

All Right, Let's Go To War

EDITORIAL writers and columnists with extraordinary vigor are intent upon the need for saving civilization. It would be unfair, young men, to debunk the fervor of these far-seeing oldsters.

Politicians, beyond the legal fighting age, insist that the country is in danger of invasion, that all we hold dear in these United States must be preserved without consideration of cost.

From his ivory tower a college professor warns pacifist students that there are spiritual and moral standards for which sacrifices must be made.

Perhaps they are right. It may be that something in this social set-up is worth preserving. Things might be worse. An argument can be made for a surcease of reason in the face of a world disaster.

Let's go to war. Let's forget that the present situation is the product of tariffs, channeling of goods and credits, profit-hungry cartels, reparations, pressure politics, land speculation—all the schemes of exploitation which restrict that free exchange of goods and services necessary for peaceful living.

Let us concede that the world is very sick, so sick that drastic emergency treatment is the only way to help it now.

However, if we make the sacrifice necessary to save the world, ought we not demand that the world agree to get on the road of right living afterward? Have we not a right to insist that the causes which brought about this debacle be removed, so that the next generation will not have to go through it over again?

After we come back from the wars—if we do—will there be jobs for us, or shall we be faced with the "no help wanted" signs that greeted the returning heroes of 1918? Shall we have to work, if we are lucky enough to get work, to pay off the bonds issued to the home patriots who fought with their money while we fought with our lives? What kind of depression will greet us on our triumphant return?

Unless we look upon war as a make-work program, or a method of getting rid of surplus youngsters, there should be a sort of moral contract between the soldier and his country, with stipulations for a curative policy.

First, the disparity in the pay of enlisted men and of commissioned officers should be removed by paying the enlisted men a greater proportion

of their normal income in productive work. It's no fault of theirs that they are being obliged to leave productive work to engage in wholly destructive work.

Second, the army, officers and men, must be drawn from all classes. No cushy jobs, at home or behind the front, for the sons of the privileged!

Of course, the men over forty who have been unable to find jobs during the past ten years may have a grudge against the country that denies them employment opportunities. If their support is to be won, restrictions on production that bar full employment must be abolished.

As for the million migrant farm laborers who do not have much in the way of homes to fight for, land should be promised them, and it must be made accessible for their families.

Finally, the ten million unemployed have no stake in the present order to defend. The restoration of full employment would give them one.

Moreover, the terms of the contract should include some guarantee that the war actually will result in a better world.

To avoid an unnecessary increase in the national debt, all the rent of urban, agricultural and mineral land and of power sites, radio channels, etc., should be appropriated by the government to defray the cost of war. No taxes should be levied until, and unless, the rent fund is found insufficient. This provision will also assure the soldiers that the land they are fighting for will actually be their own when they return. That's worth dying for. There's no sense in fighting for land which belongs to others who will make you pay to use it after you have risked your life to ward off prospective foreign landlords.

Abolition of all tariffs must be included in the agreement. Since the stupid scheme of preventing our people from buying from other nations results not only in depriving ourselves of their good products, but also prevents them from getting what they need from us, there is bound to be friction. Friction leads to fire. Let's free trade so that everybody can buy in the best market all over the world, thus stimulating business and creating jobs for everybody.

We could do without patent monopolies and pressure groups which thrive on the taxing power of the government. But these are minor pests. It will be a worthwhile world if taxes and tariffs are abolished and the land returned to the people.

Will the advocates of war meet these terms?