
European Military, Money, and Misery

by Eugene V. Debs

Published in *Locomotive Firemen's Magazine*, vol. 17, no. 12 (Dec. 1893), pp. 993-994.

Nations are no longer isolated. Electricity and steam have made them near neighbors. The concern of one is becoming more and more the concern of all. Thoughtful men in the United States cannot contemplate the steadily increasing armies of Europe with composure. Our attention is called to a recent article in the *New York Herald*, in which it is stated that at the date of the Crimean war, 1854, the aggregate strength of the armies of the great powers of Europe did not exceed 3 million, in round numbers, while today, after the lapse of 39 years, it is more than 20 million, an increase of 700 per cent.

The people of the United States, at least a great majority of them, treat with indifference figures relating to European military affairs, growing out of the fact, perhaps, that they regard with quite as much indifference the military affairs of their own country. Here we have what is called a regular army of about 25,000 men, costing annually, say, \$30 million, an establishment so small that it seldom occupies the attention of the average citizen. We notice, because the facts are forced upon our attention daily, that Europe is annually sending vast armies of immigrants to our shores, and workingmen complain because the influence of these arrivals is to reduce wages, but we do not stop to consider why such vast numbers come to us. We have tabulated figures relating to wages and production, with an occasional statement showing the deep degradation of the subjects of monarchies, but too seldom do we seek to know the real cause of the sad condition from which these wretched people would escape.

It is stated that in 1869 the fighting force of Europe was 7 million soldiers; the number in 1892 was 12.5 million, but as everybody anticipates war, laws have been enacted, which as soon as they take effect, the armies of Europe will show the sum total of 22,448,000 sol-

diers armed and equipped for war, costing annually \$1,009,000,000, as follows:

Germany	5,000,000
France	4,350,000
Russia	4,000,000
Italy	2,236,000
Austria-Hungary	1,900,000
Turkey	1,150,000
Spain	800,000
England	602,000
Sweden and Norway	338,000
Switzerland	489,000
Romania	280,000
Belgium	258,000
Bulgaria	200,000
Holland	185,000
Greece	180,000
Serbia	180,000
Portugal	154,000
Denmark	91,000
Montenegro	55,000

Total	33,443,000

The population of Europe, in round numbers, is 300 million; if the United States should determine to have a standing army based upon population, equal to that of Germany, it would number 6.5 million soldiers, and this military establishment would cost annually, at the wages now paid for soldiers, not less than \$650 million, to say nothing of equipments.

Taking such a view of the subject, it is at once seen why it is that Europeans fly from their country to find homes in the United States, free from military despotism, and where their scanty earnings are not taken by the authorities to maintain in peace the pomp and circumstance of war.

Edited by Tim Davenport

1000 Flowers Publishing, Corvallis, OR · June 2017 · Non-commercial reproduction permitted.
First Edition