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# THE PROBE

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## NOTICE.

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## COMMENTS

BY NOREN

Sometimes I wonder what would happen to the opponents of pacifists if the latter were not pacifists and yet opponents. It must be a secret comfort to the militarists and their supporters that the pacifists, who are so largely in the majority, are pacifists. Because the pacifists do not use their might, their opponents want to deprive them of their rights.

It would seem that the least dangerous of all must be the man who will not fight for any cause, not even his own. In a war to destroy war it is surely out of place to visit dire punishment upon the pacifist who never fought nor advised others to fight.

Why is it that in all countries those who make war to get peace, first make war upon those who are already at peace, their own pacifists?

What can it be that makes the pacifists so dangerous to the warriors? The pacifist pays his taxes no matter how uselessly they are squandered by the war makers. He sees them take his sons to war. He even lets them take himself to war, sometimes against his protest and other times in silent endurance. He lets the war makers walk up and down the land making an unbearable din and usurp-

ing every agency from the church to the penitentiary for their own purpose. He never tries to stop them. He freely grants them free speech and a free press.

Yet, upon this peaceful individual they, who professedly go to war to end war, wreak their first and direct vengeance. If the pacifists speak against war they are called traitors and put in prison. If they advocate peace in print they are denied the use of the mail. They who in their own persons are so peaceful that they disturb no one, must be imprisoned for the safety of those who make a profession of disturbing the peace.

I was moved to see thoughts by certain letters from persons who believe, so they say, in war to destroy war. Here is an extract from one of these letters:

"The idea of men standing out for the rights of venting forth their convictions on the most righteous causes whatsoever at such a time as this, does not show a proper sense of proportion \* \* \*."

Plainly, if pacifists are permitted to live, they should be made dumb. Speech is their only method of self-defense; therefore, speech should be denied them. Why is militarism the only cause in this world that can not stand ANY opposition? Everybody must give it assistance or be imprisoned; must approve or be denied speech.

Another one writes to a friend: "While none of us want our sons to be shot and mangled and even to stand in mud and cold in the trenches and camps, still we do not want them to shirk \* \* \*. You see you have bitterness in your heart against your own country while we hate only those who are so fiendish that they must be doomed to save the innocent whom they are trampling under their iron heels."

This writer has come to agreement with the war makers. To her, the opponents are the superwicked. To this state of mind war leads all but the clearest-headed. Imperialist war makers know that with most people the issues that were supposed to have caused the war and the principles for which it was fought, become secondary and disappear as the war progresses. It becomes a war to punish the guilty opponent for what he did during the war rather than uproot the

causes that brought the war on.

War would long ago have ceased had peace treaties dealt with causes of war rather than war. The ordinary peace treaty does not deal with general causes of war because to the peace delegates the abolishing of war is not the end sought. To most treaty makers war has brought prosperity and power and fame. If they belong to the "victory" side the exacted advantages contained in the treaty is not hailed as the fruit of peace, but of war. Because they do not deal with principles the vanquished side treats peace as a temporary truce to be broken when it seems advantageous to them. All this explains why the pacifist is the man feared by militarists. The pacifist brushes aside all the "horrors" of war that the war spirit feeds on. It is WAR that brings the "horrors" of war, not the wicked opponent. The pacifist sees no "civilized" warfare any more than he sees Christian burglary.

It may be that the suffering in Europe has been great enough to produce a hate for war. It may be that in the revolutionary countries peace men be degenerated to the peace conference. The leaders of thought and action in America have no desire for a permanent peace. They are planning to feed upon the "glories" of war for generations to come. The militarists of this country have by our entry into the European war succeeded in crushing pacifist sentiment here. If this war shall prove to be the war that destroyed war, that result will be forced upon us. That the militarists of this country look upon this war not as the last but as a preliminary to greater wars is plainly shown by the following:

WASHINGTON, Nov. 22.—America's naval strength will be more than twice as great by 1920 as it was in 1917, the year the United States entered the world war. It was brought out today before the House naval committee, in considering the 1920 naval appropriation bill. No comparative statement was given regarding capital ships, but the total number of all ships will be about 800, as compared with 300 in 1917.

Twenty-four dreadnaughts will be included in the 1920 fleet. There are now 19, and five will be built before July, 1920. Three of the latter are nearing completion—the Idaho, Tennessee and California. Three hundred

and fifty new destroyers also will be completed by that time."

No pacifist would be guilty of presenting the above program as a condition of peace. But on such perversions the militarists thrive. This method of false pleading runs through their whole system. It is a part of their propaganda and often stoops to common lying. A year ago or less I attended a lecture given by a noted American scholar and traveler. He had, so he said, a son in the war. The lecturer quoted some of the most horrible cases of cruelties inflicted by Germans upon companions to his son. These particular instances of cruelty were set forth to prove the truth of his statement that cruelties on the part of the Germans were well nigh universal.

This aged man's statement carried conviction. Not a person present rose to question the truth of them. Yet six months after the lecture U. S. Surgeon General Gorgas proved them lies by making public his statement that up to that time no case of German cruelty to an American soldier had been recorded and that his records covered every case of every American soldier in service.

Leaving aside all reference to the enemy, can human advancement be promoted by injustice to our own people. A few days ago word was received that the noted Pittsburgh artist, Fred Demmler, had died of his wounds received in battle. Mr. Demmler was one of millions who went to war against his better judgment. If war did give us safety for the future can any decent man want it at the price of Demmler's life? Does not common decency demand that those who pretend to fear an enemy to such an extent as to demand a buffer, that they themselves be their own buffers?

Is it not absurd to compel other men to go out and serve as saviors? And then these home-staying safety hunters shall blow war generations to come of their own sacrifices made for freedom, when as a matter of fact they didn't make any sacrifice but compelled others to go out and make it for them, against those others' will.

Chicago, Nov. 27, 1918

The Probe, Pittsburgh, Pa.

W. Henry Robertson, U. S. Consul to Argentina, reports a "Large banking and investment company, organized by Swift & Company to take an active part in live stock and agricultural production in Argentina," showing monopoly tightening its grip on the natural resources. Consumer: Watch your meat bill!

\* \* \*

The Chicago Association of Commerce fears "labor will resist a readjustment of wages."

Permit me to dispell their fear, just "readjust wages" upwards.

HERMAN FOREL.

## Free Trade First Essential to a League of Nations

By Kenneth B. Elliman.

A League of Nations is the question of the hour. And yet how little that is said on the subject is really practicable. Humanitarianism is strong in many individual hearts, but it has not yet shown itself as a controlling motive in international politics. Nevertheless, there is a basis for a World Federation that is not only ethically sound but one that offers as well a practical, economic advantage to all accepting it.

Between the end of the Revolution and the adoption of the Federal Constitution the American States were several times on the verge of war with one another over taxes imposed by one State on imports from another. But the Constitution put an end to this danger, and offered a genuine gain to each State that accepted it, by establishing absolute freedom of interstate trade. Since 1789 there has been no danger of any State making war on any other, and hence, no need for State standing armies or navies. The German Zollverein (Customs Union) provided a similar incentive as the basis of the federation of the German States and for the alliance with Austro-Hungary. With such a great advantage to be gained as freedom to exchange their goods with each other, and the friendliness that always results from such intercourse, differences of race, language and religion were forgotten.

Suppose the present Entente Allies and the United States establish a League of Nations by abolishing all customs taxes between each other, and invite all other nations who will do the same, to join them. Could any nation afford to forego the advantages offered by such a union?

With such a League thus established on a basis of justice, equality and freedom, the need would arise for legislation, administration and adjudication. So, in a perfectly natural and inevitable way there would be established an international legislature, executive and judiciary. The common aims and interests would before long be seen to outweigh so far any merely national interests that people would wonder that such an International had not been sooner established. Purely national affairs and administration—like State affairs in this country—would, of course, continue to be entirely independent.

1. The chief object of imperialism is markets. These can be obtained better and more cheaply through world-wide freedom of trade.

2. The independence of small na-

tions will be more secure when their markets are open freely to all the world.

3. The removal of tariff taxes will lower the cost of living.

4. The abolition of restrictive tariffs will compel industries to be conducted where they are naturally most economical,—thus reducing still further the cost of living.

5. With the question of tariffs thus removed, colonial questions will be more easily solved.

6. Through the abolition of the chief cause of war—discriminative tariffs and the strengthening of common aims and interests, the absurdity of maintaining armies, navies and forts will appear, and disarmament follow.

7. The economic peace which inevitably accompanied world-wide freedom of trade thus means permanent universal peace.

It is not pretended that free trade is a panacea, or that it will appeal to profiteers or militarists. But it is clear that it does offer a secure basis for a League of Nations, and one that would make it an advantage, instead of a concession, for each nation to join.

Editor of The Probe:

Has the war ended and will peace return again without at least some start being made toward freeing the earth to the useful producer and improver?

This question is agitating the minds of many earnest and devoted friends of humanity who felt sure that the abnormal demand for increased governmental revenue and for an increased production of food and war materials

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would force the land question upon the public mind, and that regardless of what stand-pat politicians of the old parties and their allies—the privileged classes—thought about it. We thought the rent of land, which is not a product of individual exertion, but entirely a social or natural product, would be among the first things "commandeered" by the government, and its resultant effect of making it unprofitable to hold land out of use, would open up golden opportunities for labor and capital to get busy in the production of all forms of wealth. Evidently we did not guess right, for, insofar as I know, nothing has been done toward this just, moral and scientifically efficient measure.

Even in California, where the question of freeing the land to useful producers was made a direct voting issue, the majority of voters failed to answer in the affirmative, and twenty million acres of oil, mineral, timber and farming lands in that state, will remain locked against labor and capital until such time when the lords of the land-for-a-price will graciously step out of the way and permit people to go to work on them. There must be some unseen, but it must be confessed, highly efficient influence that protects private ownership of land from "the wrath and sore displeasure" of the tax-deviled American voter, or is it just because he is a past and present dandy?

On the surface, only a very few voters desire the restoration of the land to its true inheritors—all the people, and except "the boys" who will soon return from overseas, where they have been fighting to save the world for democracy, insist upon something being done toward the common ownership of land—the true fundamental basis of real democracy—their devotion and sacrifice will to a large extent be wasted.

It is not enough that the autocracy founded on the "divine right of kings" or of military power be destroyed. The autocracy of a privately-owned earth, must also be destroyed, before the world can be saved to democracy, or, to put it another way, before democracy can be made independent and

intelligent enough to save the world.  
OLIVER McKNIGHT,  
Philadelphia.

Mr. G. H. Cox is a farmer of Milan, Sullivan County, Missouri. He and his kind are the salt of the earth. I learn from "Land and Labor" that Mr. Cox was the first man in Missouri to turn in a full petition for the "Homestead Loan and Tax Measures" recently voted on in his state. The measures failed because there were not enough Cox's in Missouri. I do not want to exaggerate, but I want to make this statement in all seriousness — that there was more statesmanship in Milan, Sullivan county, Missouri, in 1918 than there was in Washington, D. C.

In both places the main issue was the raising and spending of money. Mr. Cox gave unstinted support to a plan that would square taxes with justice; that would conform to the principle of human freedom and make men equal in their relation with the State.

What did they do in Washington? Ye gods! what did they do? They threw principles to the wind and loaded a burden of debt upon the shoulders of this nation that will make them slaves as truly as the blacks of old. Free men will cease to exist in the United States unless men like G. H. Cox succeed in undoing the evil work of the present congress and administration. Had as were the McKinley bill and the Dingley bill and the Payne Aldrich monstrosity, the champions of these bills had at least the decency to go before the country upon that issue. The tariff barons carried the fight to the people and won. They had the majority's consent and approval to do what they did. But what shall I, as a democrat, say of the Democrats? This only can I say, that they stained against better knowledge, that they drove the men of better principle out of the party, and blasted the hopes of their own supporters. If we must have political iniquity let us have it at the hands of a Fenosa in the name of big business and not under the cloak of democracy.

The Food Administration held a public meeting at the Nixon theatre Sunday, December 8. The Allegheny County Food Administrator, Mr. W. D. George, acted as chairman. He

threw the gates wide open for a real live and vital discussion. He quoted Mr. Pepper of Philadelphia, who wrote an article around the question, "What next," and that, Mr. George said, was the question now. Mr. Howard Heinz who was the main speaker, said we must save food for the allies and neutrals. Aside from that remark Mr. George's question was absolutely ignored.

Mr. Heinz looks like a business man and talks like a preacher. Words without end, amen. Not that his speech was so long, for it wasn't. He just had nothing important to say. He gave us a forecast of what is coming — the glorification of war. He described the achievements, the valor, the suffering and — you know the rest of the story, "a most glorious page in human history," etc., etc.

If war is after all so glorious as all that, what will the next generations think. Won't they be itching to write a page of their own equally as glorious, or more so.

I do not want to disparage Mr. Heinz. He is so far above the average rich man as not to be put in the same class. He has served and served unstintedly. One can well believe that he did not like his work, for it was not work that civilization made necessary. It was work that civilized men had to do in order to save mankind from utter destruction by war, the agency that destroys civilization.

The audience was a society audience, in perfect accord with Mr. Heinz; he knew nothing and they knew nothing. If Mr. Heinz possessed the eloquence of a Henry George and could have summed up the human suffering of the four years' war, the indescribable horrors of the most revolting hell; that society audience would have commented lazily "what a perfectly grand speech." That kind of an audience, the society crowd, will not realize that anything is serious until a future Bolshevik regime puts them in prison for denying liberty, as they are now putting men in prison for proclaiming liberty.

Mrs. Burnett Smith, an English lady, gave a touching recital of the woes of war. Her delicate and tasteful manner of paying compliments re-

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DR. MALCOM McFARLAN, of Philadelphia, Pa., wrote:

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realed a real lady. That a home such as hers must be, should be destroyed by war is really a tragedy. But that the thing that destroys millions of homes, hers included, should be, not hated but promoted—that's what gets me. The climax of this thing that destroys millions of homes and takes millions of lives and reduces a world to starvation, becomes "a most glorious page of human history."

For all the thoughts presented at that barren meeting, barren as a rock, the question is not "what next," but "how soon can we get ready for the next war, for the next "glorious page?"

I hope that little group of rich men who are planning great things for Pittsburgh won't forget the children of the poor and their rack-rented parents. Contrary to the welfare pest, no child ever lacked playgrounds but thousands of Pittsburgh's children lack sufficient food.

It looks as though that Czecho-Slovak army are Wall street's hired Hsesians.

It is altogether probable that if the peace congress does not agree to universal disarmament, the armaments will be taken charge of by the workers of Europe and the agreement set aside.

Something must be done. Our kept press has kept us breathless for more than a year over that coming red terror in Russia. And yet it does not come. What is the use of supporting an "All-Russian" government at Omsk if it doesn't start something?

The Russian government will not be represented at the peace congress because it has already secured what the war was for. Russia has been made safe for democracy.

There are many men who could match Rockefeller in ability. But Rockefeller plus the Standard Oil Co., plus the United States government, makes it rather hopelessly one-sided.

When you "buy" land you merely bribe someone to stand aside. You got nothing from the "seller."

For sale: Part of the navy. Being a citizen and therefore part owner of "our" navy, and having no use for it I offer my part of it for sale for whatever price it will bring.

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