

**WE WANT WILLIE!** Booth Tarkington, we see, has come out against compulsory military training. He seems to us peculiarly well fitted to speak on this subject, being the sponsor of a lad named Willie Baxter, who has taken us safely through two major wars without any previous military training whatsoever. Conscripting American youth in peacetime is the most revolutionary domestic idea that has ever been proposed in the United States, and contains the heaviest charge of social dynamite. Big shots in the Army are pushing the idea hard, but they know not what they push. Certainly no one can predict the consequences of taking Willie Baxter away from Lola Pratt, from One-eye Beljus, and from Mr. Parcher and sending him into camp for a year against his wishes. No one can say what it would do to Willie and no one can say what it would do to the society the Pratts, the Beljuses, and the Parchers adorn. Our own mind is still open on this terribly vital matter, but our heart is shut tight, and every instinct hollers that compulsory training is a wrong number. An American conscript army, in peacetime, would be a contradiction in terms: it would advertise a national desperation and it would build into the nation the thing the nation has twice taken up arms to lick.

"Look at it!" said Mr. Parcher.

"Look at what?" asked his wife.

"That Baxter boy!" said Mr. Parcher, as William passed on toward the dancers.

"What's he think he's imitating--Henry Irving? Look at his walk!"

"He walks that way a good deal, lately, I've noticed," said Mrs. Parcher in a tired voice.

Look well, America, as Willie comes walking down the street! Watch out how you change his strange and lordly gait, for he is an extremely delicate mechanism, mysteriously balanced and with an escape movement that defies every law of physics. Remove him from his father's evening clothes, put him in compulsory drab, teach him to salute, and you will have something new in this land. And you won't have Willie.

--The NEW YORKER.

**SPOKEN AT GETTYSBURG:** Government by the people can only exist if the people are individuals who think. It can only exist if the individual is free to rule the state and if he is not ruled by the state. We must be constantly vigilant to keep alive the thinking of free men, and there is no such threat to that thinking as the course which would impose on the Nation compulsory military training. We have no greater obligation to the men who fought at Gettysburg, we have no greater obligation to the men who fought in Europe and who are fighting in the Pacific, than to preserve here in America a state in which the individual shall be free to think and be master of his own soul, and where the people shall be free to govern their own Government.

--Senator Robert A. Taft.

**THE CHURCHES ONE FOUNDATION!** Dr. Daniel Poling, editor of the Christian Herald, favored compulsory military training. Commenting on the great number of Americans who are not church members, he pointed out that every young man would come under the influence of the Chaplains Corps under peacetime conscription. He said, "Certainly no plan now proposed within religious groups offers so large a hope for strengthening of America in her moral and spiritual life as does this measure, for this plan is universally applied to youth."

Dr. Poling added that "we shall have, in universal military training, America's greatest moral and religious opportunity since Independence Day, 1776." He concluded with the comment, "Universal military training will teach the rising generation that while patriotism is not enough, it is something - something glorious, something divine."

**G I JOE'S IDEA IS DIFFERENT** "We, the undersigned service men, are writing to state our abhorrence of the very idea of peacetime compulsory military training for America. Some of us, for well over three years now, have lived and observed this military system 24 hours a day. We hold it to be irreligious, un-American, undemocratic, and in peacetime unnecessary. It appears to us as if Hitler's 'might makes right' has undermined the confidence of some Americans in George Washington who weighed his words for a lifetime and then gave this final prayerful warning to a young nation: 'The greatest single threat to a republic is an overgrown military establishment.' He well knew, as did Jefferson and Lincoln, that a society wherein everybody is or was or will be a soldier is a society in which liberty curls up and dies and it will take a lot more than an act of Congress for the common man to win it back."

Report from Washington indicates that the House Military Affairs Committee will begin consideration of conscription legislation in September before Congress reconvenes. **ACT ACCORDINGLY!**

**COST OF VICTORY** Military estimates indicate that the European war has taken a toll of 60,000,000 casualties which, even if too high, gives us a tentative basis for judgment. It is estimated that 14,000,000 are dead and 5,500,000 permanently incapacitated. These figures do not include civilian dead or incapacitated. They do not include the mentally distorted next generation.

This is a huge slice of the human race. It is an enormous price to pay for the ambitions of politicians, the errors of statesmen and the false and mischievous propaganda of governments. It is too great a price to pay for anything.

If civilization means the destruction of mankind, then civilization is vicious and immoral. If civilization means an increasingly higher regard for the value and sanctity of human life, how can we possibly justify this slaughter of the innocent as well as the wicked, of civilians as well as soldiers, of children as well as women? Does anyone ever ask the question, what are we doing to ourselves?

I write objectively, without regard to race or nation, without regard to "aggressors" or "peace-loving." I write of man. I write not of my kin or my enemies. I write of the human race to which we all belong. What reason can justify the killing of 14,000,000, the incapacitating of 5,500,000, the breaking of the spirits of additional tens of millions on the wheels of time? Men speak lightly of another war. Do they wish to turn Europe into a Sahara? Do they believe that we shall be immune to this holocaust--we who have already passed the million mark in casualties? Men spoke lightly of this present war in those fateful years between 1933 and 1939, when it seemed inevitable. How can an evil be inevitable if the will to be just exists?

The answer is that it is the people themselves, the simple people of all countries who must learn to hate war. For war creates nothing; it produces no good.

--George Sokolsky 6/12/45

We might try to see--with the mind's eye, at least--100,000 dead and the manner of their dying. We might think of mud and blood, and stench, and hell's own noise, and the explosion that makes an end to living and loving, learning and dreaming, hoping and praying. ....

That's the way war is. And sometimes it seems that the only reason why any of us tolerate such organized blood-letting is simply because we do not understand its nature. We think too much of bond drives and parades, war jobs and rationing, taxes and all the incidentals which never get beyond the periphery of war. Our thoughts do not get to the heart of it--to the killing.

If they did, we would not already be beset by reckless talk of the next war--the war which we are stupidly told must "inevitably" be waged against our strongest ally. If we thought a little more we would be outraged and incensed by such callousness. We would not tolerate it.

--Editor, St. Louis Star-Times.

**PRICE OF PEACE** Writing in answer to the question "Can a Sick World Get Well?" in a recent Christian Century article, Anton T. Boisen points out three possible outcomes of the sickness of our time: "First, there may be no reorganization. In that case there will be further wars.... "Second, there may be social organization based upon military dominance....the real evils will remain uncorrected. ..."There is also a third possibility. We may be able to deal with the situation constructively and begin the herculean task of correcting the real evils, working toward the achievement of a new order of society which will represent the social solidarity of free men held together by faith and love. How we deal with the defeated enemy is likely to prove the acid test of our fitness for this task. It is likely to be the measure of the success we achieve."

It is this third possibility to which The Syracuse Peace Council is devoted and for which we work. The enclosed leaflet sums up the alternatives, points the issue and suggests action.