

The Munitions-Militarist Conspiracy

The real fight before the country at this time is to defeat the munitions-militarist conspiracy—a conspiracy which has for its object a revolutionary change in the nation's character and policy. It is a conspiracy organized with deliberation and supported by unlimited means. The conspirators are men of prominence and influence. The manufacturers of munitions are selling war supplies to Europe at the rate of more than three hundred millions worth a year, and they are selling at an enormous profit. The Du Pont company recently declared a dividend of 23 per cent on powder, and the stock in the Bethlehem steel company has risen beyond the dreams of the speculators. Among the stockholders in the munition companies are many of our big financiers, and these men largely control the metropolitan press. These manufacturers and their influential stockholders know that their dividends will dwindle when this war is over unless they can fasten themselves upon the taxpayers of the country, and grow fat as the people grow poor. Hence the newspaper crusade for frenzied preparedness, such a crusade as we have not seen in a generation.

The second group in the conspiracy is made up of professional soldiers — militarists who stand with the militarists of other countries. And the militarists of all countries stand today where the militarists stood two thousand years ago; they know no way of correcting a mistake of the mind except to cut off the head—no way of curing an error of the heart except to stop its beating—no way to settle a dispute between nations except to take human life.

To judge the militarists of the world by their program, they have never learned that nineteen hundred years ago a Prince of Peace was born and brought into the world a gospel of love which is destined to supplant the bloody doctrine of force and violence.

These two groups, one working for money and the other magnifying the profession of arms, have joined their forces in an effort to commit this government to the European plan of trying to preserve peace by terrorism. Although the plan has written history in characters of blood and has led the warring nations into the present conflict, we are asked to adopt this policy and join the "pistol toting" nations in the worship of brute force.

The big corporate employers of labor are aiding and abetting the conspiracy because they want a large army—not made up of state militia but of regulars—to keep their workmen under subjection.

And how much are we asked to invest in this false philosophy? Two billions to "get ready" with and one thousand and seventy-nine millions a year to keep ready! We are now spending two hundred and fifty millions a year on the army and navy—the most we have ever spent in time of peace. During the past fifteen years we have spent more on our navy than any other country in the world except Great Britain. We are now spending on the army and navy more than ten times as much as we are spending on the department of agriculture, and yet the army and navy experts, taking advantage of the excitement of a foreign war, demand that we multiply our war appropriations by four. The navy experts want A BILLION AND A HALF for new ships and SEVEN HUNDRED AND SIXTY MILLIONS a year thereafter to keep the navy in fighting trim. The army experts want FIVE HUNDRED MILLIONS to put the army in a respectable condition and THREE HUNDRED and nineteen millions annually to keep it up to the requirements of their program.

Eight hundred and twenty-nine million dollars per year, the sum which the army and navy experts ask us to add to the annual appropriations for the army and navy, is so large that the mind can not comprehend it. As the body becomes insensible to pain after a certain degree is reached, so the mind becomes insensible to ciphers after it has taken in a certain number. We can only understand large sums by comparison. Here are four comparisons:

1st. The farmers of the nation collected a little more than FIVE AND A HALF BILLIONS from all their crops last year—the banner year

in our history. If we compute the farmers NET income at 8 per cent of his gross income we find that the net income of all the farmers from all their crops was about \$440,000,000. THE ARMY AND NAVY EXPERTS WANT TO ADD TO WHAT WE ARE NOW SPENDING ON THE ARMY AND NAVY NEARLY TWICE THE ANNUAL NET CROP INCOME OF ALL OUR FARMERS. And they question the patriotism of those who protest against the demand.

2nd. The cost of a macadam road, 16 feet wide and 6 inches thick is, according to agricultural department statistics, a little more than six thousand dollars per mile. If we estimate the average length of the United States at three thousand miles, and its average width at twelve hundred miles, it can be gridironed with macadam roads twelve miles apart, east and west, north and south, for less than \$4,145,000,000—the amount which the army and navy experts would, IN FIVE YEARS, add to the army and navy appropriations.

3d. This sum, eight hundred and twenty-nine millions per year, would, in five years, duplicate every bank in the country, capital and surplus, and thus double the amount of bank capital and surplus available for borrowing.

4th. It costs the nation about \$800,000,000 a year to educate the 25,000,000 school children of the land. Think of making an ANNUAL increase in our army and navy appropriations equal to the ENTIRE ANNUAL COST OF EDUCATION, FROM KINDERGARTEN TO UNIVERSITY! And yet the army and navy experts, backed by the munition manufacturers, demand this and resent any opposition as if they had a vested right to decide for the people the amount to be expended. They are attempting to perpetrate an outrage upon the taxpayers of the country, and their conspiracy, if successful, would menace the peace of the world. No party can afford to stand for such a policy—least of all the democratic party, the champion of the masses and the friend of peace.

W. J. BRYAN.

MAKING WAR PROFITABLE

The following from Washington recently appeared in the press dispatches:

"Europe's purchase of war materials in the United States totaled \$340,000,000 at the end of the first twenty months of war. Figures assembled in the bureau of foreign and domestic commerce show the heaviest month was March, last, when more than \$50,000,000 worth of munitions left American ports. April totals have not been compiled.

"Shipments of high explosive shells and shrapnel are crossing the Atlantic now at the rate of a million dollars' worth daily and vessels are carrying half a million dollars' worth of powder a day. Fire arms and cartridges valued at more than five millions went to Europe during March."

This may explain why the subsidized metropolitan papers are so anxious for the war to continue, and so quick to ridicule any one who talks of peace. Blood has its price.

WHY NOT THE MASTER?

There is some talk of Fred Lynch, of Minnesota, for democratic national chairman, and it is even whispered that Arthur Mullen, the new member from Nebraska, has his eye on the position. But surely the committee would not select either of these novices in machine politics when it can command the services of Roger Sullivan, past master in the art of corporate domination, fresh from his victories in the great state of Illinois. If the party is to be officered by Wall street, the best that Wall street has is none too good.

W. J. BRYAN.

PETIT LARCENY

The jingoes in the democratic party are urging the President to "steal Roosevelt's thunder." Stealing THUNDER seldom pays—it is LIGHTNING that does the work. There is nothing grand about the Roosevelt thunder—to steal it would be petit larceny at most.

The men who loaned \$500,000,000 to the allies seem to think it the duty of the United States to go to war with Germany to protect the loan. It would be cheaper to guarantee them against loss by resolution of congress. Will they consent to peace on these terms, or are they for war at any price?

"Honor" and "Humanity"

Within the last few weeks the President has suggested three considerations that may require us to go to war. In his recent speech to the girls' camp he asks "Did any man deem that he could tamper with the honor or integrity of the United States?" Just before that in a speech to women in Washington he volunteered the statement that the United States might go to war for "humanity" but not for herself.

Passing over the significance of his frequent references to the conditions under which it may become necessary to go to war, let us inquire how our honor or integrity could be protected or humanity served by going to war at this time?

No nation is unfriendly to us; no nation has manifested any desire to violate our rights. We have suffered injuries at the hands of BOTH sides, but these injuries have been INCIDENTAL to their attacks on each other, not injuries INTENDED against us. What honor could be guarded or defended by compelling a nation to go to war with us when it is not an enemy, and does not want war with us? What glory could be won by attacking a nation on either side while it is in a death grapple with other nations? Would not fair play, not to speak of honor, require us to wait until the nation could give its undivided attention to us? It is the small dog, not the mastiff, that attacks the big dog when it is too busy to fight back. And what would history say of us if we went into such a war as this to vindicate the right of an American citizen to safeguard a contraband cargo on a belligerent ship—a war which we can easily avoid by keeping our citizens off such ships.

And what about going to war for "humanity?" The President may feel it his constitutional duty to lead the nation into a war if the war is necessary, to defend its rights or protect its honor, but by what authority can the President commit the nation to a war for "humanity"?

In olden time, the knight errant used to go about armed, and take up the cause of the weak and the injured, but he did this at the risk of his own life. The case is quite different when the executive wins the glory while others make the sacrifices. If the President thinks this nation should enlist as a champion of either side, let him state the case to the public, give his reasons, and then leave the decision to those who are to do the fighting—and the dying. As he believes in woman suffrage, he might even suggest that women be allowed to vote also, for they bear the largest part of the burden in time of war. Why not a referendum on war? The vote might be taken at this fall's election; if the candidates ask for votes, why not accept instructions?

WAR IS TOO SERIOUS A THING TO BE UNDERTAKEN, EXCEPT FOR THE MOST IMPERATIVE REASONS, AFTER EVERY OTHER REMEDY IS EXHAUSTED, AND THEN ONLY WHEN THE PEOPLE DESIRE IT.

W. J. BRYAN.

A ONE-SIDED CAMPAIGN

Would it not be a one-sided campaign if the subsidized press were permitted to misrepresent public sentiment every day, and no one were permitted to expose their fallacies or give voice to the real sentiment of the people? And yet this is the terrorism that has been attempted for more than a year.

The reactionaries, who tried their best to prevent President Wilson's nomination—and then tried to prevent the passage of the remedial measures which he urged, are now going to the convention with brass bands. Are they hoping to regain control of the democratic organization, or are they really converted to reform?

There will be more honor in mediation than can be won by going to war. Blessed are the peacemakers.