

Letters From Commoner Readers

Rev. Cyrus A. Wright, Laramie, Wyo.: I am very pleased to note the fight which The Commoner is making against the preparedness propaganda. It seems to me that The Commoner has taken a very sane position and that the present agitation amounts to nothing other than an hysteria. If I understand the history of this country at all it has been a history of a struggle to rid ourselves from anything like the military spirit and with a small standing army and not a very large navy we have been able to maintain peace without losing influence and I can see no reason why we ought not to be able to continue this same policy. It is very evident further that there is less likelihood of this country being attacked by any nation now than at any time during the last twenty-five years. Certainly with the tremendous cost of this war both in men and money it will be quite impossible for any of the belligerents to make war on any nation for a long time to come. It is very evident that to make war upon the United States with the distance of three or four thousand miles of ocean between the two contestants would be a very hard task for any nation. It has been well said that the Japanese in reality did not defeat the Russians but that seven thousand miles of narrow gauge railroad defeated them. I have taken a very pronounced stand both in public and private against the preparedness as being preached in this country at the present time, and I am sending this little communication to you to let you know that I heartily indorse the position of The Commoner in its contention against the enlarged army and navy. Please accept this kindly commendation for your preaching through the columns of your paper of the principles of "the Prince of Peace."

Samuel S. Swackhamer, Plainfield, N. J.: I feel that you are entitled to the thanks of the republic for the effort you have made in behalf of fundamental democracy and peace.

H. J. Van Houten, Brooklyn, N. Y.: Your first number of my subscription came today, and I write to express my appreciation of your views against preparedness. I have also written to the President and my congressman against this ominous and sinister policy which has sprung up so recently. Evil attracts evil. War is a terrible evil, and militarism must be evil as well, for it attracts war. But why should any nation be turned into a slaughter house by the whim of some angry and haughty diplomat, or government official, or even a whole congress? To avoid such a catastrophe, I favor a law stating that before this country be plunged into war, the people (who will have to do the fighting) be allowed to vote for or against it. And to the end that war be forever abolished I also favor (for one of many reasons) woman suffrage. For when among the few great nations of the world woman has the franchise, wars will never occur, since women are the chief sufferers from the terrible results of bloody battle. I also believe that American citizens should be warned off belligerent vessels of all kinds. Wish you quick success against the many evils you are combating.

D. S. Oliver, Cincinnati, Ohio: Mr. John Temple Graves in an address before the City club of this city, on "Naval Preparedness," went out of his way to make a vicious attack upon yourself. At the close of the

meeting I went to Mr. Graves and said: "Lest you might think that my presence here today indicated approval of your position, I wish to state that I dissent from everything you have said. Furthermore, as between Mr. Bryan preaching peace and Mr. Graves preaching war and destruction, put me down as with Mr. Bryan." I hope that the attacks of such men as Mr. Graves will not swerve you from your efforts to preserve this country from the horrors of war.

P. D. Jones, Stanley, N. D.: I wish to congratulate you on the stand you have taken on the resolution of Senator Gore warning Americans not to take passage on belligerent armed vessels. You are eternally right in this matter. I have traveled considerably in three states within the past two months, and have talked with quite a number of people in every walk of life, and I am convinced that at least eighty per cent of the people are in sympathy with the stand you have taken, and they give you credit for the fact that we are not now plunged headlong into the swirling vortex of war.

Following is a copy of a letter written by Mr. Robert Hubbard of New York, N. Y., and addressed to Dr. M. B. Adams, of Georgetown College, Georgetown, Ky.:

"Dear Doctor: You may wonder a little why I requested that 'The Commoner' be placed in the library, but there is nothing remarkable about it.

"I love this, my native country, with a passionate zeal, and am giving my life with what little ability and energy I possess to see that it continues a country where judgment is not perverted, but where justice, mercy, peace and righteousness are the controlling ideals or elements, if I may call them such, in our civil life. I am for maintaining our liberties and the ideals and aims expressed by our forefathers in the preamble of the Constitution of the United States. To promote these ends and to suppress vice and crime, to destroy oppression and discourage unfaithfulness, is the ruling passion of my life.

"Now, I have read quite a number of papers and magazines, and I am thoroughly convinced that Mr. Bryan's paper more fearlessly, truthfully, and powerfully stands and fights for a clean and just civil life than any other in the country. In short, it fights for those eternal principles of liberty, peace, and justice upon which our government was founded. It gives uncolored facts.

"I do not mean to convey the idea that I think Mr. Bryan is infallible and that his opinion is to be followed regardless of the opinion of others, but I frankly confess that I am still a great admirer of him, and have found that he is right, in my judgment, on most questions. Nevertheless, I reserve the right to think for myself and differ from him in regard to some issues.

"Nor do I wish to convey the idea that I am opposed to Mr. Wilson or that I in any way fail to appreciate what he is striving to do for our country, or that I belittle his great ability, his high ideals, and noble purposes.

"I am for him for president again, but I reserve the same right to differ from him.

"On the question of preparedness I differ from President Wilson and favor only a very gradual increase in our military and naval equipment. I agree with the views of the Honorable Claude Kitchin of South Caro-

lina on this matter. You will find his views in The Commoner and I hope that you may find time to read them.

"This is what I had in mind particularly when I made my request, for I am anxious that the students, at least of my own college, shall have the opportunity to see both sides of this momentous question. Furthermore, I am anxious that they have the opportunity to know the unbiased facts of all political questions of national concern. And I am quite sure that there is no other publication in this country that gives them quite so honestly and truthfully as Mr. Bryan's paper.

"So I sent, out of my own earnings, the subscription price in, and ordered The Commoner sent to the Georgetown College library and instructed the management to notify me when the time expired and that I would renew it year by year. And if they fail to do so, I will of my own accord write and remind them about the matter.

"Furthermore, Doctor, as soon as I get out of school and started in life, I intend to give one or more books, such as the faculty or those who have the matter in charge may desire, from year to year to the library. God willing, I shall do this.

"I hope that I may be able to do this, not alone from a deep sense of gratitude, but to lend my mite to help perpetuate the great and noble work that Georgetown College is doing.

"I sincerely hope that God will give you strength and courage to instill into the lives of the students of Georgetown College the high ideals of character and life that the Prince of Peace, God himself, revealed to men; and inspire them with the grand and lofty conceptions of citizenship and patriotism which the fathers of our country left to us.

"This leads me to my closing remarks. I do not think that patriotism consists of force alone; I do not think that a man is lacking in patriotism because he is opposed to militarism and burdensome taxation. In my judgment, the man is most patriotic—patriotic in a real, true sense—who deals faithfully, justly, and honestly with his fellows, and in this way maintains liberty and order. It is the man who earnestly endeavors to see that judgment and justice are not perverted but that the tranquility of the home is preserved from oppression and that the general welfare or common good is promoted, who is, in my judgment, most patriotic."

J. J. McMaster, Long Beach, Cal.: As a voter I would like to give my view on questions of the day. First we are the richest nation of the earth, we did not get it by militarism nor by great foreign trade. We got it by development and a healthy trade at home. Now, suppose we change our policy to the greatest military power of the world, it will compel all other powers to keep pace with us, which will bring greater hardship on nations not as rich as we are. Now we propose to grab the world trade at the present good opportunity. Now, suppose we have reached the goal. We are the leading military power; we also have cornered the world's trade. We now find America in the same position Europe was two years ago. It is a military commercial war, not a religious war, for the Turk, Protestant and Catholic are fighting side by side the best of friends. While we enjoy the friendship of the whole world, can we afford to take a chance of uniting the world against us. We

are of the same flesh and blood as the European; no wiser, and subject to his mistakes. A great president discouraged trading horses in the middle of a stream; he also wished to teach a lesson to let good enough alone. We believe the majority are against preparedness out here.

D. W. Elliott, Roswell, N. M.: I have been watching events for about fifty years and have never seen such a determined effort to override the will of a large majority of the people, for the benefit of a small majority. That the President believes his preparedness scheme is not favored by the majority of the people, is fully evidenced by the fact that he thought it necessary to make a speaking trip to try to throw his prestige and his arguments in favor of his plan. That the newspapers are trying to create public sentiment, not voicing public sentiment, is shown by the fact that they refuse to give any opposer of their propaganda a hearing in their columns. I believe that nearly seventy-five per cent of our citizenship is opposed to any of the preparedness schemes that have been proposed. I positively believe it is ten to one in this part of the country; but they are the common people, and have no chance to be heard, or, perhaps, they do not know how to make themselves heard. I believe it is a race calamity to allow our nation to be dragged from its high and righteous ideals, and our children taught that "Might makes right." I have been doing what little I can to show the "True inardness" of all this fuss, but, as I have said, the newspapers refuse to publish any article written against the doctrine of "Preparedness for peace," and it is hard to do much simply talking. Go on, go on, and fight this accursed thing, and you will have the gratitude of the men who must "foot the bill" and of unborn millions. Any thing I can do to help or to encourage the fighters, I am ready to do.

D. C. Peck, Plainville, Conn.: A friend has recently sent me a copy of The Commoner for November (1915). No other periodical in all the United States or the world is so vigorously combating the greatest danger that ever threatened our country. I am writing letters almost daily to different papers, protesting against the insanity that is degrading us more than it is possible to state. This war is something more than a mere natural conflict between nations. It is the ultimate battle between the natural and spiritual mind. Because the larger part of humanity are naturally minded, is why they are advocating preparedness. President Wilson little knows how terribly he is being led astray. Eventually the right will prevail, and you will then have the satisfaction of having boldly stood for it, in the face of world-wide opposition.

J. L. Maitland, Lakewood, Ohio: While so many are condemning and ridiculing you, a few words of cheer may not come amiss. Last Sunday evening I addressed a well filled house at the Second Spiritualist church of Cleveland on the subject "Preparedness Through Education," and referred to your work as follows: "And if we are sneered at for advocating peace instead of war, education instead of armament, let us remember the words of our greatest of men, our greatest of mediums, our Prince of Peace, 'Blessed are the peacemakers,' and let us include with him our Bryan and our Ford." The applause that followed showed very clearly that your work meets with the approval of all but the ammunition trust and a few who are for "preparedness by armament," but