

Shall Preparedness be Paid by Labor?

It has been proposed to meet the cost of "preparedness" by taxes on sugar, on gasoline and by other direct taxes that bear heavily upon labor. It is also proposed to continue the present indirect taxes on the things people use, which yield \$620,000,000 a year. It is proposed to burden the worker and farmer by taxes on the things they consume, and spend the proceeds on armament, with colossal profits to the armament ring, for an army and navy to protect principally the things that privilege owns.

Why tax labor when, according to the report of the commission on industrial relations, from between one-third and one-fourth of the male workers 18 years of age and over in factories and mines earn less than \$10 per week, while from two-thirds to three-fourths earn less than \$15 per week; when 2 per cent of the people own 60 per cent of the wealth, and 65 per cent own only 5 per cent of the wealth.

Why not compel 2 per cent of the people to pay 60 per cent of the taxes instead of making the great mass of the people, who own 5 per cent, pay 95 per cent of the taxes?

Why tax labor when war-munition stocks have increased in value in one year by \$866,000,000?

Why tax incomes in America but \$80,000,000 when incomes in Great Britain, even before the war, paid \$236,245,000? England contains

less than one-half our population and wealth.

All told, England taxes wealth, incomes and inheritances to the extent of \$380,115,000, and collected 45 per cent of her total revenues from these sources. Democratic America collected 9 per cent of its revenues from wealth, incomes and inheritances.

Why tax labor on its necessities, on the things it needs to merely live, when inheritances have not as yet been taxed a penny by the federal government?

Great Britain taxes incomes up to 33 1/2 per cent for war purposes, Germany levies taxes for imperial purposes, for state purposes, and for municipal purposes as well; the combined rate running often to 15 per cent or 20 per cent. Democratic America taxes incomes from 1 to 7 per cent, the maximum up to \$100,000 being but 4 per cent.

A tax of \$10 to the wage earner means giving up clothes, food from his table, possible the doctor for his children. A tax of \$10,000 to a man with an income of \$100,000 or \$100,000 to a man enjoying an income of \$500,000 means no sacrifice whatever.

Preparations for war should call for equal sacrifice. Defense should not mean sacrifice for the millions, and only profit for the few. Preparations for war mean profits to the railroads, to mine owners, munition factories, banks; it means speculative values for the stock brokers and speculators. It means that the

bended backs of labor will carry the army and navy, which, if the emergency arises, will be used against labor at home and for the protection of over-seas investments abroad.

CLYDE H. TAVENNER.

THE NON-COMBATANT AT WAR!

[From the Florida Times-Union.]

In theory, war means that the soldier is to set himself the task of slaying soldiers—in theory, private property is to be respected—in theory, women and children are safe while armies march over them. But sensible people look for the practice behind the theory. Mr. Root learnedly asserts that Germans should not have invaded Belgium, and it was the duty of this government to protest "with firmness" against such an outrage! In theory, neutrals should continue to transact business with each other and with the belligerents, reserving only the restrictions imposed on contraband goods and by blockades. We are all Christians, and all admit obligations to the law and the conventions; of course the European belligerents are guilty, and Mr. Root assumes that in our innocence we may stand before thrones and principalities!

When a protest from Washington could be read in Berlin, two million Germans would be marching through Belgium to reach France. Belgium had "prepared," at great cost against such an invasion—what good did it do her? Would the armies have stopped when our protest stood in the way? Has the conduct of these parties justified Mr. Root's assumption that our written word of protest would have stopped armies in mid career? Others protested, but what good was done?

How did the invasion of Belgium by Germany differ from the invasion of Virginia by a federal army? How did the conduct of German generals in Belgium differ from the conduct of federal generals in the valley of Virginia? Let us note one difference—Germany demanded huge sums from conquered cities under penalty of disappearance from the map; Germany collected hostages to be shot whenever attacks were made on German soldiers by other than regular soldiers!

How do England's restrictions on our commerce differ from the claims made by the United States under like circumstances? It is true that we are trying to establish such differences, but protests are continually met by English citations to our practices—to decisions of our courts and declarations of our diplomats. At present we are succeeding as badly with our protests against barbarity on land as with our claims for the right to do business at sea; we are permitted to feed those Germany doomed to starvation, and we are invited to wait for the decisions of English courts!

What did the pirates of other days? They levied contributions on cities and imposed blackmail on commerce and sank the crews of ships that resisted these unlawful demands. Hereafter pirates may claim law and precedent for such crimes because they can find precedents to justify them from the acts of governments and Christian powers! What did the robbers? They broke into banks and exacted tribute from towns and butchered women and children; on the oaths of good men and true all these horrors will remain to redder forever the history of Belgium. How were such crimes made possible? Moreover, such crimes are the logical and inevitable results of preparedness—the setting of nations to prepare for war while they should be working in the ways of peace! Then to mark our horror of conditions against which we should have protested, we are advised to set up preparedness on

this side as a preliminary to like acts under the impulse of the same law of cause and effect!

Modern warfare recognizes the duty of the non-combatant as well as of the soldier—labor must continue to produce that the soldier may be fed and armed. Then labor must pay the cost, and he is pledged to the performance of this duty in the act of mortgaging his future to the capital that waxes fat on war! The peace income of England is now eaten up by the interest on her war-debt; other countries have mortgaged their future to support the war! We are asked to enter upon the same business and to enter the field is to find ourselves compelled to continue to the end! How shall the soldier spare the non-combatant more than the brother in front? The new practice is logical, and who cares for a theory that will not work toward victory?

PACIFISTS

"Blessed are the peace makers for they shall be called the children of God."

These words of Jesus of Nazareth are as well known as any ever spoken on earth. This nation calls itself Christian and boasts that its civilization is founded on the teachings of Christ. And yet so empty is the pretense that today "pacifist" is the term of greatest reproach. The newspapers of the country, the public speakers—are sneering at the "Pacifists" and writing them down as only cowards. Some men find it utterly impossible to conceive that others have principles.

The "pacifists" do not keep pace with the Prince of Peace, who taught that men should not resist—should never return evil for evil. We know of no newspaper and no man urging non-resistance to attack. But there are a few newspapers and many men who do not wish to see this country put on the airs of a swaggering bully. They are willing to fight in defense of their country—as willing as the militarists to die if necessary in defense of their country, and yet they are denounced as unpatriotic and cowardly.

All this makes little difference to the men who have principles and stick to them. They can consider the source of the insults that are heaped on them and find it contemptible in quality if not in numbers. The "pacifists" are not bullies but they are just as ready to fight if necessary as the militarists are.

Some of the old men among us today remember a time when many men were loudly clamoring for war and others were protesting against it, and they know that when war came the loudest shouters for it fought no better than those who were reluctant to see it come. Among this number was Robert E. Lee, but he fought very well.

The "pacifists" want this country prepared for self-defense but not for aggression, and the founders of our government forbade aggression when they announced the principle: All governments depend for their just powers on the consent of the governed. For more than a century our nation lived up to this high level, afraid of no one, no matter how strong, and a danger to no one no matter how weak.—Florida Times-Union.

FRANCIS NEILSON

It would be essentially the position of so great a champion of democracy and the humanities as Francis Neilson to oppose preparedness. The democratic member of the English parliament has a keenly appreciative idea of what "preparedness" means. He knows it to be only a euphemism for extreme militarism. Mr. Neilson, in declaring that

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