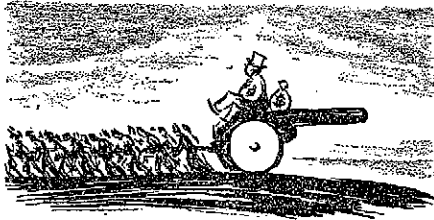


Sacrifice by All for All

AMERICA is getting ready for war. That's what preparedness is. We are told that being prepared will keep us out of war. Involved in that argument is our conceit of being a peaceful nation—an assumption that does not square with our history—and that all we have to fear is aggression from without. Maybe that's so.

Nobody will claim that war or the preparation



for it is production. It is waste. The best claim made for such waste is that it is necessary for the protection of our way of living. It is the price we must pay to preserve our national ideals. The enemy is or will be at our city gates, and these gates must be guarded lest all we hold dear be destroyed.

The proposition is quite clear. All of us living within those city gates must make the sacrifice. Not some of us. For the theory is that we are all beneficiaries of the prevailing order, and that all of us would suffer if the enemy destroyed it. We are one in peril, we must be one in our spirit of self-denial.

Now, if some benefit by the sacrifice of others, something very akin to treachery has been perpetrated. It is not as if a few individuals failed to enter into the spirit of sacrifice for the common cause; that at worst is only slackerism. When the sacrifice of the many redound to the benefit of a few nothing less than treason has occurred. And those who aid or make possible this private aggrandizement, even in the name of the law, are morally guilty of conspiracy to frustrate or hamper the success of the common cause.

That such is not the purpose of the conspirators does not alter the fact. Their ignorance of the effect of the conspiracy perhaps absolves them of mor-

al censure. But for the prosecution of war or preparedness the effect is the same whether moral turpitude has or has not entered into the act. By exacting profit for themselves, or (in the case of public officials) by making it possible for others to profit from the sacrifices made by the public for the common good, they have mulcted the people and have to that extent weakened resistance to the enemy.

To avoid such filching, to reduce the sacrifice which we must bear, to make our preparation more effective, we should abolish by law all possibility of private gain. We have seen that the most successful war machine of modern times was built on that principle. Let us emulate the successful. Let us determine upon a captain who seems able to bring us out of the valley of fear to the mountaintop of national security, and give to him all the power necessary to take whatever in his military wisdom is necessary.

Such a captain would not pay \$3,500,000 for 520,000 acres for an anti-aircraft training center in Savannah, Ga., as did our government last month. Nor would he tax us to obtain 13,738 acres of land at Fort Sill, Okla., 6126 acres at Camp Custer, Mich., 3,000 acres at Great Camp Lake Basin, Utah, and 41 acres at Fortress Monroe, Va.

Why should the owners of these lands, who as American citizens are to benefit by the preservation of our ideals just as much as the rest of us, who stand to lose as much if the enemy is not kept away, why should they receive a gratuity from the common sacrificial defense fund? (Maybe they are entitled to something for the "foresight" they showed in holding on to the land until it was needed for preparedness; maybe the land would not be there if they hadn't held on to it!)

No, the common sense of the situation, to say nothing of simple honesty, requires that our ordinary marketplace technique be abolished until we feel we are adequately prepared, or have won the war for which we are preparing. Let there be no prices, no wages, no private ownership of anything that might be needed to protect us from our common peril. All for one, one for all; that's the spirit.

If we do not do that, if we enrich landowners by purchasing their holdings—or by paying them rent for the natural resources needed for preparedness—the suspicion will not down that preparedness is a conspiracy to defraud the many for the benefits of the few, using national fear as a cover.