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# The War Censor Arrives in America: United States Postal Officials Deny Mails to Jack London's Article "The Good Soldier."

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The War Censor has arrived in America. That great power of darkness that stops up the human brain, while the human body goes ignorant to the slaughter, has started its work in the United States.

If it had not been for the War Censor the duped millions of Europe would at least know why and for whom they were fighting and dying. If they had been permitted to receive this information from the Socialist press of Europe, the great world war might never have taken place.

Even in peace times, the War Censor is busy in Europe. He is always at work in Russia, Austria-Hungary, Germany, and other countries. Socialist papers are suppressed and Socialist speakers are imprisoned because they dare fight militarism and war.

Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg go to prison for declaring war on the war god. Russian Socialists go to Siberia. The dungeons everywhere are hungry for Socialist anti-militarists. The War Censor must keep the world in darkness and the people in ignorance.

When the world war broke out the War Censor took command wherever the printed word appeared or the spoken word was uttered. Only thoughts pleasing to the god of war were permitted to see the light of day or be heard by living men. This war censorship still grips the nations at war.

WE REPEAT — the War Censor has arrived in America. The story of his arrival is told in a special dispatch from Washington to the *Chicago Tribune*. It reads, headlines and all, as follows:

## GOVERNMENT CHIEFS LAUD BARRING OF LONDON BOOK

Washington, DC, Nov. 18. — (Special.) — Government officials say that the action of the Postmaster General in barring from the mails an article by Jack London entitled "A Good Soldier" should be accepted as an earnest of a purpose on the part of those in authority to protect the uniform and those who wear it from insult or affront.

Mr. London's article, according to the military authorities, was offensive to the military authorities as well as to the men in the ranks. Mr. London stated that a man "could go no lower than to be a 'good soldier.'"

This observation and the general context of Mr. London's article was interpreted as a violation of the law governing the admission of printed matter to the mails. It is the understanding of the authorities that the article in question was distributed by organizations furthering the propaganda in opposition to increased appropriations for preparedness.

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This is the beginning of the War Censor's work. How far will he dare go? *The American Socialist* will always fight for the greatest freedom of speech and press possible, so that all may be able to voice their views on war and militarism. *The American Socialist* may not always agree with everything that is said. Sometimes it may radically disagree. But we will always declare that the War Censor has no place in the United States. The War Censor is out of place in a republic. He has no place or function in a democracy.

We are not at war. There is no danger of an immediate war. That makes the crime of the postal officials in barring Jack London's utterances from the mails so much the more reprehensible. This is a mat-

ter that should be taken up by Congress immediately it meets next month.

If the United States government, through its postal department, can censor the utterances of Jack London in times of peace, what can it not do, or what may it not do, in time of war or threatening war?

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President Wilson, backed by the Democratic administration, may feel sure of his present position in attempting to foist the beginnings of an ever-increasing militarism upon the America people. The same issue of the *Chicago Tribune* that told of the suppression of the article by Jack London, in another Washington dispatch declared that 84 percent of the Democratic Senators and 75 percent of the Republican Senators were back of the Wilson military program. This same poll claimed that the same war program would receive 76 percent of the vote of the Democratic members of the House of Representatives, and 85.5 percent of the Republican Representatives. This would seem to be an overwhelming majority.

But Congress has not yet started its sessions in Washington. Does the Democratic administration intend to maintain this majority by gagging the utterances of the American people? We hope not. Perhaps those directing the Democratic administration will soon realize the unwisdom of even barring Jack London's article, "A Good Soldier," from the mails. But *The American Socialist* does not intend to go to sleep on the job. It will fight to the end any attempt to suppress free speech and a free press. The War Censor at work will make it easier for the militarists to ride rough shod over the wishes of the American people and turn the United States into a military nation and thus take the quickest road leading to war and a duplication of the slaughter now raging in Europe.

DRIVE THE WAR CENSOR FROM AMERICA!

## Here is Jack London's Censored Article on "The Good Soldier."

(Suppressed by US Postal Officials.)

Young men:

The lowest aim in your life is to become a soldier. The good soldier never tries to distinguish right from wrong. He never thinks; never reasons; he only obeys. If he is ordered to fire on his fellow citizens, on his neighbors, on his friends, on his relatives, he obeys without hesitation. If he is ordered to fire down a crowded street when the poor are clamoring for bread, he obeys, and sees the gray hairs of age stained with red and the life tide gushing from the breasts of women, feeling neither remorse nor sympathy. If he is ordered off on a firing squad to execute a hero or a benefactor, he fires without hesitation, though he knows the bullet will pierce the noblest heart that ever beat in human breast.

A good soldier is a blind, heartless, soulless, murderous machine. He is not a man. He is not a brute, for brutes only kill in self-defense. All that is human in him, all that is divine in him, all that constitutes the man has been sworn away when he took the enlistment oath. His mind, his conscience, aye, his very soul, are in the keeping of his officer.

No man can fall lower than a soldier — it is a depth beneath which he cannot go. Keep the boys out of the army. It is hell.

Down with the army and the navy. We don't need killing institutions. We need life-giving institutions.

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

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