
President Wilson's Militarism Will Drive Nation to Disaster:

**His Program of Preparedness, If Carried Out,
Would Be the Beginning of Competitive
Armament Between Nations on the American
Continent and Encourage the War Lords of the
Old World to Continue Their Bloody Profession...**

[event of Nov. 5, 1915]

by G.A. Hoehn

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President Wilson succumbed to the powerful influence of American Capitalism. Unconsciously, we think. But the results of his submission to the powers that be are not less disastrous to the American people than they would be had the action of the President been taken with clear consciousness and intentionally. Capitalist class interests, as represented by the statesmen and politicians surrounding him and by the capitalist daily press and trust-owned magazines, so influenced and misled the Professor in the White House that he swallowed the military program of the American Trust magnates and corporation kings.

On the fifth day of November [1915], Woodrow Wilson, in addressing the Manhattan Club of New York, presented his program for National Defense and Preparedness, and the program immediately met with the most cordial applause of those who consider Militarism, Navyism, and War the best source of profit and the most effective means of enslaving the great mass of the people. The President announced that his administration plan called for an increase in the standing army and the training

within the next three years of 400,000 citizen soldiers, to be raised in annual forces of 133,000, besides the strengthening of the National Guard. As to the Navy, he said it was already a "very great and efficient force," but to lift it to a point of "extraordinary force and efficiency we should hasten our pace in the policy we have long been pursuing."

I presenting his program for the new American militarism, President Wilson was very liberal in prefacing and decorating his scheme with flowers of oratory and pictures of peace and good will to men. After speaking of the horrors of the European war, he tells us that "from one end of our own dear country to the other men are asking one another what our force is, how far we are prepared to maintain ourselves against any interference with our national action or development." Then he proceeds to justify his proposed military preparedness as follows:

President Wilson's Military Program.

"No matter what military or naval force the United States might develop, statesmen throughout the whole world might rest assured that we were gathering that force, not for attack in any quarter, not for aggression of any kind, nor for the satisfaction of any political or international ambition, but merely to make sure of our own security. We have it in mind to be prepared, but not for war, but only for defense; and with the thought constantly in our minds that the principles we hold most dear can be achieved by the slow process of history only in the kindly and wholesome atmosphere of peace, and not by the use of hostile force. the mission of America in the world is essentially a mission of peace and good will among men. She has become the home and asylum of men of all creeds and races.

"We feel justified in preparing ourselves to vindicate our rights to independent and unmolested action by making the force that is in us ready for assertion.

"And we know that we can do this in a way that will be itself an illustration of the American spirit. In accordance with our American traditions we want and shall work for only an army adequate to the constant and legitimate uses of times of international peace. But we do want to feel that there is a great body of citizens who have received at least the most rudimentary and necessary forms of military training; that they will be ready to form themselves into a fighting force at the call of the nation; and

that the nation has the munitions and supplies with which to equip them without delay should it be necessary to call them into action. We wish to supply them with the training they need, and we think we can do so without calling them at any time too long away from their civilian pursuits.

"It is with this idea, with this conception, in mind that the plans have been made which it will be my privilege to lay before the Congress at its next session. The plan calls for only such an increase in the regular army of the United States as experience has proved to be required for the performance of the necessary duties of the army in the Philippines, in Hawaii, in Puerto Rico, upon the borders of the United States, at the coast fortifications, and at the military posts of the interior. For the rest, it calls for the training within the next three years of a force of 400,000 citizen soldiers to be raised in annual contingents of 133,000, who would be asked to enlist for three years with the colors and three years on furlough, but who during their three years of enlistment with the colors would not be organized as a standing force, but would be expected merely to undergo intensive training for a very brief period of each year.

"The Navy of the United States is already a very great and efficient force. Not rapidly, but slowly, with careful attention, our naval force has been developed until the Navy of the United States stands recognized as one of the most efficient and notable of modern time. All that is needed in order to bring it to a point of extraordinary force and efficiency as compared with the other navies of the world is that we should hasten our pace in the policy we have long been pursuing, and that chief of all we should have a definitely policy of development, not made from year to year, but looking well into the future and planning for a definite consummation.

"No thoughtful man feels any panic in this matter. The country is not threatened from any quarter. She stands in friendly relations with all the world. Her resources are known and her self-respect and her capacity to care for her own citizens and her own rights. There is no fear amongst us. Under the new-world conditions we have become thoughtful of the things which all reasonable men consider necessary for security and self-defense on the part of every nation confronted with the great enterprise of human liberty and independence. That is all."

Militarism Will Enslave Nations — It Will Never Safeguard the People's Liberation.

ration interests who make the politics and dictate the policy of our Federal, State, and Municipal administrations.

To claim that military preparedness is necessary to insure peace, national security, prosperity, and the welfare of the nation is the summit of folly! History tells us a different story. The preparedness of President Wilson is the “unloaded” revolver that kills so many children. He takes the American people for a lot of foolish children and wants them to play with the “unloaded revolver” of American Imperialism. Will the people do it? Professor Woodrow Wilson of Princeton must have been soundly asleep for the 25 years preceding the present world war, for he doesn't seem to know that he is today simply repeating almost the exact words of the Kaiser. Whenever the Socialists of the German Reichstag opposed the insane work of the government for armament, for increasing the Army and Navy, the Kaiser and his military caste would answer them: *“No matter what military force Germany might develop, it will all be for peace, for the security of the people's welfare! The most efficient military preparedness is the best guarantee for peace!”*

And what the Kaiser and his Junkers said in Berlin was repeated in the House of Lords and House of Commons in London, in the Chamber of Deputies in Paris, in the Reichsrath in Vienna, and in all the other seats of militarist misrule! Consequently, President Wilson is simply repeating an old militarist lie imported from war-ridden Europe.

Woodrow Wilson's political education is not a democratic one; it is plutocratic-imperialistic, as his Manhattan Club program speech proved most conclusively. With his proposed program carried out in this country we shall soon see ourselves in the midst of an insanely competitive armament between all the capitalist governments on the American continent — that is to say, an American edition of European war preparedness. It is not the rank and file of the people who want war, who make war; the ruling classes attend to that end of the job. The nations of

Europe did not want the present war; they were opposed to the present war. But the rulers so managed the diplomatic and military affairs of the nations that the people were compelled to go to war whether they wanted it or not. Will President Wilson tell us that he listened to the voice of the American people and shaped his military program in accord with their wishes? He never did! He heard the voices of J. Pierpont Morgan, Hearst, Schwab, Loeb, Schiff, Rockefeller, and other pirates of American industry, commerce, and finance — Wilson mistook those pirates' voice for the voice of the American people!

American Militarism Will Extinguish the Light of Liberty.

Russian Prussian, British, Austrian, and Italian Militarist rulers say exactly what Woodrow Wilson said to the gathering of leading capitalist statesmen, politicians, and speculators at the New York manhattan Club. Neither the Tsar, nor the Kaiser, nor any other warlord, ever told the people that they would arm for offensive purposes but always for defense. Tsars and Kaisers and Kings were singing their songs of peace, freedom, and brotherhood, while at the same time they were building up their armies and navies for the same kind of military preparedness that President Wilson advocated in his New York program speech.

The liberties of the American people are not endangered by the European warlords of the old world, but by the same class of capitalist corporation rulers and exploiters of the people whose irresistible political pressure and influence made Woodrow Wilson come their way and accept as his military program the very kind of "preparedness" they have been striving for ever since the Spanish-American war. William McKinley, Roosevelt, or Taft could not have done better than Woodrow Wilson. He wants to bring our American Navy to *"a point of extraordinary force and efficiency as compared with the other navies of the world."* In other words, our Democratic President is anxious to build up an American Navy equal to that of John Bull! And why not add an American Army equal to that of the Kaiser? Democracy, thou

art a jewel! Congressman [Clyde Howard] Tavenner informs us that our Navy cost increased from \$22,104,061 in 1894 to \$140,718,434 in 1914, which means 1000 percent increase in the last 20 years!¹ That is bad enough. President Wilson is on the way to make it worse.

William J. Bryan came out in opposition to Wilson's program.² Bryan's position is right. Because Bryan tells the truth about American militarism and preparedness he is denounced and ridiculed by the subsidized Democratic Party organs of the country, which, however, is not surprising. Bryan says:

"The President says we should be prepared, 'not for aggression, but for defense.' That is the ground upon which all preparation for war is made. What nation ever prepared for war on the theory that it was preparing for aggression? It is only fair to assume that the European rulers who are involved in the present war though that they were contributing toward the maintenance of peace when they were making elaborate preparations for defense. It is a false philosophy, and, being false, it inevitably leads to difficulties.

"The spirit that makes the individual carry a revolver — and who ever carries a revolver except for defense? — leads him not only to use it on slight provocation, but to use language which provokes trouble. 'Speak softly, but carry a big stick' is one of the delusive maxims employed by those who put their faith in force. There are two answers to it — first, the man who speaks softly has not the disposition to carry a club, and if a man with a soft voice is persuaded to carry a club his voice changes as soon as he begins to rely upon the club.

"If there is any truth in our religion, a nation must win respect as an individual does, not by carrying arms, but by an upright, honorable course that invites confidence and insures good will. This nation has won its position in the world without resorting to the habit of toting a pistol or carrying a club. Why reverse our policy at this time? The President himself admits that there is no reason for a change."

¹ This is actually a 537% increase over 20 years.

² William Jennings Bryan resigned as Wilson's Secretary of State in June 1915 following the May 7 sinking of the *RMS Lusitania* and Wilson's bellicosity in the aftermath of the event.

As an advocate of democracy, President Wilson cannot deny the correctness of Bryan's position. As a defender and protector of Imperialism he may attempt it. We do not blame J. Pierpont Morgan, Dupont, Charles Schwab, Loeb, Schiff, Hearst, and all the rest of the American people's exploiters and skinners for their pro-military activity. It's business with them. It's protection of their class interests. It's protection not against Tsars, Kaisers, and Kings from across the Atlantic, but protection against the American working class. Someday they might make good use of their "military preparedness" during times of serious labor trouble.

Wage workers of America, wake up! Make President Wilson abandon his military program! make him drop his Imperialistic aspirations and political hallucinations! The end of the European war will present to the world a picture of horror and universal suffering that will be the death warrant of militarism. Why should our great American Republic now be pushed into the abyss? If we could boast of 50 percent of the "preparedness" of John Bull or Kaiser Bill our capitalist speculators and exploiters would have pushed Uncle Sam into the world war 6 months ago. What else does military preparedness mean but to be ready at a moment's notice to lick the other fellow, to prove that we can wage war as murderously as any other government — that we can make war worse than hell?

Edited with footnotes by Tim Davenport

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