

Mr. Ford's Page



THERE will be a "next war" just as certainly as tomorrow will be a new day, if there is a more deliberate organization for it than there is against it. It is not a question of what the people "want"; it is a question of what they Will. It can be safely said that the people seldom "want" war; but just as seldom do they Will peace. In 1914 when those who saw the stupidity of war in this age went out into the arena and tried to stop it, they found that there were no tools to work with. The world had been systematically organized for war; there were no instruments, no weapons prepared for a peace offensive. Just as truly as there can be no war without preparation, so there can be no peace without preparation. Preparedness is a necessary condition; it is just a question of what we are to prepare for.

A small well-organized minority in favor of war is more than a match for a large, unorganized majority which is sentimentally inclined toward peace. The world is ruled by organized minorities. In Russia there are 180,000,000 people; yet 600,000 Bolsheviks rule them.

It is not so despicable as it once was considered to be interested in world peace. Previous to 1914 the person who was interested in the peace of the world was regarded as an amiable faddist; he would have been counted more virile had his diversion been poker.

But the past six years has shown the world what war is, and now everybody professes to believe that it is unspeakably cruel and stupid. The most amazing confessions have been made by those who were formerly the most ardent militarists as to the uselessness of it all. It is true that soldiers exhibited superhuman courage and devotion; it is true that nations proved almost miraculous capacity for sacrifice; the human contribution lavished upon war was most glorious in its pure unselfishness; but the men who promised most for the achievements of the war are confessing one by one that they were mistaken.

The criticism of war is not of the qualities which are contributed to it—life, love, loyalty and every sacrifice—but that war, having these immeasurable riches to work with, could do so little with them.

If any constructive program of humanity could command a tenth, a hundredth part of the human values that war can command, this world could be completely transformed in little time.

The "next war" is being planned when the last one ceases; that is, men whose principal business is to fight make preparations for doing it again. It may not be that they desire it, but they fail to see in human nature any direct "set" against it.

In one of the countries a force of 5,000 military, naval and air experts is already at work on plans. This does not mean that they intend to provoke war; they are merely getting ready. It is pretty certain that the old formality of a declaration of war is a thing of the past. The next war will not be "declared." There will be no exchange of notes and a sparring for time. In the older days it was military etiquette to permit the enemy to fire first. After many years this was abandoned, but out of respect for the public opinion of nations a "declaration of war" was made in formal fashion. We all remember how those declarations were made in 1914, and how our own declaration was made after an all-night session of Congress.

The next war will sweep down like a tropical storm, unannounced by any trumpet of thunder or herald of lightning. That is being planned by those who are studying the future.

It is certain that if war is permitted again to deluge the earth—and to permit it, all we have to do is to fail to prevent it—the tactics of the Great War will be as out-of-date as if it had been fought in ancient times. War will be less an affair of men and more an affair of machines. The individual soldier with his rifle

is almost a thing of the past. Even battlefields, vast armies confronting each other in the same territory, belong to outworn methods. Invisible gases, the suffocation of whole cities without noise, silent horrors of every kind, stealthy assaults by very few men armed with most potent powers, will be the new order. The forces of nature will be used more and more to supplant the muscular force of soldiers. Ray warfare is already the theme of military study and experiment on a large scale. Light rays and heat rays are being trained to become allies of Mars. The old heroic manner of man fighting man will be largely done away; warfare will become world murder, with nature as accomplice—if nothing happens to prevent.

Germ warfare had already made its appearance before the recent war closed its main phase, but it was still in a crude stage. Wells were poisoned, cholera and typhus germs were let loose, women who carried disease were early recognized as capable of great usefulness against an enemy. But all this was very crude.

Things were done which the common people of very few of the nations would have approved. No nation, no government ever felt it safe during the recent war to take its people into its confidence even on matters that the enemy knew full well. All through the war and even today the only people who do not know the whole truth about the war—not the diplomatic or political truth, but the truth about the actual conduct of the fighting itself—are the people who stood the brunt of it all.

The people don't know the truth about war contracts, about war profits, about the connection of government employes with private business, about the "inside" group that really ran things—the people don't know any of the truth, and no government has ever dared to let them know.

There are people making money out of war today. Millions are being minted out of blood and suffering this very minute. There is enough war tinder lying about to kindle the whole fire again—if nothing prevents.

What is there to prevent? Nothing, except the people's Will. But they must exert that Will.

You do not have to speculate about what the people will do: you are one of them—judge by yourself. Ten chances to one you yourself are thinking this moment that it is a waste of time to talk about war and peace. "The war is over," you say, and let it drop at that. But is War over? That is the question. Is War over?

War is not over. It never will be over until peace actually is more than a sentiment and becomes a program.

Nothing but the Will To Peace of the people can put an end to war. Nothing but that. You may have

everything else, but if you lack that, War is still possible. The world had a Peace Palace at The Hague; it did not have the Will to Peace in the people; therefore war came. Suppose we have a League of Nations, a World Court, a Parliament of Man. We ought to have it. We have the opportunity of getting it now. But, without the Will To Peace, without a strong set toward peace as an ideal, a League of Nations would be of as little consequence as was the Belgian treaty.

Paper can only hold ink. But the Will of the People for Peace can hold back every warlike force in the world.

This is not an academic question. But no doubt it is so regarded. It begins to seem as if peace will have to make as hard a fight as if there had been no Great War at all.

One point is important just now: the world this moment is doing more for war preparedness than for peace preparedness. Does that concern you now? If not, it will later.

THE world may be growing better, but the evil things in it are not. War, for example, has been growing worse. The next war, for which the military experts are already preparing, will be very much worse than anything we have yet seen—if nothing occurs to prevent it. The recent war is almost over, but WAR is not over and never will be until the people absolutely rule it out. We cannot trust to luck in this matter. Peace preparedness is the only way by which peace can be had. Only a small minority may desire war, but a small minority well organized is far more influential than an unorganized majority. It is what the people WILL, not what they merely "want" that determines what shall be.