on Memorial Day, May 30, 1916, the President is quoted as saying at Arlington: "I have heard a great many people talk about universal training. Universal volunteer training, with all my heart, if you wish it, but America does not wish anything but the compulsion of the spirit of America." "In the estimation of Missourians," said Mr. Clark, "there is precious little difference between the conscript and the convict."

Senator Borah opposed conscription vigorously. "Conscription is the basis of militarism. It is the beginning of the military policy of every despot. It is the last resort of a republic and has been so from the beginning of time."
After a ringing defense of the volunteer system, with which he dealt constantly during the Civil War, Congressman Isaac R. Sherwood said: "I am against conscription because it is un-American and undemocratic, and unjust to the stalwart manhood of this nation" (April 26, 1917).

Perhaps the most telling things against conscription were said by the Hon. George Huddleston (Jan. 10, 1917): "The militarists having succeeded in committing Congress to a policy of vast increase of Army and Navy, now take the next step in their program and demand conscription. . . . Conscription, as a system, is universally feared and hated. No nation has ever been willing to endure it except under the fear of destruction." Congressman Huddleston then asks: "Who favors conscription?" He answers: "The military satrapy"; "the great financiers"; "war-traffickers, munition-makers, builders of ships for the Navy, and contractors for Army supplies"; "the parasite press," and "syncophants and snobs." He adds: "I would not charge all who favor compulsory service as belonging to the classes I have denounced. No doubt many unselfish and patriotic men favor conscription, have been convinced that it is necessary; but in the main these have been misled by a false propaganda. The agitation has had its source and main-spring in the selfish and undemocratic classes. . . . Outside the classes looking for promotions and profits, the demand for conscription comes chiefly from the big taxpayers, not from the farmers, merchants, and home-owning classes, but from the big business and financial interests. . . . Our Army and Navy are chiefly desired to support a foreign policy of aggressive commercial expansion, for high financiering in the Orient and South Amer-
ica, and for the exploitation of mines and railroads among weaker and undeveloped peoples, thereby bringing us into sharp competition with the greed of European financiers.” In conclusion, Congressman Huddleston said: “If there be any sound argument in favor of compulsory service, I do not know what it is. I do know that conscription is undemocratic. I know that in its inherent nature, as are all militaristic schemes, it is destructive of equality and of the rule of the whole people. It destroys men’s capacity to govern themselves as well as their opportunity to exercise their will. . . . Let us not make the big mistake of surrendering our liberties in order that we may be prepared to defend them.”

No effort was made to discover whether the American people favored conscription. It had not been an issue in the campaign and, although there was some talk of a referendum, like the one taken in Australia and defeated by a good majority, no serious attempt was made to consult the public.

The newspapers of the United States favored Conscription. Day by day they beat in upon the consciences of the American people and of their representatives the necessity for compulsory military service. Day by day the opposition to conscription weakened in Congress until when the roll vote was called only a handful cast their votes against the bill.

A few voices questioned the constitutionality of conscription, but they were lost in the patriotic applause from officialdom. Champ Clark, in his speech against conscription, said:

“Gentlemen, I am going to read a few words from an old document. I am not certain if I ought not to apolo-
gize for reading it at all, but, nevertheless, I am going to read it. It is The Constitution of the United States," and he asked later: "My fellow representatives, has the Constitution of the United States also become a 'mere scrap of paper'?" During the debate there were read several quotations from a famous speech made by Daniel Webster in Congress, December 9, 1814, in which he opposed the draft bill introduced at that time. He said: "After the best reflection which I have been able to bestow on the bill before you, I am of the opinion that its proposals are not warranted by any provision of the Constitution. . . . It is the attempt to exercise the power to force the free men of this country into the ranks of the army for the general purpose of war, under the color of military service." He added: "That measures of this nature should be debated at all in the counsels of a free government is a cause for dismay. The question is nothing less than whether a man's social rights or personal liberty shall be surrendered, and despotism embraced in its worst form." Later, he said: "A free government with arbitrary means to demonstrate it is a contradiction, a free government without adequate provisions for personal security is an absurdity, and a free government with the power of military conscription is a solecism, at once the most radical and abominable that ever entered into the head of man." After warning Congress that the States would protect their citizens against Federal conscription, Webster ended his speech with the statement: "If the administration has found that it cannot form an army without conscription it will find, if it ventures on this experiment, that it cannot enforce conscription without an army. The government was not constituted for
such purposes. Framed, in the spirit of liberty and in
the love of peace, it has no powers which render it able
to enforce such laws. The attempt, if we make it, will
fail, and, having already thrown away our peace, we may
thereby throw away our government."

There were stories of bitter opposition to the final pas-
sage of the Conscription Bill. It had required two years
to put over conscription in England; the proposal had
gone down to defeat in Australia; the authorities had not
yet risked it in Canada, yet in the great American Demo-
cracy, priding itself upon its liberty, the bill was finally
passed on May 18, six weeks after the declaration of
war. The victory of the militarists at home was over-
whelming and complete.

8. Fear and Hate!

War is built of fear and cemented with hate. Love of
family, love of friends, love of country are incidental.
Fear and hate are absolutely necessary to militarism.

Love is as potent a force as hate—more potent in the
long run, because it is more constructive. Hate poisons,
rends, crushes, annihilates. Human society, human pro-
gress, and human achievement are built upon love.

Love expands the human soul. Hate narrows and em-
bitters it.

Love and hate are two opposite human qualities. All
people are capable of both loving and hating. Militarism
is based on the idea that people should be taught to hate.

People do not naturally hate one another. Man is a
social animal. Yet, through the ages, the masters of the
world have used hate to fasten the shackles of their
power on the human race. In order to stimulate hate, they have resorted, uniformly, to fear—the fear of hell, the fear of slavery, the fear of hunger, the fear of all things new and strange. Had men been enlightened; had their minds been trained and their souls freed from bigotry and prejudice, had they been permitted to safeguard themselves against hunger, they would have refused to fear and the exploiting powers of the masters would have been lost. Despotism, vested wrong, and every form of injustice thrives on hate. Therefore, hate has been taught as nothing else has ever been taught in the world, and upon it militarism has built its fortresses.

People have been schooled to look upon “frightfulness” as a German vice. They talk as though other nations wore kid gloves at the war-game. As a matter of fact, all wars have been frightful.

Recall the words attributed to some of our greatest Americans:

George Washington—“War is the plague of mankind.”
Thomas Jefferson—“I abhor war.”
General Sheridan—“War is so irrational and destructive that it will eliminate itself.”
John Hay—“The most ferocious and futile of human follies.”
General Sherman—“War is Hell.”

This war, we are told, is to protect the democracy of England against the autocracy of Germany. We have heard, time and again, that the Germans believe in “frightfulness,” but how many of us have read these tusk-gnashings from leading military authorities of England:

Major Stuart Murray—“The worst of errors in war is a mistaken spirit of benevolence.”
Dr. Miller Maguire—"The proper strategy consists, in the first place, in inflicting as terrible blows as possible upon the enemy's army and then in causing the inhabitants so much suffering that they must long for peace and force their government to demand it."  

When Great Britain closed the North Sea to commerce and sowed it with mines, with the avowed intention of preventing the importation of foodstuffs and thus starving seventy millions of German people into submission, she was carrying out the true spirit of the war business.

When Germany announced her submarine blockade and began her general submarine warfare on commerce for the avowed intention of starving forty-five millions of British people she was carrying out the true spirit of the war business.

Mr. Morel (p. 61) quotes an interview which W. T. Stead had in 1910 with the head of the British Navy: "The humanizing of war! You might as well talk of humanizing hell! If I am in command when war breaks out, I shall issue as my orders: 'The essence of war is violence. Moderation in war is imbecility. Hit first, hit hard, and hit anywhere.'"

The purpose of war is destruction. Militarism leads to the preparations necessary for the destructive activities of war. The more complete the preparation, the more thoroughgoing will be the destruction.

Without hate, destruction is impossible. If all men loved their fellows, they would not spoil their crops, burn their homes, starve their children, ravish their women,

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wipe out their towns and cities, and rip them into shreds with every device which the wonderful ingenuity of man has brought to play in the manufacture of the engines of war. Men who truly loved could have no part in the bloody havoc of Europe's shambles.

Men's minds must be worked on before they will fight. They must be taken as little children in the schools and taught that war is necessary, glorious and right, if it be waged against a hated enemy. Then the training camp must take all of the boys who reach a certain age and prepare them to "get their man" with the rifle, the machine-gun, and the bayonet. When, finally, a war is to be "put over," the newspapers must play up the iniquities of the enemy and the virtue of the friend; preachers, teachers, and men in public life must praise war, plead, exhort, and even command. Finally, the administration must pass a bill providing for conscription, and force the people into the trenches—calling those who hold back "slackers" and other derisive names.

The whole thing is so far from the spirit of America—this doctrine of fear and of hate, without which wars would be impossible. The American people have advanced so far beyond the savage spirit that leads one man to slaughter another, that the war game can be played here only after a vast amount of careful stimulation.

So evident was this spirit in American life that President Wilson commented upon it frequently. He declared his astonishment that anyone should be preaching war throughout the country: "There are actually men in America who are preaching war, who are preaching the duty of the United States to do what it would never do before, seeking entanglement in the controversies which
have arisen on the other side of the water—abandon its traditional and habitual policy and deliberately engage in the conflict which is now engulfing the rest of the world. I do not know what the standard of citizenship of these gentlemen may be. I only know that I cannot subscribe to those standards.” ¹

The President saw clearly, at that time, that the American people were not anxious for war and were unwilling to engage in it. “The spirit of America would hold any Executive back, would hold any Congress back, from any action that had the least taint of aggression upon it. We are not going to invade any nation’s territory.”¹ “This war was brought on by rulers, not by the people; and I thank God that there is no man in America who has the authority to bring war on without the consent of the people.”² Nevertheless, the American people are now at war.

Balzac says that in man the brute ends and the angel begins. The war-mongers depend upon stirring up the brute. They cry their fears; they peddle their hate. They strive, by every means at their disposal, to play upon the more primitive and savage of the human instincts. They thrust the angel aside; they rip off the thin covering that centuries of civilization have been able to lay over the brute, and the brute reigns, supreme.

“The essence of war is violence. Moderation in war is imbecility. Hit first, hit hard and hit anywhere.”

¹ Des Moines, Iowa, Feb. 1, 1916.
¹ Topeka, Kas., Feb. 2, 1916.
² Chicago, Jan. 31, 1916.
9. The Love of Comrades

The militarist rears his soul-crushing structure upon hate and fear. In the name of patriotism, or, perchance, even of democracy, he calls upon his fellows to strike, maim, kill, destroy. How, then, can he who subscribes to the doctrine “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” make a good soldier?

Let us have done with hate and fear! The world is too old; humanity is too wise; we have gone too far; we have experienced too much to turn back. All through the ages, it has been tried—this attempt to overcome evil with evil. All through the ages it has been tried—this insane effort of one man to compel a fellow being to see life his way. And all through the ages the effort has proved a failure.

The greatest thing that you can do for people is to set them free—to free their bodies from hunger; to free their minds from ignorance; to free their souls from bigotry and hate. He who helps to liberate a fellowman performs the truest act of brotherhood, for by so doing he places before his brother the opportunity to have a well-made body, an enlightened mind and a soul eager to embrace the glad, radiant, beautiful message of the life-spirit.

There are two things in life that matter profoundly—one is the soul of your fellow; the other is the soul that is in you. Guard sacredly the spirit of brotherhood; thrust aside all things that tempt you to be less than yourself!

The present crisis will pass—but the fraternity of the human race and the intimate spirit of life that abounds in
all of us, endures forever. It is from that source that the great society of the future must spring—no other source is sufficient because no other is truly constructive. No other will link together the different portions of the human race into indissoluble, human society.

Walt Whitman, in one of his finest passages, looks ahead to the great day in the history of the world when the real things of life will be understood:

"I hear it was charged against me that I sought to destroy institutions;
But really I am neither for nor against institutions;
(What indeed have I in common with them?—
Or what with the destruction of them?)
Only I will establish in the Manhattan, and in every city of these States, inland and seaboard,
And in the fields and woods, and above every keel, little or large,
that dents the water,
Without edifices, or rules, or trustees, or any argument,
The institution of the dear love of comrades." ¹

The verdict of history is unmistakable. Militarism in every form has been tried and tried again. Force, might, power, violence, and coercion have overthrown nations and empires, devastated whole sections of the earth's surface and made human life next to impossible, but they have never built an enduring social structure.²

¹ Walt Whitman: Leaves of Grass.

² "If men do not love one another, they cannot love peace. If men are intolerant of one another they will be intolerant of the processes of peace, which are the processes of accommodation. 'Live and let live' is a very homely phrase, and yet it is at the basis of social existence."—Woodrow Wilson (Aeolian Hall, New York, Jan. 27, 1916).
No nation has ever survived militarism. In modern times the nations of the West have followed each other in rapid succession. Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt, Greece, Macedonia, Carthage, Rome, the Italian cities, Spain, Holland, France, Great Britain—one by one they have risen to power built on conquest and one by one disorder, violence, parasitism and decay have overtaken them. Rome, at the height of her power was the richest, and perhaps the best organized of any empire about which we have a record, but at the height of her “preparedness” when she was richest, and apparently most powerful, her civilization fell to pieces like a broken card-house.

At the longest, Rome’s supremacy could not be said to have lasted over six hundred years. Meanwhile the civilization of the Chinese has lasted for perhaps six thousand years. China has never been a military nation. She has preached peace and practiced it. It was not until we went among them and taught them military science in the name of the meek and peace-loving Jesus that these “heathen” ever had a standing army. Yet century after century their civilization endured while the military nations of the west rose and fell.

An individual will die of fear and hate. Nations do the same thing.

Society will be successful only as we build “the institution of the dear love of comrades.” No home, no neighborhood, no city and no nation can endure without it.

8 “There must be, not a balance of power, but a community of power; not organized rivalries, but an organized common peace.”

“IT must be a peace without victory.”—Woodrow Wilson (Address to the Senate, Jan. 22, 1917).
Permanent society cannot be constructed on any other basis, because on no other basis will people ever live and labor and build together an enduring home for the human race.

10. *Democracy’s Answer to Militarism*

The love of comrades is the basis of democracy. Liberty and justice have their foundation in brotherhood. It is for that reason that democracy has always opposed militarism. It is for that reason that militarism has always destroyed democracy.

Time and again efforts have been made to establish democracies, and time and again a little coterie of ambitious power-seekers have gutted democracy with the sword. And mark you, this attack has come not from without, but from within.

The spirit of democracy will not tolerate the presence of militarism. The true democrat resents it with all of the energy at his command.

Particularly in American life has this opposition to despotic, arbitrary authority showed itself at every turn. The American people, from the very beginning, have cried aloud to the world the glad tidings of liberty, justice, popular sovereignty and equal opportunity.

Instantly they have opposed any show of false authority. Their whole past protests against the despot.

Woodrow Wilson has pointed out this fact in striking language: “We have seen a good many singular things happen recently. We have been told that it is unpatriotic to criticise public action. Well, if it is, then there is a deep disgrace resting upon the origin of this nation. This
nation originated in the sharpest sort of criticism of public policy. We originated, to put it in the vernacular, in a kick, and if it be unpatriotic to kick, why, then the grown man is unlike the child. We have forgotten the very principles of our origin, if we have forgotten how to object, how to resist, how to agitate, how to pull down and build up, even to the extent of revolutionary practices if it be necessary to readjust matters. I have forgotten my history if that be not true history.”¹ This is true history, and the American people know it, not through recent experience, but because it has been bred into them by long years of constant reiteration.

The answer of democracy to militarism must be clear, emphatic and absolutely final. Whatever its form, we will have none of it.

As an American citizen, who has given time and thought to the question of militarism, I should like to address this statement to the President of the United States:

1. You have said—“I have come to have a great and wholesome respect for the facts.”
   The facts about militarism are conclusive. Always it destroys democracy, and the experience of the United States during the past three years indicates that we have moved at break-neck speed toward militarism.

2. You have said—“If there is one thing that we love more deeply than another in the United States, it is that every man should have the privilege, unmolested

and uncriticised, to utter the real convictions of his mind.”

During the past three years, both in Congress and among the people, there has developed a spirit of intolerance that threatens the very foundations of democracy. Free speech and the right of free assemblage have been denied. Congress, by passing the Conscription Bill, interfered, directly with free opinion. The situation has ripened until those who are even known to hold convictions contrary to the viewpoint of the ruling powers are outlawed and those who utter such convictions are treated like public enemies.

3. You stated it as your conviction that “The weakness of American character is that there are so few growlers and kickers amongst us.”

You may be certain that in the immediate future you will find little or no cause for complaint on this head. There has been comparatively little growling and kicking in the United States. Citizens have been satisfied and easy-going. They have taken their liberties for granted, believing that they were secure against any possible invasion, except from across the sea. The events of the past few months have undeceived them. The spirit of easy-going complacency has been replaced by a feeling, first of surprise, wonder, and then of fierce resentment. The nation is aroused. The people see, at their very doors, the savage form of that militarism which they have learned to hate as it revealed itself in the guise of Prussianism. The
past few years have produced a goodly quota of growlers and kickers and the next few will create many more.

4. You say—"One thing this country never will endure is a system that can be called militarism."

You are right. No display of military force, no invasion of public rights by the military authority, no infringement of the standards of democracy from any source will be tolerated by the American people. They will not endure militarism. They will not bow to military sway. No show of force will intimidate them and no resort to violence will stay them. The American people are bound to preserve liberty and in order to do this they must outlaw militarism.

5. You need not fear for the American people. We have not forgotten "the principles of our origin." We have not forgotten "how to object, how to resist, how to agitate, how to pull down and build up, even to the extent of revolutionary practices if it be necessary to readjust matters."

What is more, we propose to readjust matters and we call upon you as the representative of the American people, and as their chief executive, to use your power and authority to conserve American liberty. You know better perhaps than any other great American what the spirit of American life means. You stated its purpose with rare ability when you said, "If there is one passion more deep-seated in the hearts of our fellow countrymen than
another, it is the passion for peace. No nation in the world ever more instinctively turned away from the thought of war than this nation to which we belong. . . . I myself share to the bottom of my heart that profound love for peace." And again, "In all of the belligerent countries, men without distinction of party have drawn together to accomplish a successful prosecution of war. Is it not a more difficult and a more desirable thing that all Americans put party prepossessions aside and draw themselves together for a successful prosecution of peace? I covet that distinction for America; and I believe that America is going to enjoy that distinction."

The prosecution of peace is no simple matter. It involves first of all a desire to avoid war. In the second place, it involves a thorough understanding of the causes of war. In the third place, it involves the building up of a system of organization which will prevent these causes from operating as they have operated in the past.

The desire to prevent war exists everywhere in the world. As President Wilson has suggested on so many occasions, peoples do not make war. Governments are responsible for international conflict and behind the governments lie the forces of economic life. "Adventure, lust for gold, etc., are the fires in the engine of war, but the great financial interests direct the engine." 

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Behind modern wars lies the predatory power of vested interest and plutocratic authority against which the American people must wage their fight for liberty.

The United States is not threatened from without. The President has reminded us that we need not fear invasion, but the pressure of financial imperialism, the war mongers and their adherents, the love of aggrandizement, the lust for power, and the immense financial returns from the building up of armaments and the prosecution of successful wars all lead to the plutocratic oligarchy which controls the United States toward militarism.

We, the people of the United States, will not endure the tyrannies that militarism has imposed on the old world, and we call upon the President of the United States, and upon all of the other public servants, to use the authority with which we have endowed them to ward off the impending menace of militarism. Mr. President:

1. We demand that you consult and trust the people.
   We do not know your advisers. They may be very wise. We do know our own hearts—in them there are deep, firm-set convictions. We have always listened to your words—confidently, eagerly, because they have sounded like the words of a democrat. Now we are at the testing time. If this is a democracy, we demand the right to be heard. You said that peoples never go to war. Is that the reason why we were denied a referendum on the war with Germany? If the people could vote on conscription in democratic Australia, why were they not given an opportunity to do the
same thing in democratic America? We demand that in future, when a vital public issue, like a declaration of war or conscription comes before you, that you consult the people and trust in their judgment. They are wisest, Mr. President, and, besides, this is a government of the people and by them.

2. Six-sevenths of all the people in the industrial sections of the United States are wage-earners and clerks, Mr. President. They are the vast majority. They are the people. Find out what they think. You speak to chambers of commerce, bankers and business men. Some day, Mr. President, tour the country speaking only to men with rough, hard hands, or with union cards in their pockets. Those people did not want this war. If you had spoken to them on your famous tour of January, 1916, you would have learned that. The people never want war. You have said so many times. Consult the people, the common people, who carry the burden of the world upon their backs. They know, Mr. President. Life speaks to them in unmistakable language.

3. We ask you, Mr. President, not to take the newspapers seriously.

Perhaps you do not. We have no means of knowing. The papers reflect the point of view of the business world—not of the people. They do not deceive us, and we do not think what they tell us to think.
4. Keep the light turned on, Mr. President. Tell us what is happening.

We are pathetically ignorant—but very anxious. We see the prices of necessary things far above our reach. We see our boys sailing for France—many of them never to return. We see the power of the masters growing greater as our liberties slip away from us. We do not understand—yet. But we do want to know.

5. We hear about secret diplomacy in Europe. Are the cards of our diplomacy on the table?

Did Wall Street have a hand in pulling us into this war? You told us that the big business men were trying to involve us in war with Mexico in 1916. Was the same thing true here? Are we, later, to be forced into a war with Japan? Piti-less publicity, Mr. President! We insist upon it! We demand it as our right. If this is to be a democracy, the people must rule. They cannot rule wisely unless they know, and they cannot know about national affairs unless you tell them.

6. We fear the Army and the Navy, Mr. President.

They may be a terror to the enemy, but history shows that they are even more terrible to the people that support them. Do not listen to the generals and the admirals except in matters of military detail. They do not represent us, and we fear them and their professional killing business.

7. You speak a great deal about democracy, Mr. President. Do you really mean it?
Do you mean that you favor equal opportunity—economic as well as political? Do you mean that you believe that all public business—industrial as well as political—should be run by the people? If you do believe in a complete democracy for the American people, we call upon you to use your great power in overthrowing special privilege—the most ferocious and dreaded enemy of the American democracy.

8. We are yearning toward a great future, Mr. President, and we need your help.

Make your high office serve the interests of the people. Help us to protect ourselves against the plutocratic oligarchy that has such a grip on the country. Help us to make brotherhood a reality and democracy a power in the world. This is a call from the common people of America and of the world, Mr. President. Are you great enough to hear, and strong enough to answer?
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