

hide themselves in holes or take refuge in the tangled thickets of exemption procedure? Shall we willingly accept forever the insult of being in the eyes of our adversaries an inferior race which goes to battle only when urged at the point of the sword? Well, it may be that they are the chief artisans of our woes and that they have not waited till the present to hurl the insults at us without cause. But, are we going to give them reason to insult us?

Still what else but these shameful things can come from the doctrines preached at our street corners at the present time?

Ah well, however feeble my voice may be, however difficult it be for it to ring out before a public which hears it for the first time, along with all those—and they are numerous even outside the circle of my friends—who keep “their heads on their shoulders” and their hearts in the right place, in the name of our well understood interests I protest and proclaim that we will not accept that humiliation.

We repeat again, we must by acts, by a manifest change of attitude, sail out of the whirlpool of absurdities into which we have been driven, get footing on the solid ground which is near and not allow ourselves to be swept away bewildered, undecided, like chips adrift. And again, as soon as the madness is over, if other means of salvation are known than resolute swimming, even against the current, towards the shore, we ask that they be pointed out. Those who have ideas, at such a time, and keep them to themselves, rob their country. When the conflagration demands it, all men take their place in the bucket line, even though their trade is not that of firemen.

And that is why I have come out of my reserve, in order to tear off the bandage which blinds our eyes and I make bold to propose that my compatriots come to themselves again and redeem themselves. Let other ways be chosen; if better can be found that is the wise thing to do. But let us do something.

Before anyone comes to fetch us, waiting for the law, which has been passed in principle, to come out of the labyrinth of parliamentary procedure, round which undignified struggles are carried on, it should be tempting for us, the possible conscripts, to go and volunteer and to force open the recruiting offices. But if this act should be premature or compromised in advance, if on account of