

OUR NATIONAL DEFENSE.

Our nation has always been unprepared for defense: it is true, that our first line of defense, the Navy, is good, but it is inadequate and unprepared. Our Federal army is smaller than many a day's losses in the European war, and our state militia in many states is disorganized, and is incapable of expansion, due to the hostility of the wage earners, caused by the use of the militia in strikes. An encouraging feature is the increasing interest in our national defense amongst our thoughtful citizens. But the ill considered fulminations of many of our large metropolitan newspapers, in trying to make us believe that the European war is due to Germany's "militarism", are spreading the fear of "militarism" throughout the nation, and so give argument to the opponents of preparedness, while the out spoken partisanship of many of the advocates of preparedness, in their views on the European war, makes us fear, that much of the alleged "preparedness for necessary defense" is rather of the character of preparation for national aggression, led by the desire of plunging our nation into the European war as Ally of the "Allies".

Still, history has shown conclusively that only that nation is safe, which is able and ready to defend itself.

We should have an organized army available for emergencies, of ten million men. Possibly, a volunteer army of a million might rise on call, between sun rise and sun set. But it would be an unorganized and unarmed mob to be slaughtered by disease and starvation, and incapable of offensive action against an organized enemy.

What we need is a trained popular army, available to the Federal Government for national defense, Peaceful little Switzerland is now surrounded by war on all sides. But it is ^a/hornet's nest, which none of the great nations dares to attack wantonly. Similarly organized for defense, and for defense only, our nation would be impregnable.

The national defence is not a state matter, but a national problem. The national army must be a federal army and military training belongs into the public school system as a mandatory part of education.

Military training consists of the ability of taking care of oneself in the field, and of the practice of handling the tools of modern warfare, which includes the discipline required for efficient co-operation. The former is essentially the same as the camper in the wilderness, the settler in new countries, the pioneer and explorer requires, and existing organizations, as the boy scouts, could assist in this training. Military training as part of the public

school system should, at least in the higher grades, be under the direction of any army officer, and should continue through high school and college into military engineering and strategy.

Such military training under federal control could be introduced in the public schools by making it of interest to the communities which control the schools, similar as an effective control of the schools is exerted by some states, as New York State, by financial contributions to those schools, which conform with the State educational requirements. Suppose every school, which establishes a mandatory system of military training in conformity with the rules, and under the direction of the U.S. army, receives from the federal government a substantial annual appropriation. In a short time most schools would avail themselves of it, and at a cost of perhaps a hundred million dollars per year - two days cost of the European war - we would in half a generation have a fairly well trained defensive army of perhaps twenty million men, and this army would be entirely a defensive army, unavailable for imperialistic aggression, and, last not least, this training in the discipline of co-operation would have a wonderful effect on our ~~the~~ national health, and our national industrial efficiency by teaching our nation the co-operation of effort, on which the advance of modern civilization more and more depends.

But in the mean time? Last year, I urged through the papers the suggestion of offering enlistment in the army, for three to six months, to the unemployed, paying them the prevailing rate of wage. If this had been done, we would now have a fairly well trained army of half a million men; the withdrawal of some hundred thousand of unemployed from the labor market would have restored the balance between the supply and demand of labor, probably would have stopped the industrial panic, and all the suffering of the many hundred thousands, from unemployment and starvation, during the last winter would have been avoided. It would have cost the federal government millions, but the sum would be insignificant compared with the losses through the panic.

Thus military training by short time enlistment in the federal army would not only give and maintain an effective and adequate army of defense, but could be used as the most efficient balance wheel in our chaotic industrial system, by offering employment during the time of industrial depression, and releasing men during industrial expansion.

Several conditions are absolutely essential for the success of such a national defence army.

To base the organization of a national army on an extension of our state militia, would be doomed to inevitable failure. Whatever may be the merits of the situation, the fact is, that organized labor has become hostile to the state

militia, due to its use in industrial disturbances, and unorganized labor follows the lead of organized labor.

However inspiring it may appear, to see our prominent business men and administrators train in a military camp, as was done recently, it means nothing for our national defence. This class of people is not sufficiently numerous and in war time will have to remain behind, to keep the nation's production going.

If camp Plattsburg had been made up of machinists and plumbers, of carpenters and bricklayers, in short, of the real productive masses of people, then it would have shown the nation's interest in our national defence, even if it had not given such pretty headlines in our newspapers. But the masses of wage earners do not join the militia here, nor do they crowd into England's recruiting offices.

A popular army is possible only, if the masses of people, that is, the wage earners and their organizations, the labor unions, are favorable towards it, and their hostility would quickly defeat its creation. THEREFORE it must be strictly an army national defence, and its local use for maintaining order in industrial disturbances must be impossible, and so also it must be made impossible to use auxiliary organizations, such as the boy scouts, in any manner which labor organizations could possibly consider as antagonistic. It must be realized that a real national defence depends on the willing cooperation of the masses of people.

A material increase of the standing army of the United States is dangerous to the peace of the nation.

The soldiers business is to fight and if we create an army of hundred thousands of soldiers, we have hundred thousands of men, whose object in life is to fight, and who thus desire war and use their influence to involve us in war; that is we are embarked on the road to militarism.

Thus we want no soldiers, that is men whose business it is to fight, but we want a large army of defence, consisting of men who know how to fight, but who when called upon to fight would have to leave their business, their life's occupation, abandon their farms, offices or factories, and whose interests thus would not be to bring about war, but would be to avoid war as far as possible.

We need no professional soldiers beyond those required for duty in our colonial possessions.

We need however a very large number of well trained officers, and the proposed method of national military training in the schools, and by short time enlistment of unemployed, would employ a large number of officers as instructors, so that we could afford to maintain a large army of officers, without the risk of their desiring war, to prove their usefulness.

As we shall never have compulsory military service, and as the oceans have shrunk and our isolation is rapidly disappearing, until that time when the socialization of society has made war impossible by eliminating its causes, we need an army of defence, and such an army must be trained to be efficient, and must be a popular army, otherwise it would endanger the country's safety rather than protect it.

We must realize however, that the most important foundation of national defence, without which all "military preparedness" is valueless, is the patriotism of the masses; not merely of the small number of well to do people, who naturally are patriotic, as they have something to loose, but who are not sufficiently numerous to defend the nation. Patriotism requires a solid foundation, and can not be created in a few months by newspaper articles and appeals: such quickly created pseudo patriotism - as aroused now in England - may rise to mobbing stores and calling names, but it fails, when real sacrifices are demanded, such as facing death in the trenches. Only then will the masses of a nation become really patriotic, when they realize, that their social, industrial and economic condition is superior to that in any other nation, in other words, when they realize that they have something to loose in the nation.

We see this now in Germany, where a powerful social democratic party has years ago, forced the ruling classes to make substantial concessions, and the social conditions of the German wage earners, while not all they demand, is decidedly better than that in any other country. The masses thus have something to lose by the destruction of the German political organization, and as the result, even their most revolutionary organizations are allied with the government in the national defense. On the other hand, the masses in England are no better off than in many other industrial countries, thus have nothing to lose and nothing to defend, and their interests center in the industrial war for better conditions: higher wages and shorter hours.

In America, the industrial conditions of the masses have always been superior to those in any other nation, due to the unlimited opportunities of the new country; everybody thus was personally interested in the maintenance of existing conditions and patriotically responded in war time. But rapidly now the condition of the industrial masses is drifting down to the same level as in other industrial nations, and if ever the time comes, when the wage earner in America will not be any better off than in other industrial countries, then, when his patriotism will be called for sacrifice in the national defense, the appeal will be in vain, as it is

now in England, and Ireland.

Thus, when now we study the problem of our national defense, let us realize that the first and most important step lies in the industrial relation between the masses and the ruling classes, to establish and maintain such economic conditions, where everybody has something to lose and something to defend: the patriotism of the masses is far more important in the national defense than all battleships and armament, but patriotism presupposes a substantial foundation in an economic condition better than in other countries.

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