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LABOR AND NATIONAL DEFENSE

by

Mr. Matthew Woll, Vice Pres.  
American Federation of Labor

April 2, 1935.

COLONEL JORDAN'S REMARKS INTRODUCING  
MR. MATTHEW WOLL

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Gentlemen:

It is my pleasure to introduce to you this afternoon our guest speaker, an outstanding American (and I use the word advisedly), a man who so well exemplifies what rewards this great country of ours has to offer.

He learned the trade of photo-engraver and became one of the best in his trade. He has been editor of "The Photo-Engraver" for years as well as serving as President of the International Photo-Engravers' Union of North America from 1906 to 1929.

He served as a member of the War Labor Board and as assistant to Mr. Gompers, Chairman of the Committee on Labor of the Council of National Defense. He is:

President of International Labor Press of America  
" " Workers' Educational Bureau  
" " American Wage Earners Conference  
" " Union Labor Life Ins. Co.  
" " International Sportsmanship Brotherhood  
Acting President, National Civic Federation

He is: Vice President of the American Federation of Labor and director of its legal bureau.

His name is listed as a member of the Academy of Political Science and as a trustee of the Public Educational Association of Chicago.

A side light into this gentleman's character reveals that in the midst of all his activities he has found time in a very full life to devote himself to the education of others in the prevention and cure of tuberculosis, a serious occupational disease of the printing and engraving trades. He is a trustee of the Chicago Tuberculosis Institute and the National Tuberculosis Association.

He has chosen as his subject this afternoon "Labor in War" on which he is so admirably qualified to address us.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce Mr. Matthew Woll, an outstanding American, a noted labor leader and a man for whose opinions we have great respect.

## LABOR AND NATIONAL DEFENSE

Colonel Jordan and Friends:

I really did not know I had so many executive positions as were recalled to my mind when Colonel Jordan read off the list of my associations and activities. Without venturing any comment on this varied career, may I say that I am sure if some of our photo-engravers had heard Colonel Jordan say I was the best photo-engraver in the country they might have taken exception to such a statement. I do claim, however, proficiency in my calling.

I am delighted to have the opportunity of meeting you today. I am reminded of the fact that seven years ago I addressed the War College on the same subject and I am glad to be here with you today. I hope you will be as pleased when I get through.

It is not my custom to prepare something in advance, although the radio methods oftentimes require it, but in this question of labor and war and labor and national defense there are so many phases involved that I have attempted a paper. When I prepared it I thought it would be about six pages; when I finished I found it was twelve. It is tiresome to just read a paper, so I shall also speak extemporaneously. When you get tired let me know and I will quit.

It is, of course, a very interesting and important subject but I need not say that to you - it is your work, but the subject of labor and its relation to the studies on which you are engaged is extremely important and essential.

It is gratifying to know that those who are members of the Army Industrial College and those who are connected with its administration are seeking the viewpoint of labor upon studies embraced and to which labor can contribute of its knowledge and experiences. Such contribution by labor is of great value for it will aid and assist you in your investigation and study of the national defense and of war.

Organized labor has earned the right to be heard on the question of war and of national defense. The American labor movement, led by the American Federation of Labor, of which I have the honor to be an official, has proved its intelligence and its patriotism beyond cavil. Labor was a tower of strength to the government in the World War - more than a tower, it was a whole great fortress.

A breakdown of our railroads during that crisis would have been a worse disaster than the capture of an army in battle. Without mechanics at home, the marines could never have got to Chateau Thierry, and would have been helpless if they had got there.

No group suffers more than do the workers during and as a result of war or lack of proper national defense.

Your Director has referred to the fact that I was assistant to Mr. Gompers as a member of the Advisory Committee of the Council of National Defense and I refer to merely one incident - the matter of transportation and its importance in the great war. That subject is of such importance that it would, in itself, be sufficient for a complete lecture.

The working people of the United States, in common with all other groups, yearn for continued peace. They abhor armed conflict. They hope for peaceful settlement of disputes between nations. In common with other like-minded groups, American labor has supported every practical measure to reduce to a minimum the possibilities of war.

Suspicion, intrigue, injustice are incompatible with peace and unworthy of the high possibilities of human nature. They are destructive of creative efforts.

There was a time when international affairs touched the lives of but a few in each nation. Now the interpenetration of intellectual life, international interests and activities concerns the citizenry of practically every country. What the World War did not teach us of interdependence of industrial and commercial undertakings of most, if not of all, countries, the post-war period has made plain. Then, too, the problems of international debts show international financial stability to be no stronger than the weakest link.

Labor does not want war. No one will openly advance war or the cause of war. Unconsciously the nations of the world are moving forward to war. Developments in Europe seem to have brought us almost to the brink of war. No one can predict what tomorrow will bring forth.

No one today who pretends to keep informed about world affairs would hesitate to affirm that war clouds are hanging heavily over Europe at the present time. The recent belligerent assertion on the part of Reichsfuehrer Hitler that Germany was armed and purposes to re-establish military conscription was not only a dramatic stand on the part of the leader of Nazi Germany, but made two things

clear: first, that so far as the Versailles Treaty is concerned, Germany no longer feels bound by its terms and feels wholly competent by unilateral action to violate the general terms of peace. In the second place, it makes it equally clear that Germany has during the past fourteen years been carrying on an effective program of rearming under the guise of athletic activities, the encouragement of the Steel Helmets, the Reichswehr, and the vast expansion of its commercial shipping and airplanes. Rearmament in Germany today is an established fact! But yesterday 580,000 young Germans from the Class 1915 reported to barracks throughout Germany for medical examinations preparatory to being mustered into service. On October first another 400,000 will be enrolled and by April of next year the Reich will have a standing army of 750,000. With this accomplished fact the statesmen of the world must agree and upon it they must base all of their conclusions and reshape all diplomatic discussions. In the language of a well-known American statesman, it is a fact not a theory with which we are confronted.

Germany, by her rearmament and her determination to achieve an equality among the family of nations, presents a situation which has made especially significant the recent conferences of Sir John Simon and Captain Eden with Adolf Hitler. What transpired during the course of their meetings cannot manifestly be made public at the present time. It is very clear, however, from the statement of Sir John Simon before the English Parliament and by the reasonable speculations of the press, that Germany's position as well as expectations were made unequivocally clear by Hitler. For the former Allies the question arises whether or not they should attempt again to isolate Germany by a ring of iron, as they did prior to the Great War of 1914, or whether by a utilization of the peace machinery of the League of Nations it is possible to work out a better way in which to prevent another European war.

The Memel incident, however, has made the whole situation particularly serious and it is again possible that some incident in Lithuania may precipitate a serious clash that might quite easily be the spark to start off another European war.

The conversations of Captain Eden in Russia last week, however, indicate that Soviet Russia itself may be brought into the European scene as a stabilizing element in the whole political picture. Here we have the strange spectacle of Communist Russia and capitalist Britain joining hands to keep the peace of Europe. Whatever may be said of this whole situation, one conclusion seems almost inevitable - that we move in the direction of a situation where the nations of Europe are likely to be looking more and more toward the efficiency of their military equipment rather than to political

alliances as a basis of security. Once again then the situation presents itself of an armed Europe waiting on an incident for some kind of world crisis.

Nor if one looks at the Orient does one have a feeling of security about conditions in the Far East. While at the time being there is no fighting in the Far East, the final and official withdrawal of Japan from the League of Nations removes what little moral pressure could have been brought by the other nations on her because of her membership to check her imperialistic designs in Mongolia. The conclusion of the sale of the Chinese Eastern Railroad to Japan and the complete domination of all of the railway lines in Manchuko by Japan indicate the extent to which the military power in Japan has completed her domination from a military standpoint of all of the lines of communication from Port Arthur to the Russian border. To these facts must be added Japan's determination to abrogate the Washington Treaty and her unwillingness to be bound by any formula which did not recognize her status of equality with Great Britain and the United States. Such are but a few of the headlands in the international scene.

They are all known to you but I present them so that you may know that while labor may be engaged in industrial conflicts, it too is well informed as to what is going on in world affairs and is as keen as any other group, militaristic or otherwise, in the observation of that which is transpiring in other nations and which must have its effect on our well-being.

To all of this one must add the overshadowing fact that according to the latest reports of the International Labor Office at Geneva there are now in the world something in excess of 25 million unemployed men and women. For these millions of workers idleness has been a disintegrating influence; there is little ahead save more unemployment. With war imminent and the pressure of idle men on the domestic economy of nations we have another factor bound to complicate the whole international situation. For war means employment: it means jobs, wages, and above all a unity of life and effort. Let us hope and pray that we will meet the situation without conflict.

It is against this background that it is important for us to consider the attitude of American labor on the whole matter of national defense. No other approach would be realistic at present and labor is essentially realistic. As stated previously, labor is whole-heartedly devoted to the cause of peace. It recognizes essentially that it is only through the cultivation and development of the arts of peace that the worker can receive the fair rewards for his labor and have an opportunity of sharing more fully in the well-being of the nation. Here, too, labor is realistic. Labor

more than any other group in the community is called upon to bear the burdens of suffering that are involved in any war. May I pause for a moment to say that organizations of labor have heretofore been used by governments as military agencies? Before the great World War Germany built up a great labor movement that was used in the war for military purposes. So today they have labor movements particularly for that purpose. American labor is a great fraternity and had made great progress until within recent years. With the coming of Fascism in Italy, Communism in Soviet Russia and Nazism in Germany and other countries, the legitimate trade union movement has been suppressed, oppressed, but nevertheless trade union organizations exist in all these countries and while American labor has sought to develop a brotherhood of workers of the world there for the promotion of peace and economic advancement of all peoples we are also promoting organizations for the purpose of bringing relief to those suffering under the oppression which prevails in Russia. Labor must do the soldiering, must do all of the multifarious things which are involved in the maintenance of any military operation. Labor knows war and is unalterably opposed to it.

Furthermore, labor by its long history has built up a basis in international relationship with the workers of the world. The Labor movement is a worldwide brotherhood. The very feelings of fraternity which are a part of the labor movement make it difficult, if not impossible, for labor to have a position of hostility or enmity for the workers of other nations. In fulfillment of this world outlook, labor has developed its own instrumentality for international relations through its own agencies of trade and labor internationals, through the International Federation of Trade Unions, through the Pan American Federation of Labor, through the recently created agency of the International Labor Office at Geneva. These are all the outward and visible manifestations of labor's interest in international affairs. Labor seeks to strengthen these and make these more effective and more responsive to the needs of working people all over the world.

Here in our land, where the power to declare war is lodged exclusively with Congress, labor deems it of highest importance that this power shall be exercised carefully, intelligently, and judiciously. Under our representative government it is intended that the public will and interest will find dominant expression. Hence it is of utmost concern that the state of mind of the varying interests and groups within our body politic may not be unduly influenced, prejudiced, or inflamed.

Those who would destroy our democratic institutions would first capture the mind and control the organizations of labor. Bear that well in mind. Study modern history - the overthrow of governments, and you will see the effectiveness of what is implied in that statement. Our most recent experience in San Francisco clearly evidences

how a justified economic struggle on the part of labor may be converted by designing revolutionists or destructive extremists into a violent conflict between constituted authority and temporarily misled or misguided forces of labor.

Labor realizes the dangers that must be averted and avoided; it realizes too that an economic struggle may by clever strategists be converted into a strike against civil authority and then it is no longer an economic struggle but a weapon for the overthrow of the political order and today we have organized groups throughout our land seeking to divert that movement into revolutionary political bodies taking advantage of every small manifestation of unrest for political purposes. You may remember the Winnipeg strike of a few years ago which started over economic difficulties but ended in a fight against constituted authority, in which the American Federation of Labor was sent to meet and deal with the situation and to end the conflict and bring sanity again into the ranks of labor.

Under the present disturbed state of mind every large economic and industrial upheaval presents an opportunity for a trained strategist whose hidden motive is not industrial progress and peace but whose political objective is revolt against the existing order and the furtherance of the institutions and interests of another land and of another people.

Their purpose is not to bring economic advantages to those they seek to guide but their purpose is simply to carry out the expressed constitutional purpose of the Union of Soviet Republics and see us subservient to the dictators of that land.

Modern history presents a most illuminating experience as to the influence and power of a well organized industrial army for military and revolutionary purposes. Can we afford to disregard the experiences in Russia, in Italy, in Germany, in Austria, and in other lands? What is true of the state of mind of labor in time of peace is equally true in a time of war. How did Mussolini get his power? He organized labor in some of the smaller communities and gained control. Lenin and Trotsky overthrew the first democratic government by the power of organizing a small minority of labor. Is it not true that because of labor upheavals in Germany, Hitler gained control? It is important to know the importance labor has in the stability of national governments for we know that when the democratic government in Russia was overthrown and Lenin and Trotsky gained control their first effort was to gain control of the labor movements for they had no army, but when they got an army of labor they had a more formidable defense than a military army at that particular time.

No one realizes more fully the power and influence of labor in maintaining peace and of promoting strife than do the responsible leaders of labor and any plan that has in mind promotion of national defense or any campaign designed to avoid war or to shorten and successfully end war must embrace labor as an essential and vital factor in the whole scheme of human relations.

"War," said Samuel Gompers, on the verge of our entrance into the world conflict, "War has never put a stop to the necessity for the struggle to establish and maintain industrial rights. We (organized labor) maintain that it is the fundamental step in preparedness for the nation to set its own house in order, and to establish at home justice in relations between men. The cornerstone of national defense is justice in the fundamental relations of life - economic justice."

Now I shall not go beyond that in that statement because it would bring me into a field dealing with the necessity of social and economic justices.

No philosopher or historian could have put the case better than that. Indeed, I do not know of anyone who has put the case quite so well. The words of Gompers are as true now as they were eighteen years ago and apply just as closely to the facts now as they did then. Let me quote him a little farther:

"In order to safeguard the interests of wage earners, organized labor should have representation on all agencies determining and administering policies for national defense. It is particularly important that organized labor should have representatives on all boards authorized to control publicity in war times. The workers have suffered much injustice at such times by limitations upon their right to speak freely and to secure publicity for their grievances.

"Organized labor has earned the right to make these demands. It is the agency which, in all countries, stands for human rights, and is the defender of the welfare and interests of the masses of the people."

If the men in charge of national defense at the next crisis will keep these words of Samuel Gompers in mind, they will not and can not go far astray.

That holds true not only in matters of militarism and national defense but also in the present emergency and efforts due to the great depression and I say to you very frankly that much of our difficulty

has been because labor has not been accorded proper recognition and has not been given equal power in the determination of many measures designed to bring prosperity again to our land. If that is true in times of peace, how much more true it is when there is armed conflict and when there is not time for procrastination and time is the very essence and life of the undertaking.

It has come to be well recognized that where in the years gone by war was a matter of maneuvering relatively small armies to a point of combat and fighting a few decisive battles, that modern war is a problem of ranging an army as wide as the frontier against another equally wide in masses so deep as to make maneuvering most difficult, if not impossible.

Coincident with and arising out of this change of warfare has developed the importance of enlarged and undisturbed industrial and agricultural production. The mobilizing of industry and agriculture has come to occupy an equally important position in war with the mobilizing and maneuvering of armed forces.

Unquestionably, problems of national defense today demand the most exhaustive study of required raw materials, the countries in which they are located, the capacity of our own industrial plants, the allocation of these plants to definite subdivisions of army activities, etc. Then, too, there are involved the problems of power plants, their capacities and co-relations, and as well problems related to our transportation facilities.

Quite naturally, one of the most important problems of procurement is labor. Right here it is well for me to state without equivocation that labor is opposed to what is commonly called conscription of labor in time of war, whether such conscription is for military, industrial, or agricultural purposes.

Labor distrusts all proposals embracing compulsory service. It is especially suspicious of vague schemes for conscription of capital. Under close examination it is found these proposals generally would place steel bands on labor and rubber bands on capital to be stretched as far as influence of money could reach.

We are speaking from experience; we have gone through the great World War; we know whereof we speak. We know too that there need be no compulsion on labor if the nation is confronted with a crisis - especially a country that has shown due regard to the rights of those on whom it must rely. American labor needs only intelligent appeal and schemes for conscription of industry and labor are viewed with suspicion. Labor can work out its salvation only through industry and commerce. During the time of armed conflict freedom must to some degree be subject to regulation and regimentation but it must not destroy volition.

✓ Labor is equally opposed in rendering industrial service under military direction and control at any time. It holds that our civil processes and relationships must not be unduly disturbed in time of war, but be ever safeguarded to assure their full and complete operation immediately upon termination of war. As we may prepare for war, we must likewise prepare for the return of peace that must inevitably follow war. It is for that reason that labor of America holds that industrial management must ever remain in the hands of men trained through long experience and under civil relationships.

What is true of industrial management is equally true of human problems within industry or the control of labor. It is our firm conviction, founded upon actual experience, that the most successful control of labor in time of war as well as in peace is that control founded upon voluntary agreement, based upon the spirit of cooperation and promulgated through conference and collective bargaining. In other words, labor in America insists that the interrelationship to work cooperatively must be based upon the largest possible measure of democracy and the least possible element of military control or other form of compulsion of dictatorship.

We are facing that situation right now in connection with the proposed appropriation of \$4,880,000,000 in the Works Relief Program. Labor has contended for the prevailing wage; Congress has determined otherwise. We have always contended for these funds to be expended through existing agencies of operation; also that the contracting methods should not be disturbed - that the government should not sweep them aside and the government itself become a contractor. If we do that then we destroy the agencies that must be relied upon to take up the threads thereafter. In preparing for war we must likewise give consideration to preparation for the peace which will follow - which is one of the most baffling problems confronting human society. In connection with the conscription of labor, this morning's paper carries news that the Nye committee is reporting conscription of industrial leaders, placing them under control of the War Department. I do not have the bill before me, hence my information is based on this statement in the New York Times this morning. From this brief description it is difficult to define the conscription of industrial leaders. Does that mean management of industry or conscription of management of industry; I assume it may mean the latter. If that be true then I wonder if labor leaders are likewise considered as industrial leaders to be conscripted. If it is the purpose to conscript industrial and labor organizations then labor will certainly oppose that proposal. So you see the difficulty of placing these things under military control. Labor will not willingly acquiesce in any such proposal. Of course, we can well understand why these questions arise - because of the situation in Europe.

Labor is not the profiteer in war time. With few and small exceptions, labor lost money during the World War because costs of living went up faster than wages could follow. The only real gain to labor during the war was steady work. And certainly we ought to find a better method for profitable employment of all capable and willing to work than by the method of war or preparation for war.

In this regard it should be understood that while labor is opposed to militarism, this does not imply that it is adverse to amply and fully safeguarding our nation against all possible enemies within or without our land. Thus it has registered no opposition to the increasing of armaments or of enlarging the standing army and our navy to proper proportions. Indeed, in common with other groups, there are many and an increasing number in the ranks of labor who believe in better preparedness of our air forces.

Labor, in the next place, has learned something of the profits which flow out of war. It is entirely persuaded that no person should become a profiteer during the period of a Great War. The swollen profits made by the few, the extravagant bonuses paid to chief executives, are all an affront to the standards of disinterested public service which becomes a part of our responsibility during a period of great conflict. If war ever does become necessary, labor is entirely persuaded that we should pay as we fight. Labor, too, must itself be prepared to make equal concessions for the public good, commensurate with the standards of living to which increasingly we believe that all American citizens are entitled.

You might ask if labor has a proposal to meet this proposition of paying as we go along. I doubt if the proposal of the Nye Committee would meet it. It is a highly complicated situation; unquestionably it interferes with the law of supply and demand, although the law is subject to manipulation and is constantly being manipulated.

Let us consider, then, more carefully the nature of labor's attitude toward the national defense. In the modern world labor is persuaded that it is not possible to eliminate war either by fiat or by resolution or even by dwelling upon the horror of international conflict. An adequate system of national defense is indispensable. Such a system would be adequate for the needs within our territorial border but not for any war of offense.

Labor itself stands for an equitable distribution of burdens so far as the various groups in the community are concerned. It believes that each person in the community should have an opportunity to contribute of his service to the general welfare. If the result of that be some form of universal service, labor would find itself sympathetic to that proposal, provided it came as the result of the action of a free people and not the compulsion of an arbitrary government.

In addition to the need of preparation for war there is at present the greater need for keeping our people out of the impending European collapse. We cannot do this merely by engaging in a rarified discussion of the horrors of war and the beauties of peace.

There are those who through public meetings and writings propose to promote peace through association with other nations and through agreement refer controversies and disputes to established tribunals for settlement. Others propose resistance to all wars of every kind and character by a refusal to perform military service or to render industrial service in the furtherance of war. Others propose to promote the cause of peace through disarmament while others recommend that war be outlawed by legislative enactment.

Regardless of all these proposals, labor knows that if war on a large scale comes again, it will be largely because of the world struggle for raw materials, for employment of its people, and for foreign markets. Today every nation is seeking to safeguard its home market and enter into foreign markets.

America need not enter into this conflict. We are nearly so self-sustaining that more than ninety per cent of all our buying and selling is done within our borders. The foreign market accounts for about seven per cent of our business. Never, except under abnormal and temporary conditions, does it run above ten per cent. Our own trade is worth vastly more to us than any other trade, and no concessions and privileges must be allowed to turn us from this plain fact. More nearly self-sustaining than any other great nation, we can look with less concern than any other on the scramble for "outlets" and the feverish struggle for distant markets.

No possible commercial gain from a war could be worth anything like the price. The American labor movement, like the American people, want no war, and will sanction none that is not unquestionably waged in defense. The bloodstained and doubtful loot of conquest makes no appeal to American workers.

American labor understands, nevertheless, that peaceful intentions are not always enough to keep a country out of war. In the present plight of the world, with dictators of various breeds and all of them obnoxious, bestriding so many countries, the possibility of a struggle which we do not want and did not seek must be faced.

We were drawn into the World War without our wish or our desire. Is it not well that we learn by the experience of the past and be prepared to resolve that should other nations fall into armed conflict that for ourselves we shall not permit the lending of private funds to any belligerent and prohibit the shipment of goods to them; that American vessels shall remain aloof from disputed

water areas and that American citizens entering belligerent countries except for reasons most urgent, will do so at their own risks? So, too, might we disavow responsibility as a nation for the loss of property, life, or liberty by any American who disobeys the expressed will of America.

Certainly it must be recognized that if we are not to become involved in another quarrel we must not enter the area of active combat without thought of being hit. And that, of course, draws us immediately into the conflict.

Labor increasingly is coming to recognize the necessity for America remaining aloof as far as possible not alone from entangling alliances, but war-provoking practices.

Without presuming to venture into the field of military instruction, nevertheless there is a form of activity which finds expression in the ranks of labor and to which I must draw attention. I refer to hostile foreign influences at work within our midst and which parade under the term of Communism, Nazism, Fascism and under direction of such international labor organizations as the Third Internationale and like illusive terms.

No friend of liberty would esteem Frederick Second, King of Prussia, sometimes called the Great, a great man. He was an unmitigated and ruthless despot. But he was a great soldier. He was referring, in a jocular way, to a French general whom Frederick had routed in the Seven Years War.

"Then Marshal Soubise goes to war, " said Frederick, "he is accompanied by a hundred cooks. When I go to war, I am preceded by a hundred spies."

That difference in attitude between the two commanders had quite as much to do with the rout of Bossbach as their well understood difference in ability. For Frederick, the spy often cleared the way for the soldier. His successors took a leaf out of Frederick's book. The Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71 was pretty well over before either the French or the neutral world realized why the invading Germans knew such intimate details about the country in France, and always had the information they needed, and knew to a franc how much they could collect from any given village. The German spy system in that war counted for quite as much as the genius of von Moltke, or the great advantage of the invaders in numbers.

It is not necessary to explain to this audience the "fixed post" system of spying on which the Germans placed their chief reliance. In every country in Europe, but particularly in

France, there were men who had settled and become part of the community life, each of whom regularly reported to Berlin any facts or events in his district that might have the remotest interest for the general staff. The fixed post spy did not travel back and forth across the border. He stayed where he was planted; from time to time his reports were collected by agents sent for that purpose; he received a subsidy from the government at Berlin - and to insure that he would remain docile, a part of his pay was held back. He passed among his neighbors for a Swiss, or a Hollander, or an Alsatian, or a man from some other part of France; but never, of course, as a German. And some of these men were so well chosen and trained that they became the most influential citizens in the villages where they were stationed.

It is said, and may be true, that the Germans maintained a spy center in the heart of Paris all through the war. In other places, they were less fortunate. Every one of the chief German spies in England was arrested within 24 hours of the declaration of war. Scotland Yard had marked them down long before, and waited until something could be done about it.

I think, however, that there were few Americans who, prior to our getting into the World War, realized how many German agents there were in our own country, and how active they were in their work. Whether, as is often said, the visit of Prince Henry of Prussia many years before was the start of this activity of the Wilhelmstrasse is doubtful; but he made contacts among some of the wealthy groups of our country which should have been useful.

These agents started with an enormous advantage. There were great numbers of Germans resident in this country who were excellent citizens, deserving and receiving the respect of their whole communities. It was hard to pick out the agent of Berlin against this background. For years prior to the war, many metropolitan newspapers in this country printed gossipy letters of events in European capitals, signed by the French pen name, "Flaneur". These letters always gave England the worst of it, and nearly always contained some subtle praise for Kaiser Wilhelm, and his family and familiars. But "Flaneur" was a German army officer, living in this country and doing propaganda for his emperor. He lost his job when the war broke out. But until that time, only a handful of newspapermen in America had sensed the clever propaganda hidden under the mask of gossip which were the point and purpose of his articles.

Before the war was over, we had lost all illusions about our immunity from spies and our native resistance to propaganda. The kaiser's spy system in America was a marvel of organization. It had its fixed post men in every important district and in every important industry. They were stirring or trying to stir up discontent and trouble in munitions factories, on the docks, in the lumber camps and in the cotton fields. They gathered information on newspapers, in restaurants, bakeries - everywhere.

Plotting on our own soil, they tried to embroil us in a war with Mexico; and German agents sent a cipher message foretelling the sinking of the Lusitania.

No such system could be built up overnight or over a year. It was the work of a generation. Probably it never was fully stamped out, and be very sure that it is being built up again. Hitler has gone farther than the Kaiser ever ventured to go; and the blatant Nazi propaganda now trumpeted to the land is a sure sign that more dangerous spies are working underneath.

But Hitler's spies and propagandists are not the only ones in our midst. The Soviet government of Russia for years made no secret of its interest in Communist propaganda in this country, and the same propaganda is still going on, with the main purpose and effect of confusing every issue and aggravating every dispute among our own people. We might be at peace with Russia, and she would still take an interest in our sales of supplies to the country with which she was or expected to be at war; and her agents are placed to interfere with and obstruct such traffic as much as possible.

And, of course, there is Mussolini. The current number of one of our magazines has a long story of Fascist propaganda in one of our great universities. For a while, the Fascist agents were blatant and open; latterly, they have worked in whispered tone; but the work continues. And the activities of all these foreign agents, spies and supporters are more and more invading our industrial and economic life and herein lies the greatest menace to our future campaign of national defense.

Let it be clearly understood that the chief resistance to all these spying and subversive activities has come from the American labor movement, headed by the American Federation of Labor. Fascism, Hitlerism, Communism; American labor has no use for any of the three. That was true in the World War, it is true today; and the only thing that will change labor's attitude to spying and propaganda from abroad is economic oppression at home.

"The armies of republics," to quote Gompers once more, "cannot be made up of bondmen."

That in brief, gives you some of the viewpoints of labor in this question of national defense, preparedness for war and conduct of war, and preparation for peace. I am grateful to you for the opportunity of presenting them. Thank you.