

# THE PERILS OF CONSCRIPTION

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duty, we had also descended to bribing them. We had the spectacle at the front of motor and lorry drivers drawing 6s. a day and living in ease and in safety, while their comrades who worked the machine-guns and heavy artillery, and who must also be mechanics, were paid only 1s. 6d. and were risking their lives every moment."

The right remedy, one would think, for this obviously unfair way of treating the fighting ranks would be to raise the pay of the men, skilled and unskilled alike, who were risking their lives every moment for their country, up to the rate of those living "in ease and in safety." But that is not the conscription idea. Their remedy is to cut down the pay of all the rank and file, whether riflemen, engineers, transport drivers, or telegraphists, to the continental conscript level. For, says Colonel Lee:

"Under a system of National Service, such as exists in France, all soldiers would be paid alike and each soldier would be put to the duty for which he was best suited. That was only democratic and just, and would, moreover, save an immense amount of money."

None will dispute the colonel's statement that the adoption of the National Service system as it exists in France, where soldiers are paid only a few pence, would "save an immense sum of money," but the democracy and justice of the system is a different matter. Think what it means. Workmen under National Service are to be compelled to give up their jobs and go to the front. There they must perform tasks requiring high skill, work unrestricted hours, endure every hardship, suffer terrible wounds, risk every moment their lives. And for this they are to be rewarded by having their pay reduced from 5s., 6s., 7s., perhaps 8s., or more, down to 1s. 6d., or perhaps 6d., or 2d., as in France, while their mates who are lucky enough not to be conscripted are to enjoy their full pay, and merchants and employers are to go on with their business as usual, making as big war profits as they can. Colonel Lee does indeed "well and clearly" state the facts of the matter," and it is to be hoped the working class will as well and clearly grasp the meaning of his statement.

Major-General Sir Alfred E. Turner, who has contributed a series of letters to the Spectator in favor of conscription, also lays stress of compulsory service as a means of dealing with strikes. Referring to the South Wales miners' dispute, he says:

"The strikers gained their ends, and with them an everlasting stain on their reputation, which not all the rain of heaven can wash out, the stain of showing themselves perfectly ready to betray their country for filthy lucre. Compulsory service might not produce loyalty, but it would produce a sense of duty and discipline that would prevent such disgraceful and damaging incidents."

## ETERNAL VIGILANCE is the Price

Speaking in the House of Commons on Thursday, 16th September, last, in the debate on conscription, Sir Alfred Mond directed his attack against the voluntary system on the ground (amongst others) that it took away too many married men and so involved too heavy an expenditure on the dependents of the killed and wounded soldiers:

"The present system is the most extravagant form of recruiting that any country has yet undertaken. It is unnecessary to burden yourselves with the enormous separation allowances for years to come."

Numerous extracts might be given from newspaper articles and corre-

spondence urging the adoption of conscription as a means of disciplining the workers not only under the army authorities, but under their masters in the workshop. A correspondent, for example, in the Spectator (Sept. 14, 1915), writes:

"As a supporter of the National Service League I regret that compulsion is not to be applied to the shops. It is more necessary there than in the army."

A weekly journal that boasts having a circulation of over a million copies hails Prussian conscription as the remedy for strikes:

"The miners who refuse to work must be conscripted—put under military control and made to work at soldiers' pay. That is the way they do things in Germany, and that is the way we must do with them here."

In a special article in the Manchester Guardian, August 24, 1915, dealing with the intense feeling against compulsory service in Ireland, the writer says:

"The conscriptionists have come to be regarded in Ireland as a party working under cover of the political truce for wide, far-reaching, and permanent political changes, of which a conscript army would be only a symbol," and he quotes the Morning Post as saying that "the vile stuff of the political principle upon which modern England has developed was being thrown into the dust heap."

Finally, for I might fill pages more with quotations to the same effect, I shall ask my readers to ponder the testimony of Mr. Benjamin Kill, the well-known author of Social Evolution and Western Civilization. In an interview recorded in the Daily News (September 7, 1915) Mr. Kidd says:

## A FORLORN HOPE

"I have not much hope that once compulsion is introduced we shall get free of it after the war. There are many of the advocates of conscription who press for it for purely military reasons, but there are others, some of the chief of them have frankly admitted as much to me—who desire it as the only weapon against the growing power of the trade unions. And it is in that direction that conscription must in any case inevitably tend. The whole principle of force rests on conscription, and the introduction of conscription would mean the introduction of that principle of force of which Germany is so perfect an exponent. And if you think Mr. Kidd is taking a too alarmist view of what would result from the establishment of conscription and the letting loose of the insolent militarist spirit upon the nation, let me remind you of the sentiment recently expressed by Lord Derby. Speaking at the Guildhall, London (July 15, 1915), in company with Lord Kitchener and Sir Edward Carson, his lordship evoked cheers from the gathering by declaring: "We sometimes hear of spies being taken to the Tower ditch and shot. If sometimes we could take a questioner from the floor of the House of Commons into the Palace Yard for the same operation, I think it would have a salutary effect."

Of such, then, is conscription. Of such is compulsory military service under whatever shape or mask it is urged upon us. Of such are the conscriptionists with their lofty appeals for "national service," their grand, eloquent, beseechings to the people to yield up their heritage of civicism and freedom, and to take upon themselves the yoke of militarism which has kept the democracies of Europe in thrall and strife down all the centuries, and has dragged them into the awful whirlpool of slaughter in which we see them plunged to-day.

Do not you, my readers, now perceive the true portent of this unprecedented

zeal on the part of the aristocracy—the Lord Northcliffes, Lord Milners, Lord Derbys, and their kind—for the moral and physical regeneration of the working class, the welfare of the nation, the interests of the Empire. I am not alleging that the leaders of the compulsory service agitation are consciously seeking to deceive and entrap the people. They are obsessed with the militarist idea. It profoundly appeals to their class system, to their own material interests, to their craving for power over people. They doubtless sincerely believe, as all autocrats and oligarchs do, and always have done, that their own interests are the true interests of the nation—a notion so familiar to us in such precepts as "The poor thrive in the prosperity of the rich," and "The interests of Capital and Labor are the same." That fallacy has been the working theory of oppression and slavery since the world began. But the world is now growing out of it, and the hopes of a new civilization abound.

## VANCOUVER, B.C. LABOR COUNCIL AGAINST CONSCRIPTION.

"Whereas the Government of Canada contemplates passing a conscription law, and

"Whereas such a law, if passed, would not only sacrifice the workers without their consent, but would also annul those protective measures which organized labor has been able to force from the employers, and curtail to a minimum the liberties which we are popularly supposed to possess; therefore be it

"Resolved that this Trades and Labor Council declares its intention to resist by any means in its power the passage of such a law; and be it

"Resolved that a mass-meeting of all workers in Vancouver be called by the Executive Committee at the earliest possible date; and be it further

"Resolved that the executive of the B. C. Federation of Labor be instructed to take an immediate referendum, with a view to calling a general strike in this province, as soon as any conscription law is passed."

By a ninety per cent. majority, the representatives of organized labor, assembled at a special meeting of the Vancouver Trades and Labor Council, Wednesday night, passed the above resolution, declaring themselves as a body unequivocally in favor of a general strike in the event of the proposed conscription law being passed, those voting, however, in many instances, explaining that while they were opposed to conscription, they had not the sanction of their unions to vote for the whole membership. Many of these stated, however, that they were convinced that their locals would ratify their action on it being brought before them, while others informed the delegates that their unions were 100 per cent. in favor of the resolution.

## BAINBRIDGE DEFENCE FUND.

J. Inman, Hamilton, Ont. ....	\$ 4.00
E. Goodwin, Colinton, Alta. ....	1.00
A. L. Oaks, Reklaw, Sask. ....	4.50
Winnipeg Ukrainian (W. Kolisnyk) .....	10.00
P. Smith, B.C. Pro. Exe., Victoria	5.15
Previously acknowledged .....	214.60
	\$239.35

## AN IRISH PACIFIST.

A recruiting sergeant stationed in the south of Ireland met Pat and asked him to join the army. The latter refused, whereupon the sergeant asked his reason for refusing.

"Aren't the king and kaiser cousins?" asked Pat.

"Yes," said the recruiting sergeant. "Well," said Pat, "I want interfered before in a family squabble, and I'm not going to make the mistake again."

## A PROTEST AGAINST ALL WARS AND FIGHTING AND THE SPIRIT THEREOF.

From the Society of Friends (Called Quakers), Addressed to the People of Canada.

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to stir up the minds of the people of this, our beloved country, in the interests of war, we, the above mentioned Society being a peace loving people, do feel to send this forth amongst you.

"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." (Rom. 12, 19.)

Christ said in His sermon on the mount, "Ye have heard that it hath been said an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; But I say unto you, That ye resist not him that is evil, R.V.; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." How can we actively resist evil, and yet have a clear conscience before Him who has given these charges? And if such resistance be wrong for individuals, surely it must be just as sinful for nations.

We cannot find, in all of Christ's teaching, any justification of war or the spirit thereof; for this spirit which prompts us to harm our fellow-man is that of the Evil One. Therefore whosoever is actuated thereby opposes Christ's teaching.

While we can rejoice over the little leaven that is working among the nations of the earth, it would be "Woe" unto us to cry "Peace, peace," when there is no peace; and there never can be, so long as armaments are being built for offence or defence.

We, as followers of Him who was proclaimed the "Prince of Peace," believe that before God all men are equal, and that He is no respecter of persons; therefore, since He, our Supreme King and Law-giver, forbade the use of the sword, how can we draw it for any lesser potentate?

The Church of Christ is unfaithful to her trust if she confront not the world with the teaching of her Lord.

It is to be lamented that so many who profess to be the followers of this "Prince of Peace" do engage in the promotion of this great evil. Apart from the horrors of war, which are well known, there are evils, caused by war, in time of peace.

By various crafty and deceitful pleas we believe many innocent ones are led to have a hand in that which they do abhor. Under a pretense of physical and moral training, the art of warfare is taught to those in the tender years of childhood and youth. There is nothing good in this which cannot be taught our children in our educational institutions without the aid of anything pertaining to war. The Society of Friends is utterly opposed to military training, in any respect whatever, in any of the schools of our country. Our children can receive physical and moral training on a peaceful principle to better advantage than otherwise; for peace promotes love, humility, submission and condescension; whilst war promotes hatred, pride, and such subordination only as is brought about through fear, not love.

We do earnestly desire your serious consideration of these things, that ere it is too late, we might yet be released from the burdensome evils now casting their shadow upon our beloved country.

Given forth at the 47th Annual Gathering of the Society of Friends, held at Pickering, Ontario, in the Sixth Month of the year, 1913.

Signed by direction and on behalf of Canada Yearly Meeting of Friends.

Mordecai F. Starr,  
Marianne Richardson,  
Clerks.

Socialism will give every man an opportunity to be a real man and live the life of a real man.