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# “All I Possess”

The following letter is reprinted from November issue of the “Liberator,” an American Radical magazine, by the S. P. of C., for distribution amongst the workers and soldiers of Canada, who, after four years and three months of war and war profits, find themselves in the same, or worse position than they were in August, 1914.

Remember, Canada is richer than ever before. As proof of this, let us quote from “The Statesman,” published in Toronto on October 26th, 1918. On page 5, Mrs. Lowery (active in one of the dependents’ organizations on the Coast) asks General Mewburn the following question: “Why is Canada richer to-day, after four years of war, according to the statement of Sir Thomas White, than it was in 1914?” The General replied that “The people of Canada may be richer, but I doubt if the Government is.”

The following letter was written by a young American conscript on the eve of his being called up, and was in reply to a card he had received which read, in part, as follows:

“Pledge of membership in the Unconditional Surrender Club.”

(We reprint the following from the November “Liberator” because of its scintillating satire):

Hundreds of thousands of cards, with blank spaces at the bottom for signatures, are being distributed throughout the country asking the recipients to pledge themselves to carry on the war against Germany until that nation makes an unconditional surrender. The cards, which are headed “Pledge of Membership

in the Unconditional Surrender Club,” contain several sentences, among which only two have any specific meaning. They are:

“I pledge myself to make whatever sacrifice I may be called upon to make to the end that the Central Powers may be brought to realize that only an unconditional surrender will be acceptable to me and my country,

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"I pledge myself and all I possess to the cause of winning the war against Germany and her allies."

One of these cards sent out by The Journal, Flint, Mich., came to me, and as there were some points about it I wanted cleared up, I wrote a letter to the editor of the newspaper mentioned, a copy of which I have made.

The letter itself reads as follows:

"Dear Sir:

"One of your membership cards in the club which is pledged to fight Germany until there is secured an unconditional surrender, came into my hands. I would be glad to sign this card, but before I can conscientiously do so I want to take the matter up with you. First, as to the question of unconditional surrender; I am afraid to sign that condition. The Congress and the President, as I understand it, have control of the war, and it is their final terms which I must uphold, because should I pledge myself to fight until Germany 'unconditionally surrenders' and should the President and the Congress see fit to make conditions at the end of the war, I would be solemnly pledged to continue to fight against the wishes of my Government, and I would either have to become a breaker of pledges and a liar or be in the end shot for a bushwacker and a guerilla.

"But there is one item of the card I want to declare my adherence to. That is the one that says:

"I pledge myself and all I possess to the cause of winning the war."

"With all the power within me I am ready to stand behind that pledge. I am within the draft ages and I expect some autumn day to go forth and give all I possess, so there is little use of my making pledges as my all is to be taken anyhow. But I know of some others who are not going and who, as the country needs money, I think would be glad to get and sign this pledge to 'give all I possess,' and I suggest you send them each one. As their names come to my mind, they are:

"John D. Rockefeller, New York, N.Y.

"J. P. Morgan, Jr., New York, N.Y.

"Thomas W. Lawson, Boston, Mass.

"H. P. Whitney, New York, N.Y.

"Mr. Swift, care Swift & Co., Chicago, Ill.

"These gentlemen, I am sure, will all sign, as they are only called on for one-tenth the sacrifice I am ready to make. I am to pledge myself to give up my home, my friends, my position and the income from it ('all I possess'), and perhaps my life. All that you ought to ask them to do is to give up all their surplus and unused property and incomes, which surely they will be willing to do if I am willing to go to France to save them.

"But now I have conceived a suggestion that I feel will make your eyes light with the glow of sacrifice. It is this: Let you and I rise above mere pledges. Let us pair. Let us sign a new card, and let us put into full effect every promise we have made. Thinking of this makes me feel like lifting my hands and thanking Allah that you and I are given so great an opportunity.

"I am going soon into the army. When I go I will give up until the war is over the sight of my family and friends, and leave behind a pair of soft blue eyes that shall seek me out even in France with the look of sorrow that was in them when I said good-bye. I am going to give up my income, to eat what is given me, to work at hard labor, to put on khaki, and to arise, move, sleep and have my being by rules that others make—on penalty of death.

"I ask you only to do a small part of what I am ready to do. You know we need men to raise food for soldiers. Well, I only ask you to pledge yourself to give up your newspaper, your property, and your profits, and to leave your family and friends until the war ends and come here to Virginia, where I have for you a position on a farm at \$30 a month and board, exactly what my Government is to give me. I have already arranged about the place, as I know you will come.

"I am so sure about your coming, because I ask so little of you and myself am willing to give much. For my part, I will give up all those things I ask of you, and, over and above, I pledge my life. I will go 'Over There' and listen in the trenches through long nights to the

song of the messengers of death that some time may touch me and take me back to the Gods who sent me here. I will go out in the dim dawn when the coming day is casting the sky in pearl to face the rifles and the cannonade, and maybe die, that you and yours may not have to be spattered with the blood of war or fight grimly for your lives. I (and there are three million of me) will leave behind all dreams of life and love; the sweet caresses of women and the smile of pleasure; the chance to profit and to be clothed in soft raiment and sit at feasts; to lie beneath the peaceful stars, as I did last night, and to listen to the promise of the west wind that sweeps across my homeland. I will go to France to fight. Some night, when I am out there looking up at the crimsoned sky, which tomorrow night I may not see, I shall be thinking of you (and there are thirty millions of you), my partners in this great sacrifice. I shall dream there, on that ensanguined soil, of the ideals for which I fight and the Justice and Liberty for which you and I are laying aside each our possessions, our loves and our friends and for which I am going nine steps further and offering my life. I shall think of the homeland for which I am bearing all, of its green hills and valleys, and of those blue eyes which may not soon again, or forever, mirror the love in mine. And, glorious above the sparkle of jewelled minarets in the evening sun, I shall see the radiance of that great god, Justice, that we uphold and for which I am ready to die. I am willing (and, remember, I am three million) to make the supreme sacrifice. I do not ask you to follow me, but I do ask you to give up all you possess, except the simpler luxuries and comforts and pleasures of life, and to abandon all hoards of surplus wealth that were made for you by other hands. And for God's sake, do not fail me!

"You must see what it would mean to me if you did fail. When I come back from over there I will come with the glow in my soul of duty done, the wonderful purification of one who, facing the ultimate of the body has felt his ideals lift him toward the heavens until he almost could see God. I will come walking with outstretched hands toward the sunrise of Liberty, Justice and Peace; not

as I have known them before, but liberty for the mind, justice for the poor, peace for those that labor. I shall come from where I have seen the naked hearts of brave men, believing in the nobility of humanity. And my heart will be beating swiftly with the thought that I have done the set task and that for mankind I have perpetuated liberty and kept murder from their throats, thrilling with the altruistic beauty of a people who can give their ease, their property, their all that the World may be safe for Democracy.

"But, suppose you fail me. Suppose I come back to find you (and there are thirty millions of you) have eaten dinners and drunk wine while I was gone; that you have slept in soft couches of love and your days have passed pleasantly, and that with these days your fortune has grown and the future luxury of you and yours has become, more sure by the added gold in your bank; that you have builded great places where men and women must labor on your terms for your profit, and that while my family, my arm, my leg, or eye, or health or maybe life, has been freely given by me to protect you, you have in frenzy reached for more of the coins that mean ease for you, and for me returned penniless from the war, industrial slavery to you.

"Can't you see what that would mean? Can't you see that my soul that had grown to beauty and become filled with love, might revolt and turn to me and say:

"And that he might fill his flesh-pots, you have spilled young blood and faced the last most solemn sacrifice. The mothers who weep in Germany, weep that he may have more ease, and mothers in America have borne sons to rot on French soil that he may leave his children wealth to place them in a better class than a poor and humble soldier's child may ever reach."

"I am afraid to think of this. I fear that if I returned to find that you have not kept your pledge to 'give all that I possess' as I have kept mine, I should turn on you and with the bayonet that has been pointed to brave men who fought, strike at you. I am afraid even of the vision of this, yet I know if you fail me, it may be true. If I come back elated with my ideals and find you have not given

your little tenth while I have given my nine-tenths or my all, I fear I shall go blind with madness, and my gun will be ready to beat at you and my hands to take your calf of gold.

"I do not want these things to be, and so I ask you—Do not fail me. I ask of you not your all, but only what you have above your needs; and that you live on your own labor, not on that of others. We must all do our part, and so again I ask you to sign this pledge to 'give all I pos-

sess' with me, and to see that the gentlemen mentioned in the first part of my letter, and others like them, do the same. Yours,

"JOHN T. GOOLRICK, Jr.,  
"Fredericksburg, Virginia."

The editor of the Journal, of Flint, Michigan, has not so far answered the letter, and I am afraid I am going to have to look elsewhere for someone to work on that farm.

—J. T. G., Jr.

This leaflet is published specially for those who have given "their all" in the past four years, either as Soldiers or Workers. It is not for the Coal, the Milk, the Bacon, the Milling or Munition Barons, who have become rich while you have been pouring forth your blood and your sweat. The issue is now up to you. In your councils you must formulate your demands for your own protection. Remember the promises which were made to you—are they being kept? If not, what are you going to do? The world is yours when you want it.

"Workers of the World, Unite."

*The Socialist Party of Canada,  
Local No. 3*

