

A DISREGARDED WARNING

Why, in spite of the many years of work of peace societies, has the present European war broke out? Why have the efforts of these organisations been without effect in preventing this most disastrous and least reasonable of wars? Is it not worth while for peace advocates to carefully consider a comment on their methods, which the present deplorable situation has justified?

On December 29th, 1910, shortly after Andrew Carnegie had made his gift of ten million dollars to the International Peace Fund, Joseph Fels wrote to him, pointing out the fatal defects of peace propaganda as Carnegie and his associates preferred to carry it on. In this letter Mr. Fels said:—

You have given ten million dollars to an international peace fund. The object is worthy. The donor's intentions are good. But worthy object and good intention cannot alone make a gift a real benefaction. Donations, no matter how large, to suppress evils, no matter how great, can accomplish nothing unless they should be used to remove the fundamental cause of the evils.

Aggressive warfare is always the result of what appears to be an economic necessity. The last great war, that between Russia and Japan, will serve as an illustration. These two nations fought over the possession of Korea. Russia wanted Korea because she feels the need of a seaport accessible all the year round, and thus be able to export and import merchandise freely without being bothered with any other tariff restrictions than those of her own making. Japan felt that her independence would be threatened—that is, she realised that her refusal to freely trade with the rest of the world would create a temptation for other nations sufficiently strong to deprive her of independence.

If conditions of absolute international free trade had prevailed Russia would no more have felt the lack of an accessible seaport than does the State of Ohio. If Japan maintained no custom houses the power that would try to rob her of independence could have nothing to gain and very much to lose. Henry George made this clear in his PROTECTION OR FREE TRADE.

What are the real substantial advantages of this Union of ours? Are they not summed up in the absolute freedom of trade which it secures and the community of interests that grows out of this freedom? If our states were fighting each other with hostile tariffs and a citizen could not cross a state boundary line without having his baggage searched, or a book printed in New York could not be sent across the river to Jersey City without being held in the post office until duty was paid, how long would our Union last, or what would it be worth? The true benefits of our Union, the true basis of the interstate peace it secures, is that it has prevented the establishment of state tariffs and given us free trade over the better part of a continent.

The "need of foreign markets" which is so frequently used as an argument to justify wars of criminal aggression is a "need" that would not be felt if the aggressing nation enforced justice at home. Our own war in the Philippines would not have received popular endorsement but for the false hope of "new foreign markets" held out to commercial interests. This bait was held out and was swallowed in spite of the fact that potential new markets exist here at home.

The unemployed and partially employed population and the underpaid workers form a potential market far greater than any that any war of conquest could secure. To secure this new market, labour need but be given access to the natural resources now withheld by private monopolists. The vacant and the partially used city lots, and the valuable mining and agricultural lands held out of use on speculations are causing poverty, unemployment and low wages. The result is underconsumption of manufactured products, which manufacturers and merchants are bamboozled into believing can be relieved by forcing the people of weaker nations to purchase.

Then again, the interests which dragged the United States into the disgraceful Philippine adventure would not, and could not, have succeeded in doing so, had not

the existence of land monopoly at home made it evident that the same institution would surely be continued by our government in the Philippines.

Will the Carnegie fund be used to any extent in abolishing land monopoly, thus checking any possible repetition of successful appeals to commercial cupidity in support of land grabbing schemes abroad? Hardly.

A gift of ten millions to secure relief from malaria in a swampy district, which could not be used to secure the draining of the swamps or the destruction of the mosquitoes, would be just as effective as your peace donation.

Mr. Fels' advice was disregarded. Perhaps Mr. Carnegie felt that it was too stupendous a task to remove the causes of war to which Mr. Fels alluded. Yet, stupendous as it may appear to be, it is the easiest method of preventing war—and it may not be as stupendous as it seems. Perhaps—although it is scarcely four years since that letter was written—had Mr. Fels' advice been seriously considered and acted upon, there would by this time have been sufficient progress made to have averted the awful calamity that has befallen Europe. Much is being said about this being the last war. Let us hope that it is, but let not the work be longer neglected which alone can make permanent peace sure.

AN AMERICAN VIEW OF THE WAR

"Terrible, appalling, horrible," can be heard every day, anywhere as voicing the speaker's idea of this great war; yet we are in the throes of an industrial conflict equally as barbaric, where greater numbers perish and many more are wounded every year.

But Europe's war is spectacular and sudden, and destruction is swift; ours is a slow grinding process that knows no day of rest; it never stops; lives innumerable are blasted slowly by days and years, then snuffed out.

Blasting lives is our business, but being blind egotists we do not see.

We produce all the staple foods and fibres; and in such prodigal quantity that 'tis said we feed the world.

In the face of these gifts and the presence of the Giver we employ nearly two million children in the factories of our "big interests," at the same time that hosts of able-bodied men are idle and in want.

Glutted with abundance we destroy this multitude of little children—for of such is the profit of Mammon; indeed, we have closed our eyes and stopped our ears, and have not seen their distress nor heard their cry.

Of property we make a fetish, every mother's son of us from the garbage man to the Kaiser wants property; we talk, think and have our being in property; merchandise is our God, to sell it is man's noblest work; this may not be our ideal, but it is our practical everyday life.

Property is necessary; proprietorship in the earth is vital to our existence, but if we admit the principle of private ownership in land and its monopoly, then, indeed, do we become slaves to the cunning few who, while we work, plan and scheme and pass laws for our despoliation.

Monopoly is the mother of all wars; even religious wars are the fruit of that desire, the religious combatants desiring a monopoly of adherents to their creed.

Let us pray to our Creator that war in Europe may cease, but let us also work with our Creator that industrial war in these United States may be ended.

(W. E. Gordon in the PUBLIC, Chicago, September 25th).