

---

# Preparedness Will Crush You

by Eugene V. Debs

Published in *St. Louis Labor*, whole no. 492 (April 8, 1916), pg. 1.

Charles M. Schwab, the great steel magnate, is one of the leading exponents of military preparedness in the United States. Preparedness is to Mr. Schwab's mind the supreme necessity for our civilization. If the whole country and all its coastline would be covered with steel armor plate it would be the very thing, according to Mr. Schwab's idea of preparedness.

To Mr. Schwab and others like him preparedness is a very real and substantial thing. It pays enormously. It literally rakes in the millions and the millions have the true rink of patriotism.

If preparedness did not pay dividends in the coin of the realm it would not be synonymous with patriotism.

Preparedness is a spot cash proposition and Mr. Schwab is its incarnation.

**GREAT IS PREPAREDNESS AND CHARLEY'S MILLIONS ARE ITS PROFIT!**

• • • • •

Now, their could be nothing more supremely consistent than for Mr. Schwab and his plutocratic pals to go their whole length on preparedness, for who but they own the mills and all their accessories where preparedness is made to order at their own prices!

The more preparedness the more profit. If war follows preparedness, as intended, all the better. Preparedness makes for war and war makes for preparedness, and both turn a stream of

minted gold into the Schwab's coffers. It is a dead sure thing and not a flaw in it. It simply cannot fail, provided, of course, the Henry Dubbs continue to swallow the "patriotic" dope and other soporific bunk administered by Schwab's editors, politicians, preachers, and other barkers and whippers-in.<sup>1</sup> That Mr. Schwab is eminently wise in his day and generation in going the limit for preparedness there is not the shadow of a doubt, and when it is remembered that he is the protege of that other illustrious apostle of preparedness, Andrew Carnegie, who in his day raked in the millions for as fine a grade of blow-hole plate as was ever put over Uncle Sam, it is not strange that he stands today as the pope of the propaganda for preparedness and that even the President of the United States is preaching preparedness as the only true gospel of political salvation.

Preparedness in the military sense demanded by the plutocrats in their frenzied propaganda is shrewdly calculated to buttress the capitalistic system which rears palaces for the Schwabs and digs rat-holes for their slaves. Preparedness as a political issue is for the exploiting class alone. They and they alone reap its harvests of gold, while its harvests of blood are for its deluded and betrayed victims.

Preparedness from the working class point of view is a fraud and a sham in so far as it means an army and navy controlled by the capitalist state, and it matters not a whit what kind of an army it is, how organized, officered, or sustained, as long as it is under the control of the political state of capitalism it will respond to the commands of the ruling class and the workers need expect nothing from it except to be crushed by it when they revolt against starvation.



The preparedness the working class need and sorely need is another matter. It has absolutely nothing to do with arming the

---

<sup>1</sup> "Henry Dubb" was a popular cartoon character from the socialist press drawn by Ryan Walker — a working man who continually accepted at face value the economic and political arguments of his social "betters," to his own lasting detriment.

political state of their masters, nor with entering their wards or fighting their battles. Working class preparedness has to do with education, with the clarification of the working class mind; it has to do with organization, sound and revolutionary, both economic and political, and it has everything to do with preparing the working class, in every way that may be necessary for the class struggle, however it may be fought, and the overthrow, by whatever means, of the capitalistic system that now enslaves and robs them.

Working class preparedness appeals to the fighting instinct, but not to the murder instinct. It means war, but war against WAR and not against HUMANITY. It means war against slavery and for emancipation.

**Preparedness for the workers means that they are to cease fighting and losing for their masters and for once in the world's history fight and win for themselves.**

*Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport*

1000 Flowers Publishing, Corvallis, OR · March 2014 · Non-commercial reproduction permitted.