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THE CASE FOR  
COMPULSORY MILITARY SERVICE



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TORONTO

# THE CASE FOR COMPULSORY MILITARY SERVICE

BY

G. G. COULTON



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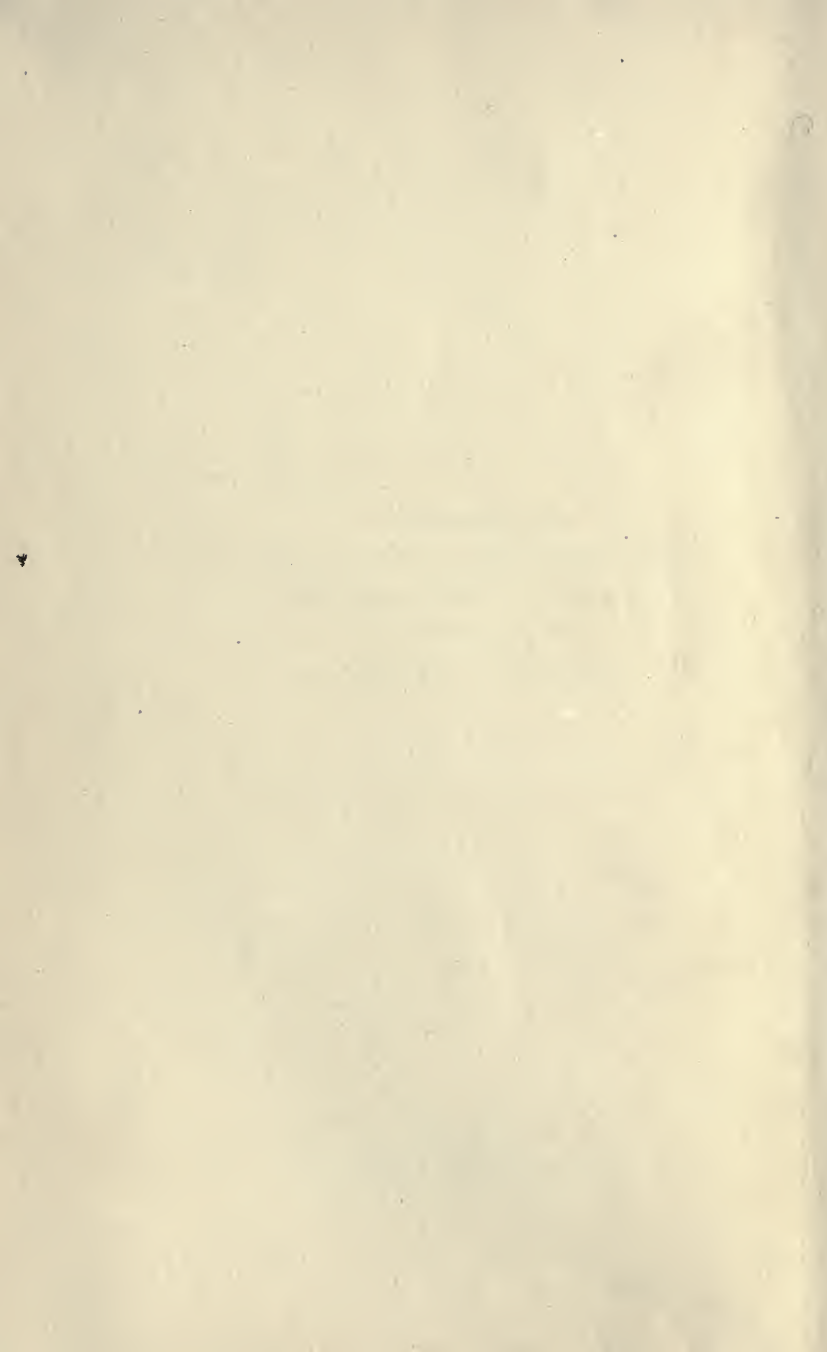
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TO THOSE WHO  
WITHOUT COMPULSION, HATRED, OR FEAR  
HAVE STAKED OR LOST THEIR LIVES  
IN OUR DEFENCE  
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THIS book was originally written for the Garton Foundation, an institution intended for the impartial publication of documents and discussions relating to important questions of war and peace. For reasons into which it is unnecessary to enter, the project for its publication by that body fell through, and I now therefore turn in the ordinary way to the general public.

The present volume may claim, perhaps, to be the first attempt at a discussion of this great national question on the firm ground of historical and political facts. The most extraordinary errors have hitherto been made by the most distinguished men. Lord Salisbury, on the one hand, imagined our own bowmen of Crécy and the modern Swiss riflemen to be volunteers, while Lord Haldane supposed that England was under a voluntary system in the days of the Spanish Armada. When, after the war, this question is finally settled at leisure, it is essential that the general public

should have no excuse for ignoring incontrovertible historical facts : the author will therefore be glad to accept rectifications, if necessary, from any quarter, and to acknowledge them either in a second edition or (if no such opportunity occur) on a sheet of errata.

GREAT SHELFORD, CAMBRIDGE,  
July, 1917.

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## INTRODUCTION

So far as modern times are concerned, the compulsory system began with the French Revolutionary levies of 1793. Since then, compulsion has gradually been adopted in all European states except Great Britain, and in all civilized countries except the U.S.A. and some British Colonies. In America military compulsion has never been seriously considered since the Civil War. In Britain, though it had been advocated as early as 1871 by such eminent thinkers as John Stuart Mill and Professor J. E. Cairnes, and though Lord Roberts's propaganda had made considerable headway during the ten years preceding this war, the majority of political Liberals thought themselves compelled, on principle, to refuse it all serious hearing. We therefore find two extremes of thought on this subject. To Americans at one end of the scale, compulsory soldiering seems almost as unthinkable as compulsory religion.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the Continent

<sup>1</sup> It seems best to let these words stand as they were written in Dec. 1915, since the subsequent turn of events has emphasized the author's contention that, for the large majority of thinking men, this question of compulsory service is at bottom one of military expediency. Many of the most determined converts to compulsion, during the last two

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of Europe, on the other hand, the voluntary system has scarcely more support for the army than for taxation; and there are practically no opponents of compulsion but those few extremists who advocate total disarmament. Britain stands (or stood, before this war) between these two extremes, but inclining far more to the American than to the Continental view.

Why this wide divergence, among nations so nearly equal in civilization, upon one of the most essential functions of a state? The Man in the Street will at once give three reasons for the British-American exception, which seem to him conclusive, but which will not bear serious examination. We reject compulsory service, he will say, in the name of Freedom, of Democracy, and of Anglo-Saxon traditions.

But no serious thinker will define *freedom*, for a civilized community, as "absence of legal compulsion." The Briton lives under more and stricter laws than the Bushman; the main difference is, that the free man recognizes these laws as just and beneficent, and therefore has no serious wish to break them. John Stuart Mill, in his essay *On Liberty*, twice specifies military service as a thing which the civilized state has a right to demand from any citizen (chaps. i. and iv.). No law can be combated in the name of civilized liberty, so

years, have been among those who strove hardest to keep out of war, but who recognize that war, if it must come, demands no half-measures.



long as that law tends towards the well-being of the state and of mankind. Is it beneficial to the state and to mankind that armies, like taxes, should be raised by law? This is the real question, which the Voluntarist has no more right to beg than the Compulsionist has. In other words, the discussion of liberty depends entirely on deeper questions of justice and world-peace; and, as a matter of fact, the fight for liberty has generally been won with the aid of compulsory levies.<sup>1</sup>

*Democracy*, again, will not serve the objector's turn. It was the first French Republic which invented Compulsory Service, and the present Third Republic reintroduced it, after the Bourbons and Napoleon III. had falsified the original principle. The Prussian autocracy followed the French example slowly and unwillingly, and has become less autocratic, on the whole, since its introduction. The one country which did not need to imitate France, having retained the compulsory principle since the dawn of history, was Switzerland, then as now the "laboratory of democratic experiments." It will presently be seen that, in history, compulsory service has been the usual note of democracies, while despots have preferred a paid army. It is an obviously democratic principle that all necessary burdens of the state should be shared, as equally as possible, among all citizens; and even those

<sup>1</sup> This, and similar historical assertions, will be supported by detailed evidence in the body of the book.

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objectors who lay most emphasis on the inequalities of continental conscription will not attempt to assert that, on the whole, it is as unequal as our voluntary Territorial system, under which one man trains for the sake of eight or nine others who are often better able to afford the time or the money.

Lastly, it is not really contrary to *Anglo-Saxon traditions*. The years 1300-1600, which laid the foundations of modern England, and carried us far beyond other Powers in civic and political liberties, were years during which compulsory service was a far greater reality here than elsewhere. If the Armada had landed on our shores, the overwhelming majority of the levies sent to meet the Spaniards would have been compulsorily recruited. Later on, during the long fight for freedom, our Compulsory Militia system was always looked upon as a bulwark of national liberties; and it survived, in principle, into this century. British common-law still demands that every man should come forward when called upon for home defence; and it was in virtue of that common-law, upon which American law is based, that Washington and Lincoln were able to levy troops by force. To assert that Compulsory Service is alien to the Anglo-Saxon spirit, is to ignore all history, and to talk as if the world had been created when we ourselves happened to be born.

There is one important distinction, I believe, which will account for the divergence of American

and Continental ideas—to choose the two furthest extremes. Freedom is not the real distinction, since we find America standing here on the side of petrified China, and separated by a whole horizon from Republican France or Switzerland, or from Radical Australasia and Norway. Secondly, democracy cannot account for it; for Compulsory Service saved the French democracy, and saved, even in America, what Lincoln called the principle of “government of the people by the people for the people.” Thirdly, if it were incompatible with the Anglo-Saxon genius, the great Anglo-Saxon nations would not have adopted it in every great national crisis. Freemen, democrats, Anglo-Saxons, have been obliged by every great war to face a question which they have often tried to ignore in times of tranquillity. Is not, this, then the real difference? Is it not mainly a question of adaptation to actual circumstances? On one point both parties would agree, that Compulsory Service is certainly no easy course; that it is no line of least resistance; that nothing but very strong resolution, or very great pressure, will ever bring a nation to adopt it. Baron Stoffel, writing from Berlin in 1868 to impress upon Napoleon III. the urgent necessity of reverting to the French revolutionary traditions of Compulsory Service, added sadly: “Like individuals who correct nothing in their lives, except taught by the stern laws of experience, Nations never improve institutions

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which govern them, until compelled to do so by the rudest trials." Colonel Seely, as Secretary for War, spoke almost to the same effect in the House of Commons a year before this present war (April 11, 1913), admitting that the whole-hearted acceptance of the compulsory principle in Switzerland is due to that country's experiences of disastrous war in the past.<sup>1</sup>

Here, then, we have the real clue to the Anglo-American exception. Britain behind her fleet, and America still more naturally in her vast and distant continent, have looked upon themselves as free from serious danger of invasion. That danger, on the contrary, has stood constantly and insistently before the eyes of all Continental peoples. Moreover, of recent years it has become distantly visible to our oversea Dominions; with the result that Compulsion has already been introduced in Australia and New Zealand, though these are not less free, democratic, or Anglo-Saxon than even the United States—to say nothing of China, the only other great state which holds to the Voluntary system.

In other words, the deciding factor is the military problem, the recognized chances of invasion. Whatever be the social and political merits or demerits of the Compulsory system in itself (and these will be fully discussed later on), they are subordinate

<sup>1</sup> See full quotation in chapter xii. below; also Stoffel, "Military Reports," trans. Home (H.M. Stationery Office, 1872), p. 145.

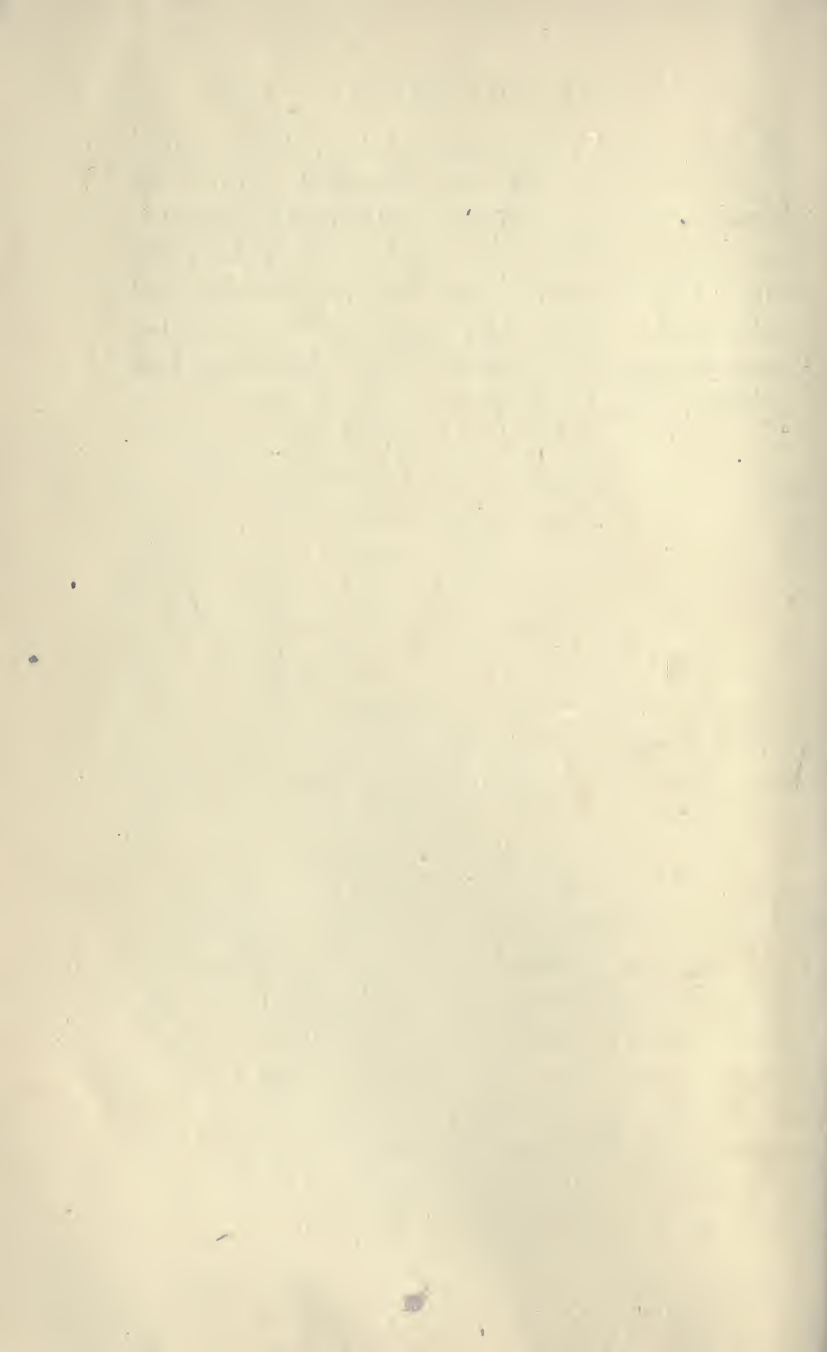
to the main question of national security, without which no consistent social advance is possible.

Under Compulsion a nation may progress as rapidly as France has progressed since 1793 ; under Voluntarism it may stand still as China has stood still during this same period. Mr. Asquith, Lord Haldane, and Colonel Seely, as will be seen later on, have freely acknowledged in peace-time that this debate must be decided mainly on military grounds. No man, therefore, has a right to shut his ears to the plea for Compulsory Service on so-called Liberal principles. It is true that Compulsionists are still in the minority among Liberals here and in America. But, if we get rid of insular prejudices and take the general opinion of all democrats in the world, we shall find Voluntarists in a very decided minority. There is no Liberal principle which permits a man to shut his ears to the arguments even of a minority ; though too many so-called Liberals do in fact adopt this essentially Conservative attitude. But for a Liberal to stick blindly to his own preconceived ideas, without considering contrary ideas which are held even by the majority of his fellow-Liberals, is an insult alike to truth and to common-sense. As a Liberal I assert without fear of contradiction that the refusal of my fellow-Liberals, in the past, to discuss this question seriously, is answerable for the fact that so many indefensible falsehoods are still current. They have been exposed hundreds

of times ; but more than half the electorate have carefully stopped their ears.

I entreat, therefore, all fair-minded readers to follow me patiently through a brief plea for the principle upheld by the majority of Liberals in the world. In a rapid survey of the past we shall see how strong is the general rule that democracies have preferred the Compulsory system. Then, coming to modern times, we shall find that continental democrats are Compulsorists *on principle*, and not (as is often falsely asserted) from mere opportunism. Then, again, taking the Swiss Militia as a type, I shall attempt to show its military, political and social working, and to anticipate the probable operation of such a system among us. Lastly, I shall bring arguments to meet the main objections gathered during sixteen years of public discussion, beginning from a time when no League had been formed and when only a few propagandists were working independently from private conviction. The experience of those sixteen years has been illuminating. In 1900, newspapers seldom thought the subject worth discussing, whatever their political complexion. On the other hand, my first audience was among working-men in the North, and was quite sympathetic. Gradually, as the question forced its way to the front, one class of papers began to favour it ; their opponents began to show proportionate disfavour ; and finally the average working-man, hearing it daily dinned into

his ears that the whole thing was a "Tory job," set his face more and more against it. Now that party distinctions are to some real extent obliterated, there is more chance of a fair hearing for both sides; but all readers who follow me to the end will probably admit that many quite indefensible misstatements have already got a long start, and are likely to die hard.





## CHAPTER I

### CONSCRIPTION IN THE ROMAN REPUBLIC

To write history with absolute detachment is impossible. The historian's task is to select only significant facts ; and the significance of every fact depends upon the reader's state of mind. We do not point out that William the Conqueror was a year older at the end of 1087 than at the end of 1086, because we trust the reader to see this for himself. On the other hand, we do emphasize William's parentage (though we cannot be so mathematically sure of this as of the other fact), because it adds something to the reader's previous knowledge, and helps to interpret certain important points of William's career and character. Every history, therefore, must to some extent reflect the preconceived ideas of both author and reader ; and we need not be surprised to find even educated British readers ignorant of historical facts which are well known in France, or *vice versâ*. The connexion of Universal Service with Democracy would seem to be a case in point. In France, their close historical connexion is taken for granted ;

yet to the average Briton this idea comes with a sense of real surprise. Fifty years ago, it was as yet unfamiliar to the average Frenchman. When, in 1870, the new French republic reverted to the strict compulsory principle, one of the greatest living French historians was compelled formally to remind his compatriots that this was in accordance with true republican traditions ; that Roman freedom had flourished side by side with the compulsory citizen-army, and Roman despotism had been marked by the steady rise of the professional soldier.<sup>1</sup> Even educated Frenchmen in 1870, like Britons of to-day, had been tempted by their political experience of the last two generations to look upon a strong army as necessarily inimical to democratic freedom ; they failed to note that the size of an army is far less important, in this connexion, than its social quality. With a mere handful of professional soldiers, Napoleon III. had overthrown the Second Republic : the defeat of his professional soldiers was the main factor which rendered the Third Republic possible. Events are now compelling us to face these historical facts, which, forty years ago, were painfully forced upon the notice of Frenchmen.

This connexion between Democracy and Universal Service may be clearly traced in Greek history, though the multiplicity of different states renders

<sup>1</sup> Fustel de Coulanges, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* for Nov. 15, 1870.

generalization more difficult in this field. Delbrück gives good reasons for supposing that Marathon was a victory won by the citizen-levies of a free democracy over the professional army of a despot. Athens, in her literary and artistic prime, relied upon all her citizens to fight; more than once the *levée en masse* was decreed, and with a thoroughness beyond that of any modern state.<sup>1</sup> Other states went upon similar principles. Naturally, as wars grew more complicated and more distant, the professional soldier came into greater prominence; but the first thoroughly professional army was formed by the first ruler who made himself despot of all Greece—Philip of Macedon. Alexander and his equally despotic successors relied upon professional armies; Greece, in the days of her decline, had lost the principle of the Nation in Arms.

But Rome supplies an even clearer example; we have here a state whose military system we can trace continuously, and in considerable detail, for a period of ten centuries. The main features of this evolution are admirably described in Fustel de Coulanges's article, and in the first two chapters of *L'Armée à travers les Ages*, published under the direction of E. Lavisse (Paris, 1899. 3 f. 50). The details are given far more fully by Delbrück,

<sup>1</sup> H. Delbrück, *Gesch. d. Kriegskunst*, Berlin, 1900, vol. i. pp. 15-23, 39, 119, 140, 201. Delbrück reckons that, in Periclean Athens, only 7,200 were excused from service out of a male population of 36,000. Compare W. Rüstow, *Gesch. d. Infanterie*, Gotha, 1857, vol. i. pp. 4, 9, 21.

under the article *Dilectus* in the great *Encyclopedia of Classical Antiquities*, edited by Pauly and Wissowa (1903).

Rome, like the Greek states, raised her armies on the compulsory principle. Livy tells us that Servius Tullius, about 550 B.C., compelled the citizens to arm themselves with different degrees of elaboration according to their income; and that he imposed no military service at all upon the "proletariate"—that is, upon the poorest class, the men who had nothing. Delbrück, following in the footsteps of other scholars, gives strong reasons for believing that Livy is here mistaken, and that the proletariate were not really freed from military service, but were used when required for the lowest duties, which brought with them no right of suffrage such as the other classes enjoyed. Thus they bore some, at least, of the labours of war, and only lacked the corresponding political privileges.<sup>1</sup> However this may be, there is no doubt that the proletariate were excused only so far as they were not actually needed; and that, in great crises like the Punic Wars, the Romans armed not only the poorest classes but even slaves. The Roman army, therefore, which drove out the kings and founded the Republic, was essentially a citizen-army. In so far as any citizen legally escaped service, it was only because he did not enjoy full civic rights; and, even so, he might

<sup>1</sup> I. 225-7; 383-4.

always be commandeered when the state had need of him.

This gave a most efficient army so long as the Romans remained a state of warrior-farmers, like the Boers of to-day, and so long as they extended their frontiers only by a gradual advance. But the longer and more distant campaigns, which their rivalry with Carthage forced upon them, broke this organization down. It is true that the system of citizen-levies enabled the Republic to wear Hannibal down, just as Republican France, by the mere superiority of numbers which compulsion gave her, wore down the armies leagued against her; and just as Lincoln, when the Draft Law gave him the numbers he needed, wore down the Southern States.<sup>1</sup> But Rome's wars against Carthage, like the French Revolutionary wars, lasted so long that the citizen-soldier became a professional. Let us look a little closer into this.

When Hannibal first invaded Italy, Rome put into the field about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of her total population—that is, the same proportion as Prussia brought against France in 1870. After the disastrous defeat of Cannae (216 B.C.), Rome at once raised such vast levies that (if we are to believe Delbrück) she had soon  $8\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. in arms—

<sup>1</sup> We must, of course, take into account also the enormous services rendered to Rome by her tributary states. But for the fact that she raised levies from free subject-states, as from her own, she would probably never have worn Hannibal down.

indeed, if we count the losses already suffered, she had by this time armed  $9\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of her total population, or nearly the proportion which Germany has probably armed to-day.<sup>1</sup> This effort seems to have been kept at its full height for four years, and to have relaxed only gradually in proportion as the military outlook grew brighter; an effort perhaps unexampled in history. These men had hoped to come back to their farms; but, at the very end of the war, we find that the backbone of the Roman legions was still formed by men enlisted fourteen years before, after Cannae; just as Napoleon's Old Guard consisted largely of peasants who had joined in 1793. The armies were led no longer only by amateur citizen generals, but by Scipio Africanus, a man whose command had been unconstitutionally prolonged from year to year, who had become a complete professional soldier, and of whom old republicans complained that he "behaved like a king." This process went on at an accelerated pace. The State, accepting still wider military responsibilities as time went on, drifted more and more in the direction of the professional army, until Marius inaugurated a new

<sup>1</sup> Delbrück, p 309. This levy, in figures of present British population, would be equivalent to our arming nearly  $4\frac{1}{4}$  million out of our 45 million souls. Professor J. S. Reid would very considerably reduce these figures, emphasizing the fact that, by reading between the lines of historians like Polybius, we can see that many citizens did in fact escape service. But the most sceptical critic would not dispute the facts that (1) every citizen's legal liability to serve was fully recognized, and (2) Rome did, in fact, succeed in raising such numbers as to wear Hannibal down.

epoch by emphasizing and stereotyping a movement which had begun long before his time.<sup>1</sup>

How far the change had already begun, and how far it was due to the sole initiative of Marius, need not concern us here. The essential fact is that Marius, from 107 B.C. onwards, ignored for recruiting purposes all remaining distinctions between the proletariat and the men of fuller citizenship—distinctions which had already been much weakened by the lowering of the property qualification. At the same time, he laid more stress on voluntary recruiting, and offered terms which made soldiering a really advantageous business to an adventurous man of the poorer class. These changes rapidly hastened the evolution from a citizen-militia into a long-service professional army. Military service was left more and more to the poor man, who adopted it as his profession and served for as long as he was fit for service. This system diminished the necessity of resorting to the law of compulsion; which, however, was not formally abolished. Moreover, as time went on, it made it easy for the richer man to escape by procuring a substitute. The Roman army, therefore, soon settled down into the regular type to which all professional armies tend to conform. The privates were mainly of the poorest class, the officers almost entirely of the upper or upper middle; and the lower middle class was very feebly represented. The real back-

<sup>1</sup> Delbrück, 332-3, 338, 375-81.

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bone of the army was the centurion—the high-class veteran who had risen from the ranks. As Delbrück puts it (p. 394) :

“the nearest analogy to the army of the world-conquering Roman republic may be found in the English army of the 18th century. The higher officers spring from the aristocracy, and pass through a brief interval of training to begin their career as staff-officers : Wellington was Lieutenant-Colonel at 24. The mass of the army is voluntarily recruited, and is kept together by the strictest discipline ; yet the basis is national and English. The foreigners, who are imported in large numbers to fill the ranks, form separate units. The difference between this and the Roman army lies in the subaltern officers, who in England were recruited from ‘gentlemen,’ *i.e.* the poorer aristocracy and the upper middle class, and who were strictly separated from the non-commissioned officers ; whereas the Roman Centurion was both subaltern and non-commissioned officer.”<sup>1</sup>

This army was irresistible against Rome’s enemies, but irresistible also at home.

“These men, soldiers by choice, soldiers by trade, were citizens only in name. . . . They cared little for public liberties, laws, or constitutional authorities ; they knew only their general, that is, the man who gave them glory and gain . . . Sylla and Marius, Caesar and Pompey, Octavius and Antony, fought one after another for absolute power in the state ; and the Republic belonged to the men who conquered in battle. It was through the army that Sylla and Caesar made themselves dictators ; through the army that Octavius founded the Empire. No citizen-

<sup>1</sup> Later on, however, the commands above centurion’s rank were increasingly given to men who had served in the lower grades.



militia would have lent itself to such a revolution as this. For such a stroke, it needed a soldiery who had lost all notion of civil life and who stood outside civil society.”<sup>1</sup>

A Nation in Arms had formerly overthrown the kings; professional armies now overthrow the Republic.

<sup>1</sup> *L'Armée à travers les Âges*, i. 38-9.

## CHAPTER II

### VOLUNTARISM IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

No doubt this soldier-rule was not only a cause of decay to Roman liberties, but also the symptom of a decadence which had already begun. Marius's reconstitution had been partly—or perhaps even mainly—conditioned by the ruin of the peasant proprietors, who had suffered more than any other class through the slaughter, the ravage of farms, and the interruption of work occasioned by the long Punic Wars. Then, again, in proportion as Rome expanded by conquest, and as trade or slave-cultivation were found increasingly profitable, the Marian system of recruiting became more and more convenient. To the capitalist, who tilled huge estates with thousands of slaves, and to the small holder, for whom this larger scale of competition spelt economic ruin, the professional army-system was as convenient as to the ambitious soldier of fortune. The capitalist here escaped service altogether, and the peasant found here a living wage. Marius, we must remember, was himself the son of a peasant-farmer; and, so far as he may be said

to have transformed the Roman militia into a professional army, we may trace his motives almost as clearly to social as to military insight.

But (as Appian remarked, looking back upon the Civil Wars from the second century A.D.) in this New Model Army the soldier was no longer a citizen, but a tool. A couple of generations later, Herodian explained why the early emperors made so little use of their common-law right of compulsory enlistment for the army; such a measure (he wrote) would have been too democratic to suit their policy (ii. 11).<sup>1</sup>

“For so long as the Roman State had been a democracy,” writes Herodian, “all the Italians were armed; but from the time when Augustus became sole ruler, he relieved the Italians of this burden and disarmed them, pushing camps and garrisons nearer to the frontier of the Empire, and establishing hired troops at fixed rates of pay.”

This policy marked the Empire in an increasing degree from generation to generation. After the disastrous defeat of Varus, Augustus fell back for a moment upon compulsory recruiting to fill his shattered legions; but such instances become rarer and rarer. Tiberius, in 23 A.D., complained of the low status and unruliness of the voluntary soldiers, and threatened measures of conscription, but apparently never ventured to carry them out. Italy itself was free from conscription, except for a sort of “garde nationale” in a very few pro-

<sup>1</sup> Compare the King of Prussia's reasons in 1794, p. 92 here below.

vinces. The less favoured provinces were sometimes called upon for compulsory levies ; but even this became rarer and rarer. In later imperial times, the army may be looked upon as altogether professional. It was not that the sources of conscription were dried up : Seeley, in his well-known description of the decay of Rome, is somewhat misleading on this point. Seeck shows conclusively that the most peaceful and prosperous provinces were those which supplied fewest soldiers. In about 50 A.D., when there were six million able-bodied citizens in the Empire, the army numbered less than 350,000 men, many of whom were not citizens. The real reason of this was partly the growing disinclination of citizens for a military life ; and still more, perhaps, the fact that this harmonized with the Emperor's political objections to a citizen army. To arm a force without imperial permission was treason, and the permission was rarely given. The Emperor took on himself the maintenance of public order, and carried out the duty very badly, on the whole. The avoidance of service by self-mutilation, to which Seeley alludes, is recorded only of these imperial days when compulsory enrolment was already the exception. The Empire rapidly settled down into the condition in which it remained for about three centuries. The vast mass of citizens knew nothing of war, except that they were taxed to hire other men to fight for them on the frontiers.

Becoming thus unwarlike, they did not permanently gain either in political liberty, in mental culture, or in worldly fortune. They were content to live in unquestioning obedience to a series of despotic rulers. Arts, sciences, and literature decayed, or marked time at best; and the centralized government gradually created a vicious fiscal system which ground the lower middle class, the healthiest and most laborious factor in the state, to powder. And this state of things seems to have been deliberately encouraged by the Emperors. Astute rulers caught at it as an obvious way of disarming popular resistance, while it lulled the people into a sense of security and material prosperity. It is probable that Roman society was not ripe for real self-government over so vast a tract of territory; but it is certain that the experiment was never tried. The Emperor was tempted to centralize all the powers of the State, and his command of the professional army rendered this despotism easy enough. After a few generations of this process, all real political life was dead: the Emperors had made a wilderness and called it Peace. And the mass of the people, it must be noted, wished to have it so; they were content to lose the higher privileges of citizenship, so long as they were freed from its heaviest burdens. It so obviously suited the Emperors to humour this mood, that we scarcely needed Herodian's reminder to detect conscious policy in this steady drift away from all idea of a

Nation in Arms. Of the drift itself, there can be no doubt whatever. Before the final breakdown of the Empire, the mass of the population were altogether estranged from the army, and recruiting was done mainly in the frontier provinces. Moreover, the vestiges of legal compulsion which still survived were of the most arbitrary and odious kind; under this despotism, nothing was left but the dregs of what had once been a real democratic system.<sup>1</sup> In virtue of a law which bound many citizens to their fathers' trades, and which thus reduced Roman society not only to a class-system, but even to a caste-system, soldiers' sons were forced into the army. Again, military service was bound up with certain holdings of land; but this was not necessarily personal service: the holder had simply to produce a fit man, or, by way of punishment (if he had been caught in the attempt to palm off a useless man upon the State), three fit men. A law of 382 A.D., punishing those who produced *other men's* slaves as recruits, proves fairly conclusively that, by this time, it was permissible to produce one's own slave.<sup>2</sup> This gangrene of substitution had been an almost inevitable product of the Marian system. We are far, by this time, from the ancient law which treated

<sup>1</sup> Pauly-Wissowa, col. 635.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* col. 600. It is true that the Republic had no efficient organization, in the modern sense, for enforcing the law of compulsory service; but this was the case with other equally important laws, and must always be so in a comparatively rudimentary state of society.

evasion of military service as sacrilege. Among all the early Italian tribes, punctual obedience to the order of mobilization had been secured by the so-called *lex sacrata*, by which the defaulter was given over, as god-accursed, to outlawry and death. The Romans of the middle Republic, though they permitted no substitution, were by some degrees more lenient to the defaulter. He was sometimes scourged or imprisoned, or even sold into slavery; but the most frequent punishment seems to have been a heavy fine, with loss of civic rights. In times of great emergency, when the State had its hands full, there was difficulty in enforcing the law absolutely; Polybius shows us that, during the Second Punic War, the levies cannot have produced their full theoretical complement. During the later days of the Republic, it seems to have become common for those who could afford it, if taken by the conscription, to buy themselves off. A law of the Middle Empire says in so many words "the numbers are mainly made up by voluntary enlistment."<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the standard was steadily lowered. The legion, the "line," was at first recruited only from the Roman State in its narrower sense; and, of Romans, from those alone who had "a stake in the country." Marius, as we have seen, first admitted the proletariat. Presently Italians of all kinds were admitted: then pro-

<sup>1</sup> Pauly-Wissowa, pp. 600, 611, 616; *Digest*. xlix. 16. 4. 10, "plerumque voluntario milite numeri supplentur."

vincials; and finally, even barbarians. These last, by a legal fiction, received the citizenship on their enlistment, by way of maintaining the principle that the legionary must be a citizen of the Empire. Therefore, during the later generations of Imperial Rome, the armies were to a great extent recruited from foreign sources, quite apart from the system by which whole barbarian tribes had been admitted into the Empire on condition of rendering military service as frontiersmen. As Seeck puts it, there was often no difference between the legionaries and the auxiliary troops, except that the former received the citizenship upon enlistment, and the latter only when they had served their time and earned their pension.

This steady decline of the soldier in social status, with the odious and arbitrary character of such compulsory enlistment as still survived, produced their natural results. Some masters, as we have seen, were bound to produce one or more serfs as recruits; if the serf cut off his thumb to avoid the service, the master was to be fined for permitting this mutilation. Similar difficulties hindered the strictest enforcement of the law which bound the soldier's son to his father's trade. Though substitution was here allowed, and though there were punishments for the self-mutilator, it became necessary at last to punish his father also.<sup>1</sup> These difficulties were

<sup>1</sup> Pauly-Wissowa, pp. 633-4.



inevitable in a State which had abandoned all that was honourable in the compulsory principle, and had retained only what was odious in it. Service had long ceased to be the duty and privilege of all citizens ; it had become an exceptional, arbitrary, and, therefore, loathsome burden, even worse than our pressgang of 150 years ago. The Nation in Arms was gone ; all that remained was the Blood Tax. This necessarily told upon the whole status of the army, with the result that the recruiting problem became more and more acute, and could only be solved by the wholesale admission of men who were scarcely less truly foreigners than the very foreigners against whom they were hired to fight. The army had become estranged from the nation. The military writer Vegetius complained, somewhere about 385 A.D., "it is not that martial ardour has decayed in the men themselves, but the carelessness bred of long peace has turned their minds partly to ease and enjoyments, partly to civil duties" ; and again, "the long peace has bred careless methods of recruiting."<sup>1</sup> The army, as Seeck says, was "barbarized" ; in the last days of the Empire even the highest commands were sometimes given to non-Romans, or to sons of non-Romans.

"The contest with barbarism was carried on by the help of barbarian soldiers. It must have been because the Empire could not furnish soldiers for its own defence,

<sup>1</sup> Pauly-Wissowa, pp. 629-630.

that it was driven to the strange expedient of turning its enemies and plunderers into its defenders. Yet on these scarcely disguised enemies it came to depend so exclusively that in the end the Western Empire was destroyed, not by the hostile army, but by its own.”<sup>1</sup>

Grievously as the Empire sinned against political liberty, it sinned almost as grievously against the laws of nature. The citizen in his daily life, and the government in its methods of recruiting, were equally careless of the breed. The comparatively stationary character of the population, during all those centuries, seems far less traceable to wars and epidemics than to the dislike of marriage and the practice of infanticide. Even in spite of heavy state bounties for fatherhood, and heavy taxes on the unmarried, the evil showed no abatement. “Marriage with us is a pleasure for which a man must be content to pay; with the Romans [of the Empire] it was an excellent pecuniary investment, but an intolerably disagreeable one.”<sup>2</sup> The outside barbarians, who lived in almost perpetual warfare, seem rather to have multiplied than to have dwindled. Yet there seems to have been no principle of increase within the Empire, taking the average all round, though its losses in war

<sup>1</sup> J. R. Seeley, “Roman Imperialism” (*Macmillan's Magazine*, 1869, p. 287; reprinted in *Lectures and Addresses*, 1870, p. 48). In the strictest sense, it may be incorrect to say “could not furnish soldiers,” for there is no evidence that the Empire had ever made a serious effort to organize for war the population of the inner and more prosperous provinces.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 51. We must remember, of course, that this applies mainly to the well-to-do.

must have amounted to only a very trifling percentage of the total population.

We cannot, however, judge these things by percentages alone. A voluntary system of enlistment is essentially more dysgenic than a compulsory system; that is now admitted by all serious students of eugenics.<sup>1</sup> The Roman Imperial system segregated, and to a considerable extent sterilized, the most adventurous elements of the population. From Marius onwards, the soldier served for as long as his health and strength made him a useful unit in the army. If he came back at all to enjoy the little farm with which the State pensioned him, it was at an age or in a condition very unfavourable for founding an average family. Under the later Empire his home, such as it was, was generally somewhere on the frontier. Thus, during the earlier centuries of voluntary enlistment, hundreds of thousands of the sturdiest and most adventurous left their homes, and came back, if at all, to far less than their proper share of citizenship and fatherhood. If, during the later Empire, this process of exhaustion became less rapid and less

<sup>1</sup> It has been emphasized lately, from different points of view, by Prof. J. A. Thomson (*Eugenics Review*, Ap. 1915), by the Editor of the *Eugenics Review* (Oct. 1915, p. 201) and by Sir Ronald Ross (*Science Progress*, Jan. 1914, p. 591, and *Times*, Sept. 30, 1914). We must doubtless beware of exaggerating this "Ausrottung der Besten" in the Roman Empire, remembering that, up to at least the middle of the third century A.D., there was no attempt to enlist from the peaceful provinces except in a very fragmentary fashion; after that, great masses were tied and bound in the chains of the civil system, and the area open for recruitment was very narrow.

complete, it was only because the heart of the Empire was already unsound ; because it could not, or, in a political sense, would not, supply the men. The recruiting system, so far as it affected Roman society at all, must have done much to "breed out" some of the most virile qualities ; it must have eliminated from the population, out of all proportion, an element restless, perhaps, but vigorous and capable of excellent work under good direction.

Even the reader who has least belief in the significance of anything which happened before he himself was born, may have some patience with this brief study in Roman history, for it is also a study in the same human nature which we see around us everywhere to-day. We, like the Romans, are apt to forget that all is not won when we have got rid of a bad thing ; that we have still to prevent some worse abuse from taking the old one's place ; and that this new task may prove harder than the first. Immanuel Kant, the greatest man who has espoused the pacifist cause in modern times, frankly confessed that this tendency which we have here traced in Rome has hitherto been the general experience of the human race. "Long peace generally gives the predominance to the mere commercial spirit, with its concomitant failings of base selfishness, cowardice, and effeminacy, and thus tends to debase the national mind." Again, "Look at China, which . . . has no powerful enemy

to fear, and which has therefore lost every vestige of freedom."<sup>1</sup>

The Roman example, therefore, is not merely a fossil fished up from some dead quarry of the past. It is a study in human nature, in tendencies which exist to-day as they existed 2,000 years ago. Rome shows these at work over a period of many centuries, on the greatest scale recorded in history; and therefore her example is in some respects the most significant of all to us. It shows most clearly in practice, what we might have anticipated in theory, that a nation which avoids the burden of national defence is not mainly actuated by moral reasons—that military responsibilities, if truly national, are not degrading, but, on the whole, ennobling—and, therefore, that immediate relief from military burdens, if bought at the price of ignoring higher rights and duties, must in the long run work towards national decay.

<sup>1</sup> "Critique of the Aesthetic Judgment" (*Collected Works*, ed. Hartenstein, 1867, vol. v. p. 270). The second quotation is given by Dietrich in his *Kant und Rousseau*, p. 140. We must not, of course, infer from this that peace may not be made, some day, to develop better than war even those virtues which we prize most in the warrior. But we must face the fact that, hitherto, the problem has not been solved, and that J. S. Mill was right when he pointed out that the higher organization of peace had still a great deal to learn from military discipline and self-sacrifice.

## CHAPTER III

### ITALY, FLANDERS, FRANCE AND ENGLAND

THE Roman example is in no way exceptional ; a similar lesson is taught by the history of other countries, both in ancient and in modern times. It seems impossible to quote the case of any single country which, having adopted Universal Service, has thenceforth found itself less free politically than in its voluntarist or semi-voluntarist days. On the other hand, history abounds with striking examples of the contrary process ; and, quite apart from the obvious tendencies of human nature insisted upon at the end of last chapter, this historical evidence throws a very heavy burden of proof on those who would contend that, though the despot and the mercenary have commonly gone hand in hand, there is no real connexion between them. Indeed, our opponents would have to prove even more than this. According to their theory, voluntarism in the army, as in other departments of state, is the note of a free country. They have therefore to prove that, in every case, the despot has not only happened to choose a system which was actually disadvan-

tageous to his despotism, but also (by a still more curious and unexpected stroke of luck) has managed to carry out his evil purpose of enslaving the people, even though the machinery which he chose for effecting this was really, in its own nature, an engine of popular freedom! I am not aware that anybody has attempted any such proof. On the contrary, this strange thesis is generally maintained by mere dogmatic assertions, the very tenor of which shows that the writers have read neither *Mill on Liberty*, nor the well-known pleas of foreign democrats for a universal militia-system.

In the city-republics of medieval Italy, there was a law of universal service in the citizen-militia. It was these levies who won liberty for the Lombard communes at Legnano, in 1176; the distinction of a city like Milan was that "artisans, whom the military landholders contemned, acquired and deserved the right of bearing arms for their own and the public defence."<sup>1</sup> Here, as in ancient Athens, every able-bodied man was called out at once at the time of national crisis. As a contemporary chronicler tells us of the war between two of these cities in 1284: "The Pisans ordained that none betwixt the ages of 20 and 60 years should stay at home; and the Genoese had ordained that none of their citizens should stay at home betwixt the ages of 18 and 70, but that all must go to fight."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hallam, *Middle Ages*, chap. iii. pt. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Salimbene, *M. G. H. Scriptt.* xxxii. p. 215.

Levies of this kind, however, are better for defensive than for offensive warfare ; and the intestine quarrels of these Italian cities threw them at last into the hands of the despot and the mercenary.<sup>1</sup>

In 1200, the constitutions of these North Italian communes approached more nearly to pure democracy than any other constitutions in Europe, and their military power depended almost entirely on the compulsory citizen-levy. A century later, these cities were ruled, almost without exception, by despots ; and there is no exception, I believe, to the rule that these despots governed by means of paid standing armies—"the usual policy of an absolute government," as Hallam calls it.<sup>2</sup> In Rome, the least free politically of all the great towns, the militia was never a success : it was reconstituted at the republican revival of 1356, but disappeared soon after the abolition of these free institutions in 1362. In Florence, on the other hand, by the popular reconstitution of 1250, "the people . . . was now organized on a military footing . . . These towns and country companies combined, formed a united popular militia, ready for action at any moment, either against foreign foes

<sup>1</sup> Extreme militarists on the one hand, and extreme pacifists on the other, are fond of denying that any distinction can be drawn between the offensive and the defensive in warfare. I try to show in a later chapter that this denial rests upon a confusion of thought : meanwhile I assume, with most other writers, that the distinction is not only real, but vitally important.

<sup>2</sup> *L.c.* pt. 2.



or to curb patrician tyranny at home.”<sup>1</sup> These armed men numbered, according to Giovanni Villani, 100,000 in 1312. By 1351, however, Florence had begun to follow the example of the other Italian cities; Matteo Villani, describing her war with the Archbishop of Milan, boasts of the ordinary citizen's unconcern. He writes (lib. ii. cap. 20), “Though the enemy had so great a host close by at Mugello, the Florentines seemed to care little for all this; within the city, every man went about his merchandize or his handicraft without bearing any sort of arms.” A century later, the Florentine Republic had practically become a despotism under Cosimo de Medici, who laid the foundation of his power by an alliance with the greatest mercenary leader of his time, Francesco Sforza.

We find a similar process in the great cities of the Low Countries—Ghent, Bruges, Ypres, etc. It may be traced clearly enough in the first two volumes of Pirenne's admirable *Histoire de Belgique* (Brussels, 1902). The civic militias which saved Flanders from French despotism at the beginning of the fourteenth century were, as Pirenne points out, the forerunners of that *levée en masse* which, centuries later, saved the French Revolution. But towards the end of that same century, the Counts of Flanders began to break down the civic liberties by astute diplomacy. The citizen-militias decayed;

<sup>1</sup> P. Villari, *The Two First Centuries of Florentine History*, London, 1901, p. 189.

in 1411 the Count mobilized them, but found that they gave him little help in his wars, while they refused to disband again until they had wrung from him certain political concessions. He took care not to call out the militia again; and, by 1471, Flanders had a standing professional army of 10,000 men, even larger in proportion than those of the Great Powers. By that time, in spite of a great deal of local self-government in the towns, the country in general was subjected to a monarchical government modelled upon that of contemporary France (vol. i. pp. 297, 393; ii. 327, 345, 376). We cannot say, of course, that the decay of civic liberties is *directly* traceable to the decay of the civic militias. But, on the other hand, it seems impossible to avoid the conclusion that the same causes which contributed to the one process, contributed also to the other: here, as so often elsewhere, the despot and the professional soldier appear hand in hand.

Most instructive of all, however, is the contrast between French and English policy and development during the last six centuries. It was a French historian who first pointed out that, six centuries ago, the most strictly conscripted country was the one which now knows least of compulsory service.<sup>1</sup> The English citizen-militia was better organized, and more frequently used, than any similar force in Europe, except the republican militias of the

<sup>1</sup> Siméon Luce, *Bertrand du Guesclin*, chap. vi.

Swiss Cantons and of Lombardy, and the almost equally democratic militias of the Low Countries. The Saxon Fyrd (as the militia was then called) nearly beat William off at Hastings ; and its subsequent development cannot be better sketched than in a series of brief extracts from Professor Tout's article in the *Dictionary of English History*, pp. 730-1.

“The history of the national militia subsequently to the Conquest strongly illustrates the continuity of English constitutional development. William I. exacted from every freeman the old national oath to join in defending the king, his lands and his honour both at home and beyond sea. In 1073 the fyrd took a prominent share in the conquest of Maine. William II. cheated the fyrd out of the ten shillings a-piece which the shires had given them for their maintenance. Yet it was always faithful to the crown in its struggle against the feudalists. The defeat of Robert of Belesme, the repulse of David of Scotland at Northallerton, the suppression of the feudal revolt of 1173, were largely due to its valour and patriotism. . . . Henry II., while relying for foreign service mainly on mercenaries paid for by the scutages of the barons, trusted to the fyrd for home defence. His Assize of Arms (1181) revived and reorganized that ancient body, and devised an excellent machinery for compelling every citizen to possess the arms appropriate to his station in life. The increased dread of mercenaries, through their misuse by John, and their attempts to control the destinies of the kingdom during his son's minority, gave an increased importance to the re-issue of the Assize of Arms by Henry III., in close connection with the system of Watch and Ward. In the Statute of Winchester,

Edward I. (1285) still further developed the same system which a series of later measures of Henry IV., Philip and Mary, and James I., has brought down to our own days. . . . The 'train bands' of the seventeenth century, which the Act of James I. substituted for the mediæval system, though in a sense the continuation of the fyrd, were also largely of voluntary origin. The difficulties caused by the militia question in 1642, between Charles I. and his Parliament, and the prominent part taken by the train bands in the Great Rebellion, rendered it necessary for the Restoration Parliament to reorganize the national forces, and reconstitute the militia under the headship of the crown. Up to 1757 this force was, however, quite neglected, when the absence of the regular army on the Continent caused it to be revived as a local organization for internal defence. Its importance as a recruiting-ground for the army was also a great reason for its revival. Under George III. and Victoria a series of Acts of Parliament have modified the militia laws."

It was under the first three Edwards that our militia reached its highest organization, as compared with those of other countries. Edward I. in his Welsh and Scotch wars, had learned the value of the long-bow and the foot-soldier : and we have documentary evidence that the Statute of Winchester was far more thoroughly carried out than the average of mediæval laws. At Norwich, for instance, there exist originals or summaries of nine different "views" of the militia between 1355 and 1370.<sup>1</sup> These show that the city mustered 1,000

<sup>1</sup> See W. Hudson, "Norwich Militia in the Fourteenth Century" (*Norfolk and Norwich Arch. Soc.* vol. xiv. p. 263), and especially the same author's *Records of the City of Norwich*, vol. i. pp. cxli ff. and ii. p. cxxii.

armed men. Mr. Hudson, whose knowledge of medieval Norwich is unrivalled, doubts whether the total population, at this time, could have exceeded 8,000; in that case the Statute must have been worked with a thoroughness beyond that of any modern conscription. Even if we take the extreme limit consistent with known facts, and estimate the population at 10,000, we still get a proportion which, on the basis of our last census, would enable us to muster 4,500,000 men in modern Britain. And the Government did all it could to secure efficiency as well as numbers. Edward I. was a great military organizer, and his work was carried on by his grandson. Edward III. was thus able to raise a strong force of infantry composed of men whose income fell short of £15 a year. The sturdiest served as knife-men, and the most skilful formed his redoubtable archery. The long-bow was a quick-firing arm as compared with the cross-bow. The English weapon was of yew, more than 5 ft. long, so light and easily handled that the archer could shoot three arrows while the crossbow-man shot one single bolt. The knife-men were armed with a pointed cutlass, a sort of sword-bayonet, with which they could either cut, or thrust between the joints of the armour. Such was the infantry to which the English armies of the fourteenth cen-

The calculation of only 5,000 for the Norwich population, in this latter passage, is apparently by Mr. Tingey; if this were correct, it would greatly strengthen my contention; but I cannot help suspecting that Mr. Tingey takes too low a figure.

ture owed their main strength. Edward III. gave it a business-like training. He frequently forbade such knightly exercises as jousts and tourneys; those courtly competitions were hampered by conventions which paralyzed all initiative in actual warfare. "It was advised and determined" (writes Froissart), "that all games should be forbidden, upon pain of death, save only the practice of the long-bow; and that all bowyers and fletchers should be freed and quit of all their debts." In the islands and along the coasts, "it was ordained that the soldiers and armed men should teach and accustom their children to handle arms and to draw the bow." Lastly, here is a no less practical provision: "Moreover, it was ordained and determined that all lords, barons, knights and substantial men of the good towns should take care and diligence to teach their children the French tongue, whereby they might be the more ready and more serviceable in war."<sup>1</sup>

Nor did Edward hesitate to make full use of the men thus trained. The London city documents, as the fullest existing, give us the best idea of the extent to which men were levied for the French wars. Between 1337 and 1355, London was called upon for more than 2,500 men; this in terms of modern population, would mean a levy of something like 300,000 from London alone. The town archives of Norwich and Lynn show similar evi-

<sup>1</sup> Lavissee, *Hist. de France*, t. iv. pt. ii. p. 31.

dence ; and the Berkeley papers show how much was required from the county of Gloucester.<sup>1</sup> Although the full complement was not always forthcoming, the numbers actually conscripted were evidently very great. In the later stages of the war, the citizens generally paid money instead, and the armies were raised by indenture, on the voluntary system. But, even then, it was of decisive importance that the English volunteers were drawn from a population accustomed, after the rough fashion of that day, to some sort of discipline and some sort of readiness in self-defence. England in those days (as Luce puts it), "acted on the principle of the Nation in Arms."

In France, meanwhile, things were very different. There was, of course, a theory, everywhere recognized in the past, that all men might be called upon to fight if necessary. But there was no organized militia for the whole country, like our fyrd; there was no Nation in Arms. Even the town militias played a very secondary part, except that they did occasional good work in pure self-defence behind their own ramparts. Before the end of the thirteenth century, there began "a transformation of military service into a tax paid to the king. The communes and chartered towns gave money instead of sending their armed men; a fact which gradually brought about a radical change in the military and financial

<sup>1</sup> These figures are given far more fully in my *Chaucer and his England*, 2nd ed. pp. 238 ff, and in my article on "Our Conscripts at Crécy" in the *Nineteenth Century and After* for Feb. 1909.

organization of the monarchy.”<sup>1</sup> This system was regularized by an act of 1317, which definitely consecrated vicarious service. Thus,

“whilst the King of England was extending obligatory service to his whole nation, his rival of France, after seeming at first to follow the same course, turned completely aside towards the end of his reign. Thanks to the principle laid down by Philippe le Bel, that, in any extreme crisis, every Frenchman ought to bear arms, but those who could not or would not serve might get off with a money-payment, whenever the French kings were in pressing need of money during the first half of the 14th century they commanded a general levy redeemable by money—or, in other words, they imposed a war-tax. Thus Philippe de Valois, in 1337 and 1338, 1347 and 1348, proclaimed a general levy for defence of the kingdom; but we must not blink the fact that these decrees chiefly aimed at, and chiefly resulted in, filling the treasury. In all the deeds by which the towns granted subsidies during this reign, it is stipulated that the citizens shall be dispensed from military service, except in the case of the *arrière-ban*.”<sup>2</sup>

The first obvious advantage of the English system was to give us the steady supply of numbers which alone made it possible to maintain the war. France, in those days, had a population of 20 million or more, with about 300,000 in Paris alone. England had only about 4 million, and London perhaps

<sup>1</sup> A. Luchaire, *Les Communes Françaises*, 1890, pp. 188, 189.

<sup>2</sup> S. Luce, *Bertrand du Guesclin*, p. 132. The *arrière-ban* was, in modern German terms, the calling out of the *Landsturm*; for instance, at the battle of Crécy there appeared citizen militias from the neighbouring towns of Abbeville, St.-Riquier, Rouen and Beauvais. They arrived a day late, and were cut to pieces.



40,000 or 50,000.<sup>1</sup> Even when we make all allowance for the fact that part of S.W. France was then more or less under English rule, this numerical disproportion ought to have been overwhelming. Nearly all our main battles, as it was, were fought at a great numerical disadvantage; and, if France had kept in the field anything like our proportion of total population, we should have been worn down in a very few years.

A second and even greater advantage of the English system came to reinforce us on the frequent occasions when, even with our utmost efforts, we found ourselves outnumbered. The whole English nation was associated with the army: therefore we had a businesslike army. Not only did Edward III. lay small stress on tournaments, and often forbid them altogether, but he definitely conducted the war on business principles, as opposed to the aristocratic conventions of chivalry. In the Crécy campaign, when he had pushed even to the suburbs of Paris, he found himself with a dwindling and ill-fed army, far from his base, and confronted now by an overwhelming force of French. But Philip, instead of attacking at once, sent Edward a knightly challenge in due form, offering him the choice of two different fields to fight in, and of four days during the coming week. Edward amused the French envoy with a feint, rapidly repaired the

<sup>1</sup> E. Lavisse, *Hist. de France*, t. iv. pt. ii. p. 20 *Social England* (illustrated edition), vol. ii. p. 323.

broken bridge of Poissy, and gained so long a start on the way home that Philip caught him up only 10 days later, and under far less advantageous circumstances, at Crécy. This is only one instance out of many. Promotion in the English army went not merely by feudal precedence, as in the French. Our tactics were the novel and effective tactics forced upon Edward I. by long experience in small wars ; while the French either clung to traditional methods, or (as at Poitiers) imitated us with so little discernment of circumstances that their new error was worse than the old. Finally, the longbow gave us the same advantage which the breech-loader gave to the Prussians against the Austrian muzzle-loaders in 1866. Nothing might seem easier than for the French to adopt this arm at once ; but a nearer view of the facts will show that our superiority here was rooted in the peculiarity of our national life. It took many years to form a first-rate archer, and thoroughly efficient archery presupposed a Nation in Arms. Bishop Latimer shows us this in one of his delightful autobiographical passages (sixth sermon before King Edward VI.) :

“ In my time my poor father was as diligent to teach me to shoot, as to learn me any other thing ; and so I think other men did their children ; he taught me how to draw, how to lay my body in my bow, and not to draw with strength of arms, as other <sup>1</sup> nations do, but with strength of the body : I had my bows bought me, according to

<sup>1</sup> As divers other, 1607.

my age and strength ; as I increased in them, so my bows were made bigger and bigger ; for men shall never shoot well, except they be brought up in it : it is a goodly art, a wholesome kind of exercise, and much commended in physic."

Latimer insists also on the disciplinary benefits of such exercise ; and here is the greatest glory of our fourteenth-century Nation in Arms. Rough and bloodstained as is our history in that age, it compares well with any other. No other such important insurrection as our Peasants' Revolt of 1381 was marked by so little murder and robbery. With all their disorders, those revolutionaries did, on the whole, keep a discipline which we shall find nowhere else in the Middle Ages under similar circumstances ; and abroad, by the confession of our very enemies, we showed the same superiority. Among the Free Companies (as those mercenary adventurers were called who became the scourge of Europe in this century), the English were among the most formidable in war, but among the least cruel to the vanquished. Hawkwood, one of the most hardened of their leaders, disobeyed his orders and spared a thousand women whom the Papal Legate commanded to be slain at the massacre of Cesena.<sup>1</sup> And Father Denifle, the late sublibrarian of the Vatican, printed a far more substantial testimonial to our soldiers. In 1433, Archbishop Jean-Juvénal des Ursins addressed a long memorial to the

<sup>1</sup> M. Creighton, *Hist. of the Papacy*, bk. I. chap. i.

States-General, then sitting at Blois, and a similar letter in 1439 to the French King. While emphasizing the cruelties practised on both sides during the war, he twice points out that the French peasants suffered less, on the whole, from the English soldiery than from their own. In the first memorial, speaking of the indiscipline and tyrannies of the French soldiery, and their disregard of their own plighted word given by way of safe-conduct or otherwise, he adds, "at present, however, things are somewhat amended by the coming of the English." In the second, after describing the sufferings endured by the population under the English invaders, he goes on: "Nevertheless, it must truly be confessed that they do keep not only their securities once given, but their safe-conducts also; and I will pass briefly over their deeds; for, whatsoever tyrannies these our enemies may do, your own soldiers do as terrible, and far worse, all things considered."<sup>1</sup> We have truer cause for pride in a testimonial of this sort, than in our victories of the Hundred Years' War. Yet those victories were almost, if not altogether, unexampled in history. A man born in 1335, and living to be eighty, would easily have remembered Crécy, Poitiers, and Agincourt. Is there any other country or time in which, during a single lifetime, three such crushing victories were won, in spite of such enormous odds,

<sup>1</sup> H. Denifle, *La Désolation des Églises, etc.* (Mâcon, 1887), vol. i. pp. 497, 504: cf. Dussieux, vol. i. pp. 248-9.

against a country of the first military rank ? Both victory in war, and superior tranquillity in peace, went here with the country which laid most stress on the universal liability to serve.

Nor is the political and commercial development of England, during these centuries, less remarkable than her other successes. Our towns grew in wealth, in numbers and in freedom ; while the French civic liberties decayed, and many towns surrendered their charters altogether. Our parliament not only successfully asserted the power of the purse, but even helped in the overthrow of three kings. The difference in political freedom between the England and France of 1450, as compared with the England and France of 1150, is enormous. There were doubtless many causes for this divergent development ; then, as now, our insular position may have contributed more to our freedom than any other cause ; happy is the people that can work out its own political problems without violent interference from an outside invader ! But, so far as the influence of universal military service can be traced in either direction, it certainly tended to confirm, rather than to retard, our development in liberty.

The comparison with France will again make this clear. In 1357, when the King had been taken at Poitiers and was still a prisoner in London, the States-General forced upon the Dauphin a series of articles of Government, a medieval Petition of

Right. One of these articles insisted that Government should arm not only all the townsfolk, but the far hardier and more numerous peasantry also.<sup>1</sup> But the Dauphin hated these articles, which had practically been forced upon him by the semi-revolutionary population of Paris; the rest of the country was far less advanced in democratic thought than the capital; and this Ordinance was never carried out. When, at last, in the middle of the fifteenth century, the French armies began to assert their superiority over ours, it was not through a Nation in Arms. One determining cause, undoubtedly, was that the English had long since lost heart in the war; the nation was no longer really engaged in it, in anything like the sense in which the campaign of Crécy may be called a national struggle. Even more decisive, perhaps, was the reorganization of the French army by the "Ordonnance" of Charles VII. in 1439. This established a permanent, numerous and efficient professional force under the sole command of the king; and, at the same time, the States-General granted a *perpetual* tax to maintain this army.

"The absolute control of the national force and of the national revenue, which the action of the States General of Orléans allowed the crown to assume, enabled the monarchy to erect a despotism in France. Englishmen may hold that orderly government and national indepen-

<sup>1</sup> Perrens, *Etienne Marcel*, p. 131; Lavissee and Rambaud, *Hist. Générale*, iii. 93.

dence were dearly purchased by the sacrifice of all securities for constitutional liberty ; but it is at least probable that if they had ever found themselves in such an evil plight they would have conducted the same bargain on the same terms." <sup>1</sup>

The fact that medieval England never found itself in this evil plight can hardly be dissociated from the fact that, in medieval England, every man was something of a soldier. Can we wonder, therefore, if the large majority of modern Frenchmen believe that the best safeguard yet invented against invasion from abroad, and against tyranny at home, lies in a system of universal service which will interest every citizen in self-defence, and will throw the professional soldier as much as possible into the background ? Many of the troops thus raised by the French kings were foreign mercenaries ; and the complaints of the States-General in 1484 show that the people realized already, to some extent, how truly they had exchanged king Log for king Stork. The petition ran :

“ France has a numerous population, warlike by nature, which is glad to do its duty in shedding its blood for the king. For many centuries the country relied upon its natural defenders ; and then, far from being exposed to oppression on the part of neighbouring nations, it gave the law to all the nations of Europe. The mercenary

<sup>1</sup> R. Lodge, *The Close of the Middle Ages*, 1906, p. 353 : cf. Dussieux, i. 248. The tax was not, at first, theoretically perpetual ; but the king had a right to exact it so long as he kept his part of the bargain, by maintaining this efficient army.

armies, which are extolled as so useful now-a-days, were first erected by suspicious tyrants, who thought they had no other means of escape from public vengeance. Therefore, let us not be told now that these mercenaries are the very arms of the body politic, and that the salvation of the state depends upon them.”<sup>1</sup>

But the mercenary, and the irresponsible taxation which this institution had brought with it, were firmly riveted now upon France, for as long as the monarchy itself should endure. Even our Tudors did not dare, in face of their people, to set up a real standing army ; if Henry VIII. had quarrelled with his people as seriously as Charles I. did, he had no forces sufficient to overawe the whole nation. In the France of that time, on the other hand, the king and his army had been masters of the country for a whole century ; and this despotism was destined to grow more and more irresistible until the Revolution.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Benoiston de Châteauneuf in *Annales d'Hygiène Publique*, 1833, p. 243.



## CHAPTER IV

### FRANCE AND ENGLAND (*continued*)

THE reign of Queen Mary brought a reconstitution of our national militia, but these changes were merely superficial. They were mainly intended to bring the armament and training up to date; and their success seems to have been small. The queen would have liked to form a standing army, but dared not propose it. Though the old machine was now thoroughly rusty, it still kept up the principle of universal compulsion.<sup>1</sup> In Harrison's valuable introduction to Holinshed's *Chronicle*, written on the very eve of the Armada, he says :

“As for able men for service, thanked be God! we are not without good store; for, by the musters taken 1574 and 1575, our number amounted to 1,172,674, and yet were they not so narrowly taken but that a third part of this like multitude was left unbilled and uncalled. What store of munition and armour the queen's majesty

<sup>1</sup> J. W. Fortescue, *Hist. of the British Army*, 1910, i. 125. Mr. Fortescue is chiefly concerned to emphasize the military weaknesses of a citizen militia, which to a certain extent are undeniable, though we shall have to consider later on how far they are irremediable. Our concern here is mainly with the *political* working of the militia system.

had in her storehouses it lieth not in me to yield account, sith I suppose the same to be infinite.”<sup>1</sup>

This “infinite store,” as we now know, existed mainly on paper, thanks to Elizabeth’s parsimony ; and doubtless there were plenty of frauds in the register of names ; it has been suggested that Shakespeare is thinking of these musters when he describes Falstaff’s proceedings in the first part of his *Henry IV*. Moreover, though Harrison’s numbers show that the legal accountability of all adult males was still maintained, the Trained Bands (*i.e.* the select men who were supposed to be actually drilled) were only about one-tenth of these. The discrepancy between theory and practice, however, was not so very much greater than similar discrepancies which have been revealed at the outbreak of war on far more recent occasions, under the Voluntary System.

James I., though he set his hand to an act which practically destroyed the old universal militia as an organization, did nothing to impair the principle of universal service ; both he and Charles I., in fact, pressed men even for service abroad, as Elizabeth had done. And, when the Civil War broke out, this gave the English people a real chance of asserting their liberties. In the France of that day, even the peace establishment of the standing army amounted to 81,000 men, admirably drilled and equipped, and supported by taxes which the

<sup>1</sup> *Elizabethan England*, ed. F. J. Furnivall (Walter Scott), p. 225.

people had no constitutional right to refuse.<sup>1</sup> The people, for their part, had no right to bear arms; they were almost as helpless as the modern Armenians are under Turkish rule.<sup>2</sup> It needed the bloodiest social upheaval known to history, before this disability of the French population could be remedied. With us, on the other hand, the duty of service was also a privilege: "in England," said a French cardinal, "they say that the French peasants are brute beasts."<sup>3</sup> The Long Parliament even wrested from the king the constitutional right of raising the militia; so that, while neither side began the Great Civil War with a regular army, Parliament had the right of taxation, right of levying soldiers, and possession of such arms as existed in the militia depots of the different parishes on their side. In this matter of armament, the Parliament thus started with an actual advantage over the king.<sup>4</sup> By the time the war had lasted a year,

<sup>1</sup> Dussieux, ii. 76.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. G. Hanotaux. *La France en 1614* (Collection, Nelson), p. 375: "Even now-a-days, in eastern countries, the conquering peoples keep government and military service to themselves, suffering the subject peoples at their feet to go on quietly with their commerce, industry, and despised trades, so long as they regularly pay their taxes. This social state has some real resemblance to that of France at the beginning of the seventeenth century. One part of the nation governed the rest who supplied its wants. On the other hand, the ruling class had scarcely more consideration for the working and paying class, than the true Osmanlis have for Greeks, Armenians and Jews." Cf. again the report of the English ambassador in 1609, quoted on p. 394 of the same book: "The French peasantry are kept in such servitude that the Government dares not to trust them with arms."

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 394.

<sup>4</sup> C. H. Firth, *Rede Lecture*, 1910, p. 21.

Parliament decreed the impressment of 22,000 men, and the king resorted to the same means. In 1645, more than half of Cromwell's New Model Army was raised by impressment.

“There was no zeal amongst the men thus forced into the ranks, and at first they deserted and ran home again in great numbers, and, as Fairfax complained, with perfect impunity. But physically they were good material for soldiers, and after the first few months little is heard of their desertion. The last great press for the army took place in 1651, when Parliament ordered 10,000 men to be raised to reinforce its troops in Ireland. It was then remarked that the men raised by impressment for that service were better than those who had voluntarily enlisted.”<sup>1</sup>

As Prof. Firth has pointed out, our Rebellion of 1642 resembled the American Civil War in this, that it victoriously maintained the principle of “government of the people, for the people, by the people,” to use Lincoln's celebrated phrase. And, in both cases, the victory was decided by the assertion of a people's right to claim actual personal service from every man who helps to compose that people. “They showed that democracy and discipline might be allies, not enemies, and won the war in the process.”<sup>2</sup> This obligation of militia service, which helped the Parliament to vindicate our liberties in 1642, was finally abolished only a

<sup>1</sup> C. H. Firth, *Cromwell's Army*, 1902, pp. 21, 36.

<sup>2</sup> *Rede Lecture*, pp. 7, 26. The quotation here given is from words spoken by Prof. Firth in a different context; but the transference does no injustice, I trust, to the reading of his lecture. Cf. p. 27.

few years ago, when the Territorial Force was constituted by the present Lord Haldane. During all those intervening years the militia, old-fashioned though it was, was looked upon as a natural constitutional counterpoise against the dangerous political tendencies of a standing army; and even the victorious army of Waterloo contained a good many pressed men. Moreover, the abolition of the militia as a standing force has in no way affected the common-law liability of every British subject to fight in case of invasion, as Lord Haldane plainly reminded his hearers in the House of Lords since the outbreak of this war.

We must turn now to France, where the story ends in the creation of the modern Nation in Arms.

Her great wars of the seventeenth century compelled the government to reinforce voluntary enlistment by measures which (like those of the later Roman Empire), had all the disadvantages of Universal Service, with none of its more solid advantages. "All the weight fell upon the common people . . . all workshops throughout the country were closed; and the people, lacking bread, were compelled to enlist . . . the citizens paid money, and remained at home."<sup>1</sup> The medieval militias were revived, but under partial and iniquitous conditions; the kings, not daring actually to arm the people, ordained a cunningly-devised blood-tax which helped

<sup>1</sup> Dussieux, ii. 56, 180-1, 193-5, 374.

them to fill their professional armies. At the same time, the most shameful methods were used even with the so-called "volunteers." The philosopher Locke, who was at Montpellier in 1675, noted in his diary: "These artifices are employed where pressing is not allowed; it is a usual trick, if any one drink the king's health, to give him press-money and force him to go a soldier, pretending that, having drunk his health, he is bound to fight for him."<sup>1</sup> Dussieux quotes still worse cases. Even when, in 1688, Louvois seriously reorganized the provincial militia, it was mainly to furnish recruits for the foreign wars; and its class-character, already sufficiently pronounced, soon became more odious still; "the government, needing money, sold patents of nobility and a thousand different offices which exempted men from service." We need not wonder that the Revolution made a clean sweep of this. The *cahiers* (i.e. the memorials which came from all parts of the country to prescribe the reforms to be carried out by the States-General in 1789), "unanimously demanded the suppression of the militia and of the provincial regiments." The States-General abolished all personal obligation of military service in March 1791. No attempt was made to discriminate: the duty which, in England, had helped the fight for liberty was cast off simultaneously with these odious exemptions which had enabled the kings to transform a

<sup>1</sup> King's *Life of Locke*, 1830, vol. i. p. 104.

national privilege into a class-disability. Yet, even under the *Ancien Régime*, advanced political philosophers had pointed to this as one cause of the insignificance of the Tiers État in France.<sup>1</sup> And, only a few months after the storming of the Bastille, one of the boldest and most far-sighted Radicals in the Assembly, Dubois-Crancé, had proposed universal service in the name of democratic efficiency (Dec. 12, 1789). "I lay it down as an axiom," he said, "that every citizen of France must be a soldier, and every soldier a citizen; or we shall never have a real Constitution." And again: "We must, therefore, have a truly national conscription, including every citizen, whether he has a vote or not, except the king. Every man must be ready to march as soon as the country is in danger." But the nation, through its unhappy past experience, had become confused between *partial* conscription, with all its obvious defects, and *universal* military service, which is really a very different thing. Frenchmen in 1789, like Britons in 1913, confused all compulsory service with "militarism"; and Dubois-Crancé's speech fell upon deaf ears, in spite of the esteem which the speaker enjoyed.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Rousseau, *Contrat Social*, iii. 15, a passage which Carnot recalled in 1792, when he appealed to the National Assembly to decree military training for all citizens without distinction. Mably, Rousseau's contemporary, had written to the same effect: "A country will not keep its liberty if its citizens pay soldiers to defend it" (quoted by Ed. Péclot, *Conscrit et Conscription*, Paris, 1867, p. 24).

<sup>2</sup> This fallacy is far more fully exposed by the great French pacifist and socialist, Jean Jaurès, in his *Armée Nouvelle*. See his words in chapter xii. of *Democracy and Military Service* (Simpkin, Marshall & Co. 1s. net).

In April 1792 war broke out with Prussia and Austria, who were plotting to interfere in the Revolution, and to restore the king's absolute power. This war went so badly for France that, at a very early stage, it was necessary to resort to measures of veiled compulsion. The real voluntary effort, however, was very remarkable, and for some time the country hoped that this would suffice. But the volunteers had engaged for only a year; and a large proportion of them refused to serve longer, though the need was by that time even more pressing. In February 1793 the Republican Government was obliged to "requisition 300,000 National Guards"—or (in terms of British conditions), to conscript 300,000 Territorials for foreign service. This levy produced far less than the 300,000 required; therefore Barère and Carnot, a few months later, persuaded the Government to decree a general levy of all able-bodied men from 18 to 25. It is significant that here in France, as later on in Germany, this first serious effort to utilize the fighting forces of the nation coincided with an equally serious effort to found a real system of National Education (see Appendix 2).

Carnot, of course, was an even more determined Republican than Dubois-Crancé: and it was he who created the armies of the French Revolution. In order to gild the pill, both these levies of conscripts were still called Volunteers, a name which had been rendered honourable by the



real volunteers of 1792; but this political device has caused a great deal of misunderstanding in later histories. These levies of 1793, being the pick of the national manhood, became magnificent soldiers, devoted to their country and to the Republic; but very few of them had originally been volunteers. After a time, France was able to put overwhelming numbers into the field, and the invaders were everywhere driven out of French territory. But the national ambition to spread revolutionary ideas over Europe continued the war; and in 1798 Jourdan's law first made this compulsory service into a fundamental clause of the Constitution (Sept. 5). It was then that the name "conscription" was first formally introduced from Roman into French history; therefore superficial students have sometimes overlooked the fact that the *thing* itself had been in force since 1793, or even, under a decent cloak of voluntarism, since 1792.<sup>1</sup> The Revolutionary armies have been judged very differently by professional soldiers on the one hand, and enthusiastic politicians on the other; the truth lies, as usual, between the two extremes. Dussieux puts both sides fairly (vol. ii. p. 376).

"In this question of the volunteers, which we must treat without prejudice, good and evil are intermingled. For some people, the volunteers of 1792 are everything; it was they who did everything. This assertion is false.

<sup>1</sup> Dussieux, ii. 374 ff.

Well-organized armies cannot be met by feudal mobs, or by volunteers, francs-tireurs and national guards, ill-officered, ill-trained, loosely organized and undisciplined. That was shown in 1793 and 1870, as it had been in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Those who have declaimed against standing armies and compulsory service—those who have said, written, and repeated in season and out of season that France need only stamp her strong foot, and legions would spring from the ground, invincible in their patriotism and in virtue of the noble ideas which inspired them—those men have unworthily deceived the nation; for the so-called Volunteers of 1793 were forced into the army by the energetic measures of the Convention, and these masses of men raised and sent into the firing line in the very throes of war are incapable, at first, of bearing the burden thrown upon them; they are sacrificed in vain.

On the other hand, it is not true to assert that the Volunteers did no good. They and the National Guards of 1792-3 behaved well at Valmy, Jemmapes and Mayence; they took part in the victories of Hondschoote, Wattignies, Geisberg and Fleurus. They animated the army with their own ardent patriotism; they kept it to its duty by preventing it from following the generals who betrayed the Revolution; they formed good auxiliaries to the regular army. Without the Regulars (it cannot be too often repeated) the Volunteers could have done nothing; but they did really help the army and take an important part in the victory. The advocates of the Volunteers commit the mistake of leaving the Regulars out of account, and *vice versa*. Both classes of soldiers united to repulse the invaders of 1792-3; neither could have performed this singly—least of all, the Volunteers.”

That Compulsory Service saved Revolutionary France has probably never been seriously denied;

Socialists like Jean Jaurès agree with conservative historians in treating it as indisputable.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Frenchmen may be said to have accepted the system in proportion to the strength of their Republican convictions. The only organized resistance to the principle of Universal Service came from the Royalists. As Gabriel Deville puts it in the fifth volume of Jaurès's *Histoire Socialiste*, (p. 534) :

“It was the royalist party which caught at the application of the Conscription Law as a means of increasing its adherents. Many priests, who had filtered back to France, . . . preached disobedience to the laws, etc., incited conscripts to desert, remained agents of the Royalist reaction, and kept up the state of war. It was the [political] ancestors of our present militarists who worked so hard . . . to hinder the execution of the salutary Conscription Law.”<sup>2</sup>

But British writers, and especially more or less irresponsible journalists, look away from all this, and connect conscription only with the militarism of Napoleon. The Army, they say, by lending itself to the imperial tyranny, more than counter-balanced its earlier service to liberty; upon this Republican levy was based the anti-civic policy of the Empire. This objection, though it will not

<sup>1</sup> Lord Acton, *Lectures on the French Revolution*, p. 330. Cf. the testimony to the military value of these “commandeered” men in Lavissee and Rambaud’s great *Histoire Générale*, vol. viii. p. 269.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Nicolay and Hay, *Abraham Lincoln*, vol. vii. p. 24: “In no single instance was there a riot incited by drafting wherein Americans by birth bore any considerable part, nor in which the great body of the actors were not born Europeans, and generally of recent importation.”

bear serious examination, is so important that we propose to deal with it in the next chapter. Up to 1795, at least, the same law seems to hold good for Britain and France which we have already traced in earlier history. In no case have we found national or social servitude as a result or a consequence of the Universal principle in military training. On the contrary, so far as any definite connexion can be traced, it is the free country in which every man is subject to the duty—and can therefore claim the right—of bearing arms and mustering side by side with all his fellow-citizens. The unfree population is that in which the central authority undertakes the whole duty of national defence, and fulfils this duty mainly through the instrumentality of hired soldiers. In France, in which this system is most thoroughly worked, political and social conditions can be seriously compared with those of modern Turkey. But as soon as the people win their freedom, and are compelled to fight for that freedom against foreign interference, they fall back upon the principle of the Nation in Arms. In this, they see a principle of political and social liberty: how far, then, did the case of Napoleon really belie this hope?

## CHAPTER V

### CONSCRIPTION AND CAESARISM IN FRANCE

To clear the ground, it may be as well to start with three very significant facts, which are not likely to be contested by any student of French history.

(1) Napoleon's government, at its worst, gave France more freedom and tranquillity than she had enjoyed under her later kings. Both in material prosperity, and in freedom of thought or action, the vast mass of citizens were far better off in the conscripted France of Napoleon than during the last years of Louis XIV.

(2) It was not the army which conferred dictatorial power upon Napoleon. On the contrary, his most serious difficulties at first were with the army.

(3) Nor was the army responsible for that corruption and misgovernment under the Republic which made France welcome Napoleon's dictatorship with such relief. The army, on the whole, was the soundest part of the nation.

(1) The first of these propositions is too evident to need detailed proof; and this, by itself, would

suffice to show that we have here no real exception to the general law. Napoleon's armies were welcomed by large populations in Germany and Italy, who found that the conqueror gave them far more liberty than they had enjoyed under their own petty tyrants and their paid armies. The Confederation of the Rhine—a vassal state formed by Napoleon out of a multiplicity of German principalities which he had conquered—marks one of the most definite forward stages in German political liberties: yet the citizens of this state had naturally rather less freedom than their French conquerors.

(2) Secondly, all the best authorities agree in emphasizing the Republican spirit of the army with which Napoleon had to deal. His power over them—until he had become a sort of God of Victory—depended mainly on their belief in his essentially Republican convictions. His difficulties with the army are admirably told by the writer whom Lord Rosebery saluted, just before his death, as “the first of living historians” of Bonaparte.<sup>1</sup> In the army of Italy, some regiments were excused from the oath of allegiance to Napoleon and his fellow-consuls because “all the commanders felt sure they would refuse to swear.” The greatest of all the armies, that of the Rhine, was “far less devoted to Bonaparte than to Liberty,” the army in Holland “did not intend that France and the army should

<sup>1</sup> Le Comte Albert Vandal, *L'Avènement de Bonaparte* (Collection Nelson, 1s.), vol. i. pp. 467 ff.

have a single master; 'no dictatorship' was their very plain rallying-cry." Side by side with the judgment of a Conservative Republican like Vandal, we may set that of an able Socialist like Jean Jaurès, who wrote:

"The grenadiers [who helped Napoleon to overthrow the Government] in Brumaire were not working for the profit of a [military] caste. The rise of General Bonaparte had been rendered possible by the long faction-fights in which the political parties had exhausted themselves, and from which the army had stood aloof. Bonaparte himself affected to remain outside and above the army; and his success disquieted his own comrades in arms at least as much as it did the revolutionaries, who remained faithful to the Republic."<sup>1</sup>

(3) Lastly, Vandal insists repeatedly upon the healthy spirit and true Republicanism of the army in general, and warns us against the mistaken idea "that the soldiers and officers of the field-armies, to whatever category they belonged, were passive tools in the hands of their commanders" (pp. 8, 10, 19, 250). The army accepted Bonaparte's

<sup>1</sup> *L'Armée Nouvelle*, p. 345. Jaurès here devotes ten pages to proving from history that the French army has almost always been the servant of the government for the time being; and that, even at the worst, "the military organization was not able, by its own initiative or its inherent strength, to offer serious resistance to the democracy. . . . At the present moment (1910) it is not the inherent force of the military machine which clogs the democracy. It is the democracy, still more than half paralyzed by the selfish influence of a timid middle-class, which is checking or clogging the necessary evolution of military institutions" (p. 355). All this is the more striking, because Jaurès had every natural temptation to exaggerate in the other direction. He had been one of the earliest champions of Dreyfus against military persecution; and these words themselves were written in the heat of the indignation which Jaurès, as leader of the Socialist party, felt at M. Briand's mobilization of the railway-men as strike-breakers in 1910.

usurpation (though with rather more misgiving than the rest of the nation), because the fallen Government was one which had long since forfeited all title to loyalty or respect. This "government of lawyers" had shown itself not only complacently incapable, but thoroughly corrupt (36, 276-8). "Its task was heavy, but it failed deplorably in face of this task. It managed to repair nothing, to create nothing; it gave France neither order nor liberty" (6). Though the press was gagged, and unpopular opinions were bitterly persecuted, the Government showed only weakness in great things. The war was disgracefully mismanaged, yet ministers clung ferociously to their offices (11, 37, 39, 49, 69, 455-460). One of the great factors which reconciled the troops to Bonaparte's usurpation was "their growing exasperation against this Government more ready to talk than to pay, weak and corrupt, which starved its soldiers and risked the ruin of its armies" (248). Royalism was rapidly raising its head again; in default of Bonaparte or some other successful general, men seriously thought of importing a German prince as constitutional king of France (123, 189). Dr. Holland Rose sums up the whole situation in four sentences :

"The revolutionary strifes had wearied the brain of France and had predisposed it to accept accomplished facts. Distracted by the talk about Royalists' plots and Jacobin plots, cowering away from the white ogre and the red spectre, the more credulous part of the populace



was fain to take shelter under the cloak of a great soldier who at least promised order. Everything favoured the drill-sergeant theory of government. The instinct developed by a thousand years of monarchy had not been rooted out in the last decade. They now prompted France to rally round her able man and abandon political liberty as a hopeless quest; she obeyed the imperious call which promised to revivify the order and brilliance of her old existence with the throbbing blood of her new life.”<sup>1</sup>

If we compare this with a remark of Vandal’s, “this race of Gauls had 18 centuries of obedience in its blood” (p. 57), we shall see how little reason there is to look upon Napoleon’s usurpation as a crisis of militarism. Not Universal Service, but the whole past history of the nation, was responsible for the political incapacity under which it now broke down. In all countries and under all circumstances, a breakdown of this kind necessarily ends the same way. When a country’s constitution and its constitutional representatives prove hopelessly unequal to their task, then a dictatorship presents itself as the only alternative to anarchy; and all the soundest elements of the nation rally round the first man who is strong enough to restore some sort of order.<sup>2</sup>

The further story of the French army system can be told in few words. When the Monarchy was restored, the law of universal military liability was

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Napoleon I.* vol. i. p. 228.

<sup>2</sup> For a contemporary English view of French conscription, see Appendix 2.

repealed; recruiting was partly by voluntary engagement, partly by compulsory ballot, with the indefensible permission to buy a substitute (1818).<sup>1</sup> This gangrene of substitution preyed upon the French army until the present Republic came in. Soult tried vainly to abolish it. The law of 1832 kept the mixed system, only laying more emphasis on the ballot and less upon voluntary enlistment. The short-lived Republic of 1848 did try to abolish "the plague-spot of substitution," and to organize a vast militia system behind the regular army: but it lasted too short a time. The Emperor Louis Napoleon, during the latter part of his career, worked definitely backward towards the professional army system. Substitution was not only permitted, but encouraged and organized by the state. "This created a new army, and a new military spirit. Soldiers re-engaged for life, or at least to the age of 45 or 50, when they retired upon a pension. They thus separated themselves from the rest of the nation, and constituted the Emperor's army." The army which was beaten at Sedan was (as intelligent English observers noted at the time)

<sup>1</sup> Dussieux, iii. 121. For the other statements in this paragraph, see *ibid.* pp. 139, 157, 163. The German Revolutionaries of 1848 also insisted on the necessity of universal military service as one of the foundation stones of their new constitution: see *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. xi. p. 267, and W. Altmann, *Ausgewählte Urkunden u. s. w. seit 1806*, pp. 279 ff. Article 2 of the "Fundamental Rights," as drawn up by this Radical assembly, ran thus: "There is no class-distinction before the law. The nobility, as a class, are abolished. All class-privileges are done away. All Germans are equal before the law. . . . military service is the same for all: no substitution is here permitted."

a long-service professional army of a similar type to that which we then had in Britain. (*E.g.* Professor Cairnes in the *Fortnightly Review* for February, 1871.)

Yet there were plenty of warning voices. In 1850, H. Redon de Beaupréau published a pamphlet entitled *Quelques Mots sur les Institutions et l'Esprit Militaires*, in which he deplored this tendency "to hark back to the state of things under the ancient monarchy, by restoring to the soldiers that professional, mercenary, and life-long character which had been destroyed by the law of 1798"—*i.e.* by Jourdan's Conscription Act (p. 10). In 1867, E. Péclet (*l.c.* p. 18) exposed the shame of the substitution system in words which anticipated the recent indignant protest of a French Socialist in an English paper.<sup>1</sup>

But by far the most striking utterances were in the secret reports of Napoleon's own chosen agent, Colonel Stoffel—reports which the Republicans of 1870 unearthed from the Imperial archives and published as a proof of Napoleon's culpable blindness to the Writing on the Wall.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Nation*, Feb. 12, 1916, p. 700. Mr. Augustin Hamon, author of the well-known study *Bernard Shaw et Molière*, writes: "When the Frenchman hears that some Englishmen allege that the British Empire finances the Allies, then he gets angry, for he thinks that money does not pay for the dead. And he does not admit that, in this war of life and death for all the democracies of the world, some are to give their gold, whereas others are giving their blood. His sense of equality is stirred up; for he deems that gold is not so valuable as blood."

<sup>2</sup> *Military Reports*, by Colonel Baron Stoffel, translated for the War Office by Captain Home, R.E. (H.M. Stationery Office, 1872). For convenience of reference I quote from this translation; but it omits Stoffel's own most interesting Preface to the authorized French edition of 1871 (Garnier frères). For brevity's sake, I relegate the fuller quotations from Stoffel to Appendix 4.

The Prussian victories over Austria in 1866 produced a veritable consternation in France. Napoleon at once chose the man he could best trust to study this disquieting phenomenon, first on the actual battlefields and then as Military Attaché in Berlin. Stoffel joined the staff of Prince Frederick Charles only six weeks after the decisive battle of Königgrätz, and sent in his first report after a three weeks' study of the epoch-making events which were still so fresh. In this first report of September 8, 1866, he strikes the main note upon which he harps repeatedly in succeeding years, the plainest warning of all being dated February 28th, 1870. The Prussian army, he writes, outclasses the French army in virtue of the superior justice, intelligence, and efficiency of the system on which it is founded. "The Prussians" (he writes in his first report), "are proud to call their army The Nation in Arms; and this gives a very just description of it." And, in his last sad Preface, written after the collapse of France, Stoffel sums it all up again in the Crown Prince's epigram: "It was the Prussian schoolmaster who won the battle of Königgrätz." He emphasizes the blunders of the Austrian commander, and the advantage which the Prussians had in their needle-gun. But these were only details: the real cause lay deeper. The Austrians were outclassed at every point; Prussia had the better Staff, the better officers, commissioned and non-commissioned, and the better privates. And this, again, rested

on a still deeper and broader foundation ; the Prussian army represented the sum-total of all individual intelligences and characters in the whole nation. In his second report, of a month later, he insists even more emphatically, and at greater length, upon "two things [which] are very striking ; (1) the intellectual value of the army, and (2) the principle of justice and morality which is the basis of its organization " (p. 11). Over and over again, in succeeding reports, his words amounted to a plain warning that France would court defeat unless she abandoned the substitution system and trained every citizen as a soldier.

Even more significant in the light of modern events, perhaps, are his reports of August 12, 1869, and February 28, 1870.

In the former, Stoffel replies to the Emperor's confidential question : What do the Germans think of our new Territorial Organization—the Mobiles ? He points out that this organization, while professing to form a Home Defence Force of 500,000 men behind the Regulars, is for all practical purposes a sham. So far as it rests on universal compulsion, and avoids the "plague-spot of substitution," it is a real step forward. But the law provides only fifteen drill-days a year, which will teach the men nothing. Yet (its defenders argue) serious training will begin when the war breaks out. Stoffel makes the obvious reply, that a disastrous war (in which these men would most be needed) would

render all serious training impossible ; and he thus concludes his criticism : “ I do not believe that any assembly in any country ever gave such a flagrant proof of inconsistency and levity. How can we be astonished after this, if foreigners criticise us severely ? . . . and if they proclaim with ill-disguised satisfaction, in books seriously written, the downfall of the Latin races ? ” And he insists on the weakness of the lawyer-politicians whose boastful language about the strength of this new organization, combined with their refusal to take any real steps towards efficiency, is imperilling France. This law had been in force two years when the war broke out, but, as Dussieux says, “ the Mobiles were organized only on paper ; and, in 1870, nothing had been done to put them into working order beyond naming their officers ” (iii. 167). A distinguished French professor has recently recounted to me his personal experience as a Mobile. Before the war he had never fired a shot from a rifle. Then he, with some hundreds more, was bundled into one of the forts near Paris, where the real soldiers found no time or inclination to give these greenhorns either firing-exercise or drill. “ The Prussians used to creep at dusk into the vineyards round the fort, and steal the grapes. One morning, at dawn, I saw a Prussian not fifty yards off, and fired at him. A whole squad turned out and fired as he ran ; not one of us hit him.”

In the latter report (February 28, 1870), Stoffel discusses the Emperor's vague scheme of proposing to Prussia, through the mediation of England, a plan for reciprocal "disarmament"—or rather, considerable reduction in armaments. Stoffel points out that Prussia can do no such thing without altering her political constitution, which is based upon Universal Service. He continues (p. 173):

"Would it not be madness to think that any nation would consent, of its own accord, to abandon so fruitful a principle, which, taken as the basis of one of its fundamental institutions, has contributed more than any other to the development of its greatness? Now it cannot too often be repeated that it is compulsory service, joined to compulsory education, which, for sixty years perseveringly adhered to, have led Prussia, by slow and imperceptible degrees, to that moral and intellectual development which made her the most enlightened and disciplined nation in Europe, and placed her all at once in the first rank among Powers. And let it be said, as a digression, that Prussia having just adopted universal suffrage, no one can foretell where the destinies of this educated, energetic and ambitious people will stop—a nation having Universal Compulsory Military Service, Universal Compulsory Education, Universal Suffrage—three immovable columns on which to support the whole edifice of its institutions." He concludes: "it will be seen in what a false position a government will place itself which is sufficiently ill-advised to send to Berlin a proposal for disarmament. By such a step it would voluntarily place itself on the horns of a dilemma; it would meet with a refusal, or be cheated."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> P. 180, Stoffel's explanation of these last words will be found in Appendix 4.

These plain warnings had very little effect : smaller reforms were carried out, but none of the radical reforms by which Stoffel had hoped to oppose an Armed Nation in France to the Armed Nation of Germany. If any proof were needed of the incapacity of French statesmen to grapple with the real problem of those years 1866-1870, it may be found in the elaborate apologetic writings of the man who was most responsible—Emile Ollivier. The legal subtleties by which Ollivier attempts to prove that the France of 1870 was “ready,” while in the same breath he admits essential and notorious defects with which no party politician dared seriously to grapple, do but clinch the real responsibilities of these statesmen who, with their eyes half open, drifted towards Sedan. Ollivier’s own defence corroborates the most serious accusation of his enemies ; that he was quite incapable of distinguishing between facts and words—between things as they really are, and things as they can be described by a clever advocate to an audience which has but imperfect means of testing his assertions. From him we can learn, as plainly as from Stoffel, that the army of Napoleon III. was out of touch with the national life ; and that, while the expert knew the hidden gangrene, the politician might successfully hoodwink successive parliaments. “The nation felt proud to live under the protection of an invincible army ; and our only fear was lest the Emperor, intoxicated by his own



power, should allow himself to be enticed into fresh warlike enterprises.”<sup>1</sup> Parliamentary orators were sure of applause, so long as they publicly extolled this new Territorial Army about which Stoffel had written so plainly in private.

Sedan came in due course, and the Empire fell ; and the new Republic, among its earliest tasks, had to raise vast new armies by compulsory enlistment. The soul of these new armies was Gambetta, who, eighteen months before this, had been elected to the Chamber as an antimilitarist, pledging himself to “ the suppression of standing armies, which ruin national finance and business, create hatred between nations, and arouse distrust at home.”<sup>2</sup> To those who have called Gambetta ‘ the Carnot of Defeat,’ Captain v. d. Goltz answers with much justice : “ His armies would certainly have been victorious, if they had found their Bonaparte, and if they had been pitted against Generals like those of the Coalition.”<sup>3</sup>

When the war was over, and the Republic began to set her house in order, there was no serious difference of opinion about military organization.

“ After the collapse of 1870, when France reconstituted her fallen military power, necessity compelled her to abandon the whole organization of the past and to fall

<sup>1</sup> E. Ollivier, *L'Empire Libéral*, vol. xi. p. 353. Cf. 345-351. See further on this subject in chap. viii. of this book.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 498.

<sup>3</sup> Dussieux, iii. 248.

back upon the Revolutionary principle : ‘ every Frenchman owes personal military service.’ The National Assembly of 1871 deserves our emphatic congratulations, for it did not hesitate to vote the necessary laws and the necessary money.”<sup>1</sup>

As in the France of 1793, and the Germany of 1807, this policy went hand in hand with a determined effort to raise the standard of national education also. “ Our citizens,” said Gambetta, “ must think, and read, and reason ; they must also act and fight. . . . Military education is the very base of civic education.”<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the ripe experience of the forty years which followed this speech led the greatest of French democrats to the same conclusion. Jean Jaurès wrote deliberately in 1910 : “ Military science is an essential part of the system of human knowledge ” ; and he proposed that no diploma should be granted to any candidate for the learned professions who had not qualified as officer in the Citizen Army.<sup>3</sup> It will be seen, therefore, that the later history of France fully justifies the deductions which we have drawn from her revolutionary history. The tyrant’s use of the Nation in Arms was exceptional and shortlived. Normally, it is the free governments which have maintained and carried out the principle of universal liability ; and, even before this war, voluntary military service was almost as little within practical

<sup>1</sup> Dussieux, iii. 271.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 273-4.

<sup>3</sup> *L’Armée Nouvelle*, second edition, pp. 218, 308, 467, 471.

politics in France as voluntary taxation in England. The extreme antimilitarism of Gustave Hervé appealed only to a minority even among the Socialists ; and this War has converted Hervé into one of the most uncompromising champions of national defence.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONSCRIPTION AND CAESARISM IN GERMANY (I.)

THE typical British view of German manners and institutions, a couple of generations ago, may be found in Samuel Laing's *Notes of a Traveller*. The first series of these notes was published in 1842; a second series, under the title of *Observations, etc.*, was written in 1848-9 and published next year. Laing was a Radical in politics; he possessed a natural gift of observation and had read widely. For actual observed facts he is nearly always trustworthy; his analyses of contemporary movements are often just and penetrating; but his prophecies, like those of even wiser men, are often absurd.<sup>1</sup> Apart from the direct interest of his books, they throw incidentally a flood of light upon the mentality of our early Victorian ancestors. With all his ability and general desire to get at the facts, he reminds us sometimes of the travelling

<sup>1</sup> *E.g.* he foretells that the Prussian military system will be found incompatible with industrial expansion; that France will beat Prussia in the next war; that, in fact, the Prussian military system must lead to national bankruptcy under any real stress of war, etc., etc.

M.P. as handed down to us by Thackeray and Dicky Doyle. Compulsory Education was one of his bugbears ; and he supplied the keenest weapons to those well-meaning politicians who, as official exponents of "what England would think tomorrow," maintained that any system of universal state education would "Prussianize" and enslave us. We know now by actual experience that a nation may be educated, yet even grow in freedom. We know that, although professors and schoolmasters have contributed enormously to the militarization of the present generation in Germany, this of itself does not prove the inherently anti-democratic nature of schools and universities ; on the contrary, outside Germany, the net result of education is on the other side. Again, because the German book has done much to encourage pan-Germanism, and because these mischievous professors could have done little without books, we do not therefore rush to the conclusion that printing is an undemocratic invention, and that democracy would have flourished better under a manuscript régime. In education, in printing, we distinguish clearly between the good instrument and the evil use to which it may be temporarily put. Let us try, therefore, to look upon the military question with equal freedom from prejudice. With strange inconsistency, the very writers who were least willing in the past to recognize the international significance of German militarism,

are sometimes most intemperate now in their one-sided emphasis on Teuton iniquities. They point to "the evil Germany that we now know"—to these "unspeakable savages and barbarians, quite unworthy to be regarded as belonging to the family of civilization, surpassing Huns in barbarity, Turks in wickedness"—and ask us how we can possibly accept a system which has converted a nation of reasonable beings into such a herd of brutes.<sup>1</sup>

But there is here a gross and obvious fallacy. Germany is the classic land not only of universal service, but also of compulsory education and of printing; therefore Samuel Laing and Sir Edward Baines were quite sure that the "evil" in Germany had its root in Compulsory Education. Yet, among all modern politicians, it is precisely the intellectual descendants of Laing and Baines who would now most indignantly repudiate this false reasoning. May we not therefore truly say that, of all modern politicians, the most inexcusable are those who try to maintain their position on the question of Compulsory Service by an exactly similar fallacy? If any real moral, political, or social weakness in Germany can clearly be traced to the principle of Universal Military Service in itself, let us by all means note it, and be warned in time. But to argue "The Germans are hateful; and the evident cause of their wickedness is their

<sup>1</sup> Normal Angell, *Prussianism and its Destruction*, pp. 5 and 49.

possession of an institution which we have always hated, and have therefore always abstained from studying closely in detail"—to jump thus from a thing we dislike, and a thing which we confessedly do not know intimately, to a conclusion which flatters our preconceived opinions—is clearly unjustifiable.

Already before this War there was a strong tendency to exaggerate the contrast between German Imperialism of to-day and "the Germany of Goethe, of Schiller, and of Kant." Since the War this theme has been worn threadbare by journalists, many of whom seem to know as little about Goethe as about Goethe's Germany. Under favour of the utter ignorance of continental history which reigns in nearly all our schools, and the extreme insularity which the majority of our publicists seem even to cherish, there reigns a general impression that Germany had more freedom 150 years ago, and more culture in the truest sense, than now. Not one educated Briton in a hundred has read Voltaire's *Mon Séjour à Berlin*, though it is one of the wittiest pamphlets ever written, and may be bought for a few pence.<sup>1</sup> Voltaire left the Prussian court in 1753, when Kant was twenty-nine years old. Voltaire's own France was not exactly the land of freedom in those days, except in comparison with Prussia under

<sup>1</sup> It forms the last 75 pages of the 5th volume of *Romans de Voltaire*, separately procurable (Bibliothèque Nationale à 25 centimes. 2 Rue de Valois, Paris). My quotations are from this edition, pp. 116, 118-120.

Frederick the Great's father. Of that Prussia Voltaire writes :

“It must be confessed that Turkey is a Republic when we compare it with the despotic sway of Frederick-William.<sup>1</sup> . . . When the king had reviewed his troops for the day, he would take a walk through the streets of Berlin. Everybody fled at his approach. If he met a woman, he asked her why she was idling here in the street? *Be gone to your house, you slut! an honest woman ought to be at her own house-work!* And he accompanied this remonstrance with a sound box on the ear, or a kick in the belly, or a few strokes with his walking stick. He had a like treatment for the Ministers of the Gospel, if they ever had the curiosity to come and see his troops parade.”

The future Frederick II. “had a sort of mistress. . . . His father caused this girl to be marched round the great square of Potsdam by the public executioner, who flogged her under the Prince's eyes.” When the Prince tried to run away, and his bosom friend was executed for complicity in the attempt, “four grenadiers held the Prince's head by force at the casement, while his friend

<sup>1</sup> In 1784, the celebrated Bernardin de St-Pierre made the same comparison (*Études de la Nature*, vii.). After speaking of Turkish society, he adds that similar phenomena may be noted in “Prussia, whose internal police and victories abroad have been so highly celebrated by French writers; though its Government is still more despotic than that of Turkey, for the Prince [in Prussia] is absolute master at once in temporals and in spirituals.” Edmund Burke, again, wishing to give examples of tyranny, thought instinctively of Prussia: “Slavery they can have anywhere. It is a weed that grows in every soil. They can have it from Spain, they can have it from Prussia” (Speech of March 22, 1775, on “Reconciliation with America”). Even from Carlyle's apologia, at the beginning of his *Frederick the Great*, we may gather how Prussian civilization must have appeared to cultivated French and British contemporaries.



was being beheaded on a scaffold erected just under his window.”<sup>1</sup>

But Voltaire (it may be said) had quarrelled with Frederick the Great, and wrote frankly as a satirist. Let us compare him, then, with an entirely unexceptionable witness—a shrewd and plain-spoken Scottish doctor who described German society in 1779, at a time when Kant and Goethe had already developed their powers, while Schiller was destined to burst into fame two years later. Dr. John Moore was father to the hero of Corunna. He wrote in 1779, after witnessing a review in Berlin :

“ A review, such as that which I endeavoured to describe, is undoubtedly one of the finest shows that can be exhibited : but when a spectator of sensibility reflects on the means by which these poor fellows are brought to this wonderful degree of accuracy, he will pay a severe tax for this splendid exhibition.—The Prussian discipline on a general view is beautiful ; in detail it is shocking.

When the young rustic is brought to the regiment, he is at first treated with a degree of gentleness ; he is instructed by words only how to walk, and to hold up his head, and to carry his firelock, and he is not punished, though he

<sup>1</sup> Compare the stories told by the famous Dr. Zimmermann, who attended Frederick the Great in his last illness, and was one of his greatest admirers. He writes of Frederick's royal father : “ I do not know whether his illness had begun when he drove the citizens of Berlin from the public walk, and sent them to Spandau, merely because they were fond of walking ; when he reduced the pension of a privy counsellor from 1,000 to 400 crowns because, passing one evening before his house, he had seen several lights in it, and because he learned that this counsellor had company to sup with him ; and, lastly, when he spat one day in a lady's bosom because he found it too openly displayed ” (*Dr. Zimmermann's Conversations with the Late King of Prussia, translated from the Last Edition, London, 1791, p. 95*).

should not succeed in his earliest attempts :—they allow his natural awkwardness and timidity to wear off by degrees :—they seem cautious of confounding him at the beginning, or driving him to despair, and take care not to pour all the terrors of their discipline upon his astonished senses at once. When he has been a little familiarised to his new state, he is taught the exercise of the fire-lock, first alone, and afterwards with two or three of his companions. This is not entrusted to a corporal or serjeant ; it is the duty of a subaltern officer. In the park at Berlin, every morning may be seen the Lieutenants of the different regiments exercising with the greatest assiduity, sometimes a single man, at other times three or four together ; and now, if the young recruit shows neglect or remissness, his attention is roused by the officer's cane, which is applied with augmenting energy, till he has acquired the full command of his fire-lock.—He is taught steadiness under arms, and the immobility of a statue ;—he is informed, that all his members are to move only at the word of command, and not at his own pleasure ; that speaking, coughing, sneezing, are all unpardonable crimes ; and when the poor lad is accomplished to their mind, they give him to understand, that now it is perfectly known what he can do, and therefore the smallest deficiency will be punished with rigour. And although he should destine every moment of his time, and all his attention, to cleaning his arms, taking care of his clothes, and practising the manual exercise, it is but barely possible for him to escape punishment ; and if his captain happens to be of a capricious or cruel disposition, the ill-fated soldier loses the poor chance of that possibility.

As for the officers, they are not indeed subjected to corporal punishment, but they are obliged to bestow as unremitting attention on duty as the men. The subalterns are almost constantly on guard, or exercising the recruits : the Captain knows that he will be blamed by his Colonel,

and can expect no promotion, if his company be not as perfect as the others : the Colonel entirely loses the King's favour if his regiment should fail in any particular : the General is answerable for the discipline of the brigade, or garrison, under his immediate command. The King will not be satisfied with the General's report on that subject, but must examine everything himself : so that from his Majesty, down to the common sentinel, every individual is alert. And as the King, who is the chief spring, and primum mobile of the whole, never relaxes, the faculties of every subordinate person are kept in constant exertion : the consequence of which is, that the Prussian army is the best disciplined, and the readiest for service at a minute's warning, of any now in the world, or perhaps that ever was in it. Other monarchs have attempted to carry discipline to the same degree of perfection, and have begun this plan with astonishing eagerness. But a little time, and new objects, have blunted their keenness, and divided their attention. They have then delegated the execution to a commander in chief, he to another of inferior rank, and thus a certain degree of relaxation having once taken place, soon pervades the whole system ; but the perseverance of the King of Prussia is without example, and is perhaps the most remarkable part of his extraordinary character.”<sup>1</sup>

He recurs to the subject in his next letter (p. 155) :

“ As to the common men, the leading idea of the Prussian discipline is to reduce them, in many respects, to the nature of machines ; that they may have no volition of their own, but be actuated solely by that of their officers ; that they may have such a superlative dread of those officers as annihilates all fear of the enemy, and that they may move

<sup>1</sup> *View of Society and Manners in France, Switzerland and Germany*, London, 1779, vol. ii p. 144 (Letter 65).

forwards when ordered, without deeper reasoning or more concern than the fire-locks they carry along with them.

Considering the length to which this system is carried, it were to be wished that it could be carried still further, and that those unhappy men, while they retained the faculties of hearing and obeying orders, could be deprived of every other kind of feeling.

The common state of slavery in Asia, or that to which people of civil professions in the most despotic countries are subject, is freedom in comparison of this kind of military slavery. The former are not continually under the eyes of their tyrants, but for long intervals of time may enjoy life without restraint, and as their taste dictates ; but all the foreign soldiers in this service, and those of the natives, who are suspected of any intention to desert, and consequently never allowed furloughs, are always under the eye of somebody, who has the power, and too often the inclination, to controul every action of their bodies, and every desire of their hearts."

Again, in letter 67 (p. 161) he reports a long conversation with " a Prussian officer of character " :

" I then mentioned a fact which appeared to me still more extraordinary. A hussar, at the last review, had fallen from his horse at full gallop, and was so much bruised, that it was found necessary to carry him to the hospital ; and I had been assured, that as soon as the man should be perfectly recovered, he would certainly be punished for having fallen. Now, continued I, though a man may be a little careless about his hat, it cannot be imagined that this hussar was not seriously inclined to keep his seat ; for by falling, he might have broke his neck, or have been trod to death : Or, even if you choose to suppose that he did not ride with all the attention he ought, yet, as he received one severe punishment by the fall, it would be cruel to

inflict another. I have nothing to oppose to the solidity of your argument, replied the Prussian, but that General Seidlitz, who was the best officer of cavalry in the world, first introduced this piece of cruelty, since which it is certain that the men have not fallen so often. The King imagines, continued the Prussian, that discipline is the soul of an army; that men in the different nations of Europe are, in those qualities which are thought necessary for a soldier, nearly on a par; that in two armies of equal numbers, the degrees of discipline will determine how far one is superior to the other. His great object, therefore, is to keep his own army at the highest possible degree of perfection in this essential point. If that could be done by gentle means, undoubtedly he would prefer them.—He is not naturally of a cruel disposition.—His general conduct to officers of rank proves this.—Finding that the hopes of promotion, and a sense of honour, are sufficient motives to prompt them to their duty, he never has had recourse, except in cases of treachery, to any higher punishment than dismissing them. In some remarkable instances, he has displayed more mildness than is usual in any other service. Some of his Generals have allowed towns of the greatest importance to be taken by surprise; others have lost entire armies, yet he never was influenced by popular clamour, or by the ruinous condition of his own affairs in consequence of those losses, to put any of the unfortunate generals to death. And when any of them have been suspended for a certain time, or declared, by the decree of a court-martial, incapable of a military command under him, he has never aggravated the sentence by any opprobrious commentary, but rather alleviated it by some clause or message, which spared the honour of the condemned general.

The common soldiers cannot be kept to their duty by mild treatment. Severe and immediate corporal punishment is found absolutely necessary.—Not to use it at all, or

to use it in a degree incapable of producing the full effect, would be weakness. Soldiers are sometimes punished for slips, which perhaps all their attention cannot prevent ; because, though it is impossible to ascertain that any particular man could have avoided them, yet experience has taught that, by punishing every blunder, fewer are committed on the whole. This sufficiently justifies the practice of what you call cruelty, but which is in reality salutary discipline ; for an individual suffering unjustly is not so great an evil in an army, as the permitting negligence to pass unpunished. To allow ten guilty men to escape, rather than risk the punishing of one innocent person, may be a good maxim in morality, or in civil government, but the reverse will be found preferable in military discipline.

When the Prussian had finished his discourse, I said, You seem to neglect all those incitements which are supposed to influence the minds of soldiers ; the love of glory, the love of country, you count as nothing. You address yourself to no passion but one. Fear is the only instrument by which you compel your common men to deeds of intrepidity. —Never mind the instrument, replied the Prussian, but look to the effect.”

Finally (letter 68, p. 172) :

“ Instead of saints or crucifixes, the King intends that the churches of Berlin shall be ornamented with the portraits of men who have been useful to the State. Those of the Marshals Schwerin, Keith, Winterfeld, and some others, are already placed in the great Lutheran Church.”<sup>1</sup>

The men thus treated were either Prussian peasants or foreigners. For the Prussian army

<sup>1</sup> This is noted also by Bernardin de St-Pierre (*Études de la Nature*, xii.) who adds, “ The military enthusiasm kindled by this sight is inconceivable.”

system of this date corresponded very closely to that of France before the Revolution. Men were enlisted partly by voluntary recruiting, partly by an iniquitous law which fell upon the poor alone. The Prussian peasant was still a serf: and in that capacity he owed service to the lord of the manor—the Junker.<sup>1</sup> The commissions, therefore, were reserved for the Junker and his family, while the ranks were filled partly by peasants taken from the land, partly by hired outsiders. Out of the 160,000 soldiers in Frederick the Great's armies, 90,000 were non-Prussians.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For justification of this and similar comparisons or contrasts in this chapter, see Sir John Seeley's testimony in Appendix V. of this book.

<sup>2</sup> Colonel A. Keene in *Nineteenth Century and After*, for Feb. 1915, p. 271. Bernardin de St-Pierre asserts that a large number of these foreigners were French deserters (*Études de la Nature*, No. xiii.). Moore describes the extraordinarily stringent precautions which were taken with all Frederick's foreign soldiers, to prevent desertions. Compare *Camb. Mod. Hist.* vol. vi. p. 215. "At the end of Frederick William I.'s reign half the army, 40,000 men, consisted of foreigners, while the other 40,000 were drawn from home."

## CHAPTER VII

### CONSCRIPTION AND CAESARISM IN GERMANY (II.)

NOR did Prussia stand alone in her militarism ; some other German states followed much the same system. The Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, writes Moore, "keeps on foot 16,000 men in time of peace, disciplined according to the Prussian plan " ; and it is one of his great amusements to drill some of them "when the weather is very bad, in the dining-room of his palace." This Hessian army was at least five times more numerous, in proportion to population, than the British army before the Seven Years' War. Moreover, the Landgrave owed a large portion of his income to the hire of these soldiers to England, and to the retaining-fee which England gave him even in time of peace. For this prince was, of course, the most unabashed seller of human flesh in the civilized world. His press-gang worked regularly to pick up recruits, who were drilled after the Prussian system, formed into regiments, and sold abroad. No words could put this more eloquently than the following bald



paragraph from the *Annual Register* for the year 1786 (pt. ii. p. 48) :

“Nov. 21. At the bank [of England] £471,000 3 per cent. stock was transferred to Mr Van Otten on account of the Landgrave of Hesse, so much being due on Hessian soldiers lost in the American war, at £30 a man.”

During the American war, he had supplied us with 23,000 soldiers from a territory not larger than the Principality of Wales ; and he received, in all, nearly 23 million dollars as the price of their blood.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, Moore counts it for righteousness when he finds a prince who does not sell his men. Of the Margrave of Baden-Durlach he writes :

“Probably his principles and dispositions prevent him from thinking of filling his coffers by hiring his subjects to foreign powers. If he were so inclined there is no manner of doubt that he might sell the persons of his subjects as soldiers or employ them in any other way he should think proper ; for he, as well as the other sovereign Princes in Germany, has an unlimited power over his people. If you ask the question in direct terms of a German, he will answer in the negative ; and will talk of certain rights which the subjects enjoy, and that they can appeal to the Great Council or General Diet of the Empire for relief. But, after all his ingenuity and distinctions, you find that the barriers which protect the peasant from the power of the prince are so very weak that they are hardly worth keeping up ; and that the only security that the peasant has for his person or property must proceed from the moderation, good sense, and justice, of his sovereign ” (vol. i. p. 384).

<sup>1</sup> Moore, *l.c.* pp. 43 ff. ; Meyer's *Hand-Lexicon s.v. Hessen-Kassel.*

An extremely interesting account of this "soul-selling" system may be found in the autobiography of a fairly well-known man of letters—J. G. Seume. The book, in spite of its brevity and its extreme human interest, is so little known in England that some readers will probably welcome a considerable extract from it (Appendix VI.). Readers of Thackeray will hardly need to be reminded of *Barry Lyndon*, chapters v. to vii.

With a military system of this kind, Prussia and Austria entered upon the wars of the French Revolution. In both countries (and, in fact, almost everywhere), the State had the theoretical right of calling every man out for war; but, in fact, custom had long limited this liability to the poorest and most helpless classes.<sup>1</sup> Things went well enough with these armies until the French *levée en masse*. Then the tide began to turn; the Allies were confronted not only with overwhelming numbers, but with a new spirit in the French soldier. Early in 1794, the Archduke of Austria, as Emperor of Germany, proposed to meet this general levy of French by a general levy of Germans. To this, the King of Prussia opposed an uncompromising refusal. The reasons he gave were extraordinarily similar to those which have been more or less officially urged in Britain during this present war. The King of Prussia pleaded

<sup>1</sup> Except in Prussia, where the aristocracy were compelled to send their sons to serve as officers, *Camb. Mod. Hist.* vol. vi. p. 217.

that the present system was working well; that the removal of so many hands would ruin agriculture; last, but not least, that to arm all his subjects would be "infinitely dangerous" in a political sense.<sup>1</sup> What the King feared as a result of Universal Service was not despotism, but democracy—the contagion of the French Revolutionary spirit. This flat refusal of Prussia made it hopeless to attempt any general call to arms through the rest of Germany; and the country drifted steadily on towards military disaster. After Jena, Prussia was subjected to the most intolerable humiliations that any great state has suffered in modern times. The smaller states accepted the Napoleonic conquest fairly easily; they had never enjoyed real national life, and the conqueror now brought them an actual accession of social and political liberty. We all know how urbanely the great Goethe received the conquering Napoleon, though few people seem to realize that he afterwards publicly apologized for this lack of patriotism.<sup>2</sup> But with Prussia it was different. Napoleon knew that Prussia would not thus be reconciled to him; so he set himself to annihilate her. The result, of course, was a real national uprising; a people's war such as Prussia had never fought until now. After Jena it was all the healthier elements of the nation which not only accepted, but demanded, Com-

<sup>1</sup> For this and the preceding assertions, see documents in Appendix VII.

<sup>2</sup> *Des Epimenides Erwachen*, lines 793, 859.

pulsory Service for all. The creation of the modern Prussian and German armies came from a national impulse, to which the King lent himself as figure-head. It was associated (as it had been in the France of 1793) with an enormous step forward in the organization of general education. As in France, it enabled the people finally to drive out the foreign oppressor. As in France, it abolished at once nine-tenths of the degrading punishments which had seemed necessary to discipline under the old unjust system.<sup>1</sup> It was intimately associated, again, with the abolition of serfdom. Even in the strictest military sense, it worked enormously for the education of the officers, as it has done in all other countries where so many of the rank and file are men of education. "After all that has been said about the intelligence of the modern Prussian officer and of Frederick the Great as a friend of enlightenment, it may particularly surprise the English reader to learn that of all the abuses of Frederick's army, the worst was the extreme ignorance of the officers. Yet there is no controversy about the fact."<sup>2</sup> The most prejudiced antimilitarist cannot read the second volume of Seeley's *Stein* without realizing that all this was, on the whole, a real national regeneration. Nor

<sup>1</sup> "During the reign of Frederick William I. there were no fewer than 30,000 desertions, and this in spite of the brutal penalty of flogging through the line" (*Camb. Mod. Hist.* vol. vi. p. 214; cf. p. 215).

<sup>2</sup> Seeley's *Stein*, ii. 122. Colonel F. N. Maude, again, lays special stress on this education of the Prussian officer by the privates (*War and the World's Life*, 1907, p. 10). So does Stoffel in his Reports.

can he, in face of the actual facts, contend that the Prussia of to-day is less civilized than that Prussia of a century ago, in which the King was unembarrassed by anything resembling a Parliament or a Constitution, and could therefore shrink from the idea of arming all his subjects as an "infinitely dangerous" project, fit only for French Revolutionaries.

But the story must be brought briefly down to the present day.

Laing, in 1840-50, scents far less political danger from the Compulsory Service of Prussia than from her Compulsory Education and her Bureaucracy.<sup>1</sup> He thinks the Prussian system of Universal Service will break down under stress of war; but he admits that, politically, it works in some important directions for democracy. He sees clearly that, on the whole, the Nation in Arms is not a convenient instrument for a war which cannot be represented as defensive. He notes, it is true, that Germany in general has now less political freedom than all the minor German states had enjoyed under Napoleon's domination; but he makes no attempt to trace the influence of conscription here; for of course everyone knew that they had been far more strictly conscripted under Napoleon. He sees clearly that the main difference between the English and Prussian character depends upon the slow

<sup>1</sup> *Notes*, ed. 1854, pp. 78-9; *Observations*, ed. 1850, pp. 193, 217, 220, 243, 268-272.

development of many generations. With all his dislike of the German professoriate and their influence ("as great as that of the medieval clergy"), he sees that the dynasties would have had much more power but for these teachers. "The German thrones have been undermined by the German Universities"; and it was the professors who made the Revolution of 1848.<sup>1</sup> Laing was a strong Radical; but to him, as to most British Radicals of that day, the German professorial Radicalism of 1848 seemed excessive and Utopian—as of course it was.

The Professors, then, discovered in 1848 that class-room education is not everything. The school and the university can do much; but they cannot, in forty years, obliterate centuries of political subjection. The Professor-made Parliament of Frankfort had undertaken to create a United Germany; but its quarrels and its practical impotence rendered it the laughing-stock of Europe. German culture, in the most real sense, in the sense of man's mastery of his environment, was as yet only skin-deep.<sup>2</sup> Of the Germans even to-day it may be said as Vandal says of the French

<sup>1</sup> Practising lawyers were even more numerous in the Frankfort Parliament than professors, and more numerous still were the men who, having taken law-degrees at the Universities, were now stipendiary magistrates or civil servants. But all these men were the product of the professor-system, and shared its doctrinaire narrowness.

<sup>2</sup> Interesting quotations, showing how the main actors in the 1848 revolution awoke themselves to this national defect, may be found in K. Jürgens, *Zur Gesch. d. deutschen Verfassungswerkes* (Brunswick, 1850), vol. i. pp. 216-9.

in 1799, that they have centuries of obedience in their blood. Laing saw clearly that the really great German literature existed only for the few; that even the newspapers were printed for a comparatively small public, and that the multitude had far less breadth of outlook than in Britain. Fichte, one of the greatest German philosophers and patriots, had already noted this a generation earlier.<sup>1</sup> Germany was politically unripe, not because of the Professors or because of the Prussian army, but in spite of her Professors, and in spite of the just and democratic insistence upon equality of military obligation in Prussia.

To Laing, in 1849, German Unity seemed a dream, and not even a noble dream; just as the Prussian army seemed to him a citizen-rabble which the French Regulars would easily put to rout. Thirteen years later Bismarck came into office, strengthened the army in the teeth of Liberal and Professorial opposition, and with the help of that army won the three wars which created the German Empire. In 1862, scarcely anybody had taken him seriously, or imagined that he would hold office for more than a few weeks. In 1871, the mass of the Professors had already gone over to his side.<sup>2</sup> They form even now the backbone of that National Liberal party which was formed in 1867 out of the best and

<sup>1</sup> *Notes*, pp. 130, 137; *Observations*, p. 275; Seeley's *Stein*, ii. 38.

<sup>2</sup> For an interesting British view of this conversion of German Liberalism by what seemed the irresistible logic of continuous victory in war, see the *Edinburgh Review* for October, 1870, pp. 480, 490.

strongest elements of the old Liberal opposition ; a party which puts Imperialism in the first place and Liberalism in the second. But Bismarck himself had to make great concessions. In 1867, he had to base the Confederation, and in 1871, the Empire, upon Universal Suffrage ; because no colourable excuse could be found for limiting the vote in a country where all men were educated, and all men were liable to the heaviest responsibilities of national service. His old Conservative allies cooled towards him after this, and broke with him when he introduced Local Government, civil marriage, and the lay control of schools. To keep his hold on the people, he introduced State Insurance for the workers a whole generation before our British statesmen ventured upon so revolutionary a step. If the German people has hitherto made so little use of its opportunities, it is not because conscription has benumbed democracy. It is because democracy is, in its nature, a plant of slow growth ; because, even when outward opportunities of freedom are offered, it still needs inner experience to make a man really free. On the whole, the wars which created modern Germany under Prussian leadership were just and essentially defensive. These wars have been followed by a period of almost unexampled expansion, prosperity, and international prestige. If, therefore, even the German democracy allowed itself to be persuaded into war in 1914, this is not because the Nation in Arms is a



*normally* aggressive institution, but because it may become exceptionally aggressive, as the French did after the success of their Revolutionary war.<sup>1</sup> The French have gradually learned their lesson ; nobody who knows that country can question its essential pacificism in 1914, or the patience, dignity and freedom from chauvinism with which France has faced her terrible trials since then. When the history of this war is written, and People is compared with People by impartial historians, the palm will probably be given by universal consent to the great nation which invented the modern Armed Nation in 1793, and regenerated herself by re-asserting the universal principle in 1871.<sup>2</sup> And it was a great Frenchman, a great Internationalist and Pacifist, who protested before this war against the superficial theory that Universal Service works, in the long run, against Democracy. Jaurès, who knew the history of modern War and Peace movements better, perhaps, than any statesman then living, wrote in 1910 :

“There has never existed any democracy, however pacific it might be, which could take root and endure without guaranteeing its national independence. On the other hand, no nation, however militarist it might be, has ever been able to organize or save itself but by appealing

<sup>1</sup> We must remember that the Frankfort democrats of 1848, in drawing up their statement of the “Fundamental Rights” of all citizens, and claiming equality for all before the law, added also that all must be liable to military service.

<sup>2</sup> See Seeley’s remarks on a similar subject in Appendix VIII.

in some degree to the revolutionary forces of liberty. True, the peoples have sometimes been duped, and have been baulked of the democratic reward which by their national effort they had earned. This was the case in Germany after 1815, and even after 1866 and 1870. But here, even they have not been altogether baulked. The national victory has always brought with it some share of democratic victory. There is a great gulf between what Bismarck proposed at the beginning of his career in the Prussian Landtag, and the system of universal suffrage which he had to grant to Germany in order to concentrate all its forces. That universal suffrage, it is true, was neither so dominant nor so free as it should have been; yet, even thus, it is essentially a democratic and revolutionary force whose effects are slowly but invincibly developing.”<sup>1</sup>

Here, then, is the deliberate verdict of a man whose temptations were all on the side of our British pacifists. But, in the clear light of history, he does not hesitate to admit that both the Napoleonic episode, and the case of modern Germany, are merely partial exceptions to the general rule; and that equality of military obligation spells, on the whole, not tyranny, but further freedom.

<sup>1</sup> *L'Armée Nouvelle*, 2nd ed. (1915), p. 439, translated in *Democracy and Military Service* (Simpkin, Marshall and Co.), 1916, chap. xii.

## CHAPTER VIII

### BRITISH DEMOCRACY AND VOLUNTARISM IN THE GREAT FRENCH WAR

#### I. THE INITIAL BLUNDER

WE must now deal with a second class of apparent exceptions to the rule that Universal Service is a Democratic principle.

We have seen that, in the cases of Napoleon and of Imperial Germany, the connexion between Conscription and Despotism proves, under analysis, to be temporary and accidental and incomplete. It depends more on the defective political development of the people, than on their over-development in the direction of military organization. In many ways, Napoleon would have found the British system far better for his purposes—a professional army, an officer-caste, and recruits to be had in proportion as the general could offer them greater glory or increased pay. Even so advanced an antimilitarist and socialist as Jaurès, therefore, agrees with other historians in treating the cases as exceptions to the general rule.

But it is often urged that we have more serious

exceptions in the other direction ; that the great Anglo-Saxon democracies are the most advanced communities in the world ; and that in Anglo-Saxondom the people not only dislike Universal Service but—what is more to the point—have succeeded precisely in virtue of their Voluntarism. This argument, on the face of it, begs one very important question and blinks one very striking fact.

It begs the question of progress in civilization. Outside our own borders, it is extremely probable that the majority of voices will proclaim France to be the most civilized power in the world. In any case (to put the objection in its mildest form), it is dangerous to base an important argument upon a postulate which is so obviously liable to falsification by national vanity.<sup>1</sup>

Again, the argument entirely blinks the very obvious and very inconvenient fact that Anglo-Saxondom is *not* solid for Voluntarism. Our two

<sup>1</sup> Compare Mr. Edison's words, printed in the *Observer* for Dec. 10, 1916. Mr. Edison does justice to Britain's share in this war, while speaking very frankly of the conservative outlook which has so often trammelled us. He adds, "But it is in France that we find the finest phase of the tragic spectacle of the war. To me this war has proved that France is the banner-nation of the world. In her we see a nation really governed by the people, who really love it and will fight and sacrifice themselves for it with an unselfish enthusiasm not seen elsewhere. It may have been paralleled by the deeds of our Americans in the days of our Revolutionary war ; but I doubt even that. . . . In France I see a nation which has sought and found more of the real than any other nation in the world." A few months earlier, so sincere a voluntarist as Mr. H. W. Massingham expressed almost equal admiration for the French spirit as he had just seen it in Paris. He added : "Democratic France, bravest of the brave, fights on" (*The Nation*, March 25, 1916, p. 897).

most democratic colonies, on the contrary, have for some years past been frankly Compulsorist ; and in South Africa, again, Mr. Botha raised a forced levy very early in this war, not only on grounds of convenience, but also on principle. There were, he explained, many burghers, the pick of the fighting population, who would very naturally reason, " If the national need is really so great as to justify our leaving our farms, then it is for Government to say so, and to call us out. Until then, we shall go on minding our own business."

But, for the sake of argument, let us meet the objector on his own ground. Let us stand, with him, upon that assumption of Anglo-Saxon superiority which is so flattering to our vanity. Let us, again, with him, blink the fact that the most democratic States of the British Empire are also the most definitely Compulsorist. And let us see whether, even after these concessions, the argument from Democracy is not just as superficial, and just as untenable, as the argument from Caesarism. It ignores practically all British and American history except that of the last generation or two ; it appeals mainly to that class of mind which unconsciously assumes that, for all practical purposes, the world's experience began about the time that we ourselves were born. It ignores also the attitude of America, in the face of possibilities of war which have arisen since these words were first penned. Here, for instance, are two newspaper-cuttings taken almost

at random. The *Daily News* wrote already on December 12th, 1916 :

“In the turmoil of the Presidential election the vast scheme of organizing the entire nation for war, which is now being carried on in the United States, has not attracted on this side of the Atlantic half the notice it has deserved. . . . There are recommendations made for the [military] training of America’s 2,000,000 children between the ages of 14 and 18.”

And in the *Times* of May 12th, 1917, we find at last:

“An agreement has been reached by the Committees of the Senate and House of Representatives upon the various amendments to the Army Bill. The clauses authorizing the raising of an expeditionary force by voluntary enlistment have been eliminated, and the age of the men liable to selective draft has been fixed at from 21 to 30 years inclusive. The agreement is welcomed by the entire Press, which urges Congress to ‘hurry up’ with the rest of the Government’s programme.”

That Anglo-Saxon democracies have succeeded with the Voluntary principle *in peace-time* is, of course, perfectly true. Nothing is easier than to create an army on paper, and to maintain the legend of its efficiency in Parliament. Under long peace, the nation becomes profoundly disinterested in the army as such, and begins to doubt, as the years wear on, whether it is even a necessary nuisance. In any case, the severest criticism naturally takes the form of reduction in expenditure. It is an incontrovertible fact, open to verification by any one who studies *Hansard* and the

division-lists, that many of the men who insisted most emphatically on Naval reductions were the same men who voted military reductions on the express plea that the Navy is our one safeguard. Such absurdities are easy in normal times of peace. The real trial comes at the exceptional time, the time of war. Does Anglo-Saxon experience really show the superiority of Voluntarism for bringing war to a speedy and satisfactory conclusion?

While avoiding present controversies as much as possible, we may fairly refer to present events so far as they are undisputed and indisputable. One such event is this: that the British Parliament, by an overwhelming majority, did at last pass a Compulsion Bill, and that those who withdrew their opposition at the second reading did so avowedly on the grounds that if a Dissolution had been resorted to, the overwhelming majority of votes would have supported the measure. Let the reader calculate how far we must look back to find a real parallel to this—a measure so definitely reversing the policy of more than two generations, calling upon the country to accept not a gift but a burden, and involving even personal humiliation to three-quarters of the members who voted for it; since it was notorious that, a few months earlier, they would have scoffed at such a measure. How long is it since the Nation or the Parliament has been called upon to give such a proof of sincerity as was involved in this reversal of policy?

A still more significant occurrence, perhaps, is the extraordinary unanimity of the United States in following our example when they found themselves at war.

When the events of this war are studied in detail, it is probable that facts will be published which will even strengthen this argument. But it is better to turn back to our last great war, which can be studied without bitterness of controversy, and in which our policy has been minutely analyzed by one of the best living authorities on Military History. Mr. J. W. Fortescue has published, as a supplement to his great *History of the British Army*, a volume entitled *The County Lieutenancies and the Army, 1803-1814*. Into these 300 pages he has compressed his studies, not only of all the printed sources available, but also of nearly a hundred thousand manuscript documents, of different sorts, now at the War Office and at Windsor Castle. It is impossible to tell the story better than by summarizing Mr. Fortescue's account, which should certainly be read in the original by all who can find time to study this subject. And let the reader keep in mind from page to page, not only the question whether Voluntarism proved successful during this crisis of our fate, but also the further question how far real Voluntarism survived at all, and how far it gave way to a pseudo-Voluntarism whose advantages were purely political, while, from the points of view of social



justice or military efficiency, it combined the defects of Voluntarism and Compulsion.

When war broke out again with France in May, 1803, the Prime Minister was Addington, who had been Speaker, and one of the best Speakers that had ever sat in the Chair. But his gifts were mainly parliamentary; and, in this matter of recruiting, his main object was to take the line of least parliamentary or popular resistance. The result was a weak compromise which not only failed under Addington himself, but left a fatal heritage to his successors. Compulsion was freely applied, but in odious and unbusiness-like forms. Like France before the Revolution, and Prussia before Jena, we practised conscription with a cynical partiality which made it morally indefensible, while crippling its efficiency as a military system.

In Mr. Fortescue's pages, we see Parliament first passing an Act of the kind already tried under Anne, to levy a certain number of men for the Regular Army and the Navy from every parish in the country. The parishes, of course, produced their least desirable inhabitants; and these Acts operated mainly upon "the criminal and vagrant classes."<sup>1</sup> "The measure was a total failure so far as the Army was concerned, and in the Navy it was generally considered, from the bad character of the men

<sup>1</sup> See p. 2 of Army Blue Book (Militia Ballot), published July 29, 1875. This gives a brief, and generally trustworthy, history of British experiments in military compulsion. Where no further indication is given, references in the text are to pages of Mr. Fortescue's book.

produced, to have been the chief cause of the Mutiny of 1797" (4). This was already under the younger Pitt. Then, under Addington, came a series of acts which testify to the folly of temporizing under crisis of war. Three Acts were passed between March 24 and the end of April. A fourth and fifth were passed on June 11; this last "on the face of it, a half-hearted measure" (pp. 23-25). "Then came a new complication," and two new Acts on June 24 and July 8 (26). "Meanwhile the Government had decided, or thought it had decided, upon a definite plan for Volunteers"; hence another Act (July 6). "This Measure had not been law for a fortnight when, on the 18th of July, Government brought in yet another bill to amend the Defence Act of the 11th of June." This was called the "Levy en Masse Act," and was carefully calculated to render any real levy of the whole people, as in France, impossible. A tenth Army Act was passed on the same day as this (July 27): "Then, though the Levy en Masse Act was the second of its kind, it had hardly been passed before it was found to need amendment" (11th August). The same day, another Act was passed "ordaining the qualification of an effective Yeoman to be twelve days' exercise, and of an effective Infantry Volunteer to be twenty-four days' exercise in the year."

Another Act, of the same date, patched up a hole in one of its predecessors (pp. 33-35). This made

thirteen Army Acts in a single session ; and yet the problem was not half solved. For, even in face of Napoleon, the Ministry were less concerned for absolute efficiency than for choosing the line of least parliamentary resistance. In those days when even the lower middle classes were scarcely represented, the line of least resistance was undoubtedly that of allowing money-payment as an alternative to personal service.

The "plague spot of substitution" was now even worse in Britain than it had been in despotic France and despotic Prussia. "Throughout the whole of the vast correspondence upon the subject the most remarkable point is, that no one, from the parish overseer to the Secretary of State, ever expected a principal to accept service in the Militia. It was assumed in every quarter that substitutes would be provided practically in every case ; and, in fact, in 1803-5, the ballot was simply an instrument for compelling the parishes to organise at their own expense recruiting depots for the Militia" (p. 40). "It is an actual fact that in the ranks of the Middlesex Militia, whose quota (including the Supplementary Militia) was over 4500 men, there was but one principal to be found ; and when his time of service expired in 1808, the Lord Lieutenant begged to be allowed to keep him as a curiosity" (47).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Compare the earlier experience of 1759-60 (Blue Book, p. 2). "The quota fixed by the Act was 32,100 men, but of these, in July 1759, only 17,436 were raised (6,280 being in embodied service), and in December 1760, only 24,093, Lord Barrington (who prepared the Parliamentary

A class of crimps was created who dealt openly in men for sale. "Robert Craufurd said openly in the House of Commons that, out of 4000 men raised under the Act by June 1805, 2292 had been obtained by payment to crimps" (155). The man thus sold very often deserted in a few days, to sell himself elsewhere. "At the beginning of April 1803, after endless balloting, the Southwark district of Surrey had produced only 22 men out of its quota of 288 ; and the Clerk of General Meeting declared the task of raising the rest to be hopeless unless the substitutes could be at once carried off to headquarters, dressed, powdered, and furnished with queues, so as to make them easily recognisable" (47). The main prejudice against the Militia was due to the fact that "contrary to the spirit of the elder Pitt's original act, personal service was not insisted upon and the Militia was not made a truly national force" (48). The almost incredible injustices as to exemption, due simply to the hasty and perfunctory character of these Acts, are detailed on pp. 52-3 of Mr. Fortescue's book.

Meanwhile the difficulty with the so-called Volunteers was equally pressing. Twelve days' drill in the Yeomanry, or twenty-four days' drill in the Volunteer Infantry, exempted a man from

estimate) having recorded that they were almost all *substitutes*, and that any success attributed to the scheme was due to the fact that such officers as joined were 'men of the first nobility and gentry, full of spirit and fond of the thing—their rank and authority having great weight with the common men.'"

any further call on his military services. "How ministers contrived to commit this extraordinary blunder is a mystery . . . it is certain from Sec. 8 of the Army of Reserve Act, and indeed from their own admissions, that they had no intention of granting this exemption ; and indeed for some time they would not confess that they had granted it" (65). Mr. Fortescue, while quoting one appalling instance, which shows that it might have been due to mere ignorance on the part of Ministers, is inclined to believe certain contemporary indications that the clause was smuggled in "by some mistake or conspiracy," though this would have been impossible, as he shows, without the connivance of some Ministers, at any rate. By August 18, 1803, this arrangement had called forth such a multitude of pseudo-Volunteers that the Secretary for War had actually to issue a circular against "the Inconvenience which must unavoidably attend the carrying of the Volunteer system to an unlimited extent" (67). These regulations provided that the Volunteers might not, in any country, grow to more than six times the number of the Militia. But "the fresh outburst of murmurs which greeted this new attempt to keep [the Volunteers] within reasonable limits" proved the decisive factor here. The direction of the Volunteers was transferred from the War Office to the Home Office, which again took the line of least resistance. All not illegally-constituted Volunteer corps were to be

recognised ; but the rule of proportion (six Volunteers to one Militiaman) must still be kept to some extent : that is, the extra Volunteers must be “without any allowance for pay, arms, or clothing, and without claim to exemption from any ballot.” “Thus,” adds Mr. Fortescue, “the question was at last decided, so far as rules could decide it ; and the country was finally committed to the maintenance of a huge amorphous mass of undisciplined men, subject to two different Acts of Parliament, two different sets of regulations, and two different spheres of service, namely, the Military District and Great Britain at large ; the whole of them immune from the Militia ballot under one set of conditions prescribed by the Militia Act of 1802, and from the Army of Reserve under a second set ordained by the Billeting Act of 1803 ” (68).

And now the blunder of the Exemption Clause (which we have already described in his own words from p. 65) began to produce its effect. The Ministry attempted to explain the clause away, and referred in despair to the Attorney General, who was compelled to decide that the clause actually gave exemption to all who had done their 12 or 24 drills. They had now to face the indignation of the real Volunteers, the men who had joined under no such impression. “The Lieutenant of Roxburgh announced boldly that he differed from the Law-Officers ; and many magistrates of the West Riding of Yorkshire equally declared them-

selves unconvinced. They could not believe that the old Volunteers, who had come forward from patriotic motives, were to be put on the same footing with the new, who, as the Lieutenant put it, were only Volunteers under compulsion. In counties where there had hitherto been hesitation on the part of Volunteers to present themselves, there was now great eagerness to form corps, for the sake of the exemption; and thus the Government found its scheme for the Volunteers legally defined in a form which was exactly contrary to its own intentions" (69).

The net result was, that there were 450,000 Volunteers by the end of the year—in terms of present population of the British Isles, this would be roughly a million and a quarter. But the effect on the Militia was disastrous; "the price of substitutes rose higher and higher, and their quality sank lower and lower. . . . To obtain recruits at all in North Britain, it was necessary to violate the law" (70). The confusion was increased by mismanagement; "the lieutenant of Berkshire asked plaintively how he was to distribute 603 muskets among 2673 men": the Lieutenant of Pembrokeshire wrote: "Their zeal is cooling; and I firmly believe that in the course of a month the greater part or the whole will go to the right about." Mr. Fortescue fills five pages with similar complaints (85-90). He sums up (p. 119):

"the really amazing thing is that after nine years of war, from 1793 to 1802, after many threatened invasions of

England and one actual invasion of Ireland, the wisdom of Ministers and of Parliament should have been unable to produce an Act which could be accepted heartily by the whole country to govern the training of its population for defence. The task, it must be abundantly confessed, was no easy one ; but after review of the proceedings of Addington's Ministry it can hardly be said, I think, that they shone in the preparation of England for war. Still it must be remembered that Addington was preceded by Pitt, and was working more or less under his protection ; and that it was Pitt and no other who, under some unhappy inspiration, originated the whole of the Volunteer system, and started it definitely and irretrievably in the wrong direction."



## CHAPTER IX

### BRITISH DEMOCRACY AND VOLUNTARISM IN THE GREAT FRENCH WAR

#### II. "PAPERING OVER THE CRACKS"

SUCH is a brief history of the attempt of these parliamentary tacticians to solve the military problem along the lines of least political resistance. In May, 1804, Addington went out and the younger Pitt came in again. Pitt, by universal consent, was not a great War Minister ; and, though he realized the necessity of a Reserve to feed the field-armies steadily with recruits, he attempted this by radically unsound methods: His Bill was criticized by members who foretold its weak points pretty exactly ; one of them insisted that there was no remedy but to compel all men to train for home defence, and then to offer really generous inducements for service abroad.<sup>1</sup> But "the arguments

<sup>1</sup> How little Pitt rested upon democratic principle in his avoidance of general compulsion may be gathered from his earlier measure of 1796. In this, he had attempted to compel all the game-keepers in Great Britain (estimated at about 7,000) either to "volunteer" for military service at home, or to throw up their licences. See *Annual Register* for 1797, p. 120 ; and *Monthly Magazine* for Oct. 1796, p. 742.

of the opponents of the Bill were thrown away. Pitt thought that he had made a master-stroke by turning the parish officers into recruiting-sergeants, and would listen to no prophecies of evil" (131). It was practically the last of his great legislative enactments, and it was a failure. It was patched up later on, but "nothing could galvanize that unhappy measure into life."

An analysis of its working, at the end of 1805, showed "that of all the men obtained under the Act, three-fifths had been produced by ten counties, and two-fifths by eighty-one remaining counties of the United Kingdom; and, further, that five-sixths of the whole had been supplied by twenty counties, while among the rest, twenty-five actually had not furnished a man. The reasons put forward to account for this failure of the Act were various; though all the Lieutenants concurred in the opinion that the parish-officers, from ignorance and negligence, had made but indifferent recruiting agents" (154). Like all half-measures of the kind, it had overdriven the willing horse, and left the shirker untouched. "The Lieutenant of Caermarthen reminded the Government that in the American War a battalion had been raised in his county and had been sent to Goree, from which not a private returned home, and added that in Merthyr-Tydvyl there were to be found not only high wages, but total impunity for all deserters, no man daring to execute the King's warrant therein" (*Ibid.*). Nelson

saved us at Trafalgar, while we were still blundering at home. As the Blue Book puts it—with legal caution—on p. 4: “[Pitt’s] Act was repealed at the instance of Lord Grenville’s ministry; and, as the counties were relieved from the fines then due to the Exchequer, amounting to more than £1,000,100 sterling, the Act was not (I apprehend) a success.” The actual amount of the fines was, in fact, “£1,800,000, a sum which could never have been collected” (164).

Windham, as War Minister under Grenville, proposed compulsory national training for all, except such as had already volunteered. “In fact, despite a few vehement protestants to the contrary, the House appeared to favour some form of compulsory training. The one doubtful point was, how should that training be carried out; and Windham left far too much to chance” (169). This would, in fact, have been conscription for home defence, and the Blue Book frankly uses that word; but it resulted only in another juggle with the Ballot. “The Act was put in operation to the extent of balloting and enrolling the men in the Militia, but no men were ever trained under it” (Blue Book, p. 5). It became law in July, 1806; in March, 1807, the Ministry fell, and Castlereagh had to take up Windham’s task.

In his first statement to the House, Castlereagh proposed to drop the training part of Windham’s scheme, and only to utilize its machinery for the

Militia Ballot (181). The injustices of this new Ballot at least equalled those of the old. Mr. Fortescue tells in detail the wearisome story of expedients and after-thoughts, of blunders and subterfuges, through which the Government led a people which would have welcomed a more decided lead. Only by such cumulative evidence, (as he rightly contends), can the historian "show how infinitely the natural obstacles to the levying of recruits may be increased by hasty and ill-considered enactments, and even more by additional Acts passed to amend and explain the same. The root of the matter, of course, lay in the absence of a definite policy, the inevitable result of which was the hurried abandonment of one set of expedients, and the equally precipitate adoption of another set. . . . It is a reproach to our statesmen that such fiction should still have abounded after fourteen years of almost unbroken war" (190).

Crimping became worse than ever; even Army officers added to their income in this way. "In one case a man was engaged for the Warwick militia by a corporal for a bounty of £10; the corporal sold him to a sergeant for £18; the sergeant made him over to a crimping publican for some unrecorded price; and the publican finally disposed of him to a parish officer for £27 6s." (191). In this same district "two hundred children had been furnished as substitutes, who might grow into men, but were at present only fit for drummers.

And, beyond all question, vast numbers of the so-called men, all over England, were even as these children of Warwick" (*Ibid.*).

As to the rest of the home force, "whatever the volunteers may have been in 1804, they stood revealed in 1807 in their primitive condition as an armed rabble." "With this stern fact before him, Castlereagh spent the winter of 1807 in devising means for replacing this rabble by something which should return better value for the money expended upon it" (200). He really did abolish substitution in the Ballot for the Local (as distinguished from the General) Militia, and did something to utilize the force for a scheme of general compulsory home training, modelled upon Windham's. His measure, says the Blue Book, on the strength of official figures published, "may be considered as having been successful" (6). At any rate, it seems to represent the high-water mark of success during the whole war. But Mr. Fortescue, who goes far deeper in 1909 than the Blue Book had gone in 1875, has no difficulty in showing that even this measure, after all our experience, was neither just nor really efficient. The Ballot, though used with a procrastination and a leniency which left much to be desired from a military point of view, was met with resistances and evasions which still further increased its inherent injustice. Men took every advantage of the muddle in which ministerial indecision had involved the whole business: "It is so intricate"

(wrote the Lieutenant of Nairn), "that scarcely two counties have acted under the same construction [of the law]" (237).

In Lancashire, "the mercantile community at large had come to an amicable agreement that apprentices should enlist when trade was slack, and be claimed by their masters when trade was brisk. The rest of the population, stricken with envy of so happy a solution of a difficult problem, bound their sons, brothers, and cousins apprentices *pro forma*, so as to be able to claim them likewise whenever they were wanted. Thus in Lancashire military service was converted into a kind of outdoor relief, which could be repudiated as soon as suited the convenience of the recipient" (239). There were riots and mutinies in many places: yet the militia remained 26,000 short of its establishment. But, in justice to Castlereagh, Mr. Fortescue adds: "It must be remembered always in connexion with Castlereagh's scheme [for the Volunteers] that he had inherited the 'fleeting and inapplicable mass' from his predecessors, and that its existence was a perpetual bar to any but a very gradual reorganization of the people for military purposes" (211).

These measures, however, just tided us over to the Peace of 1814. By that time, the system was showing signs of a final breakdown. Behind the victories of our Navy, we had at last produced a great general in Wellington; but, if the Navy had broken down only for a short time—if the Mutiny

at the Nore had lasted a few months (or perhaps weeks) longer—the wasteful incoherence of our military system would in all probability have led to utter disaster.

Mr. Fortescue's own summary is unsparing (pp. 282 ff.). Addington falsified the whole problem, for himself and his successors, by treating it rather from the point of view of home politics than of military efficiency. His other blunders were bad enough, but the Volunteer blunder was fatal.

“As he was unprepared with rules to govern this mob of men, which had sprung into existence against his wish, his Home Secretary was obliged to introduce, by side-winds and sly devices, regulations which gave rise to endless friction and discontent, and yet were powerless to enforce discipline. It is not too much to say that to the end of the war our military system never recovered from the mischief wrought by Addington and his Secretary for War, Hobart, during the year 1803. It was no fault of theirs that England was not ruined both in a financial and a military sense, so unspeakable were their blindness, their weakness, and their folly” (283). By the grace of Addington, the Crimp reigned supreme; and “Pitt took over the military administration in a state of utter chaos.” The system Pitt invented might have succeeded in time of peace, after preliminary trials and failures; but, under the actual circumstances, “it was a complete and dismal failure.”

“Then came Windham, the great reformer, who held firmly by three sound principles: first, that the Regular Army was the ultimate end for which all our military organization existed; secondly, that the whole nation ought to be trained to arms; thirdly, that a Volunteer who received anything from the State besides his arms was no Volunteer. His practice, however, fell short of his theory. . . . The national training, as he projected it, was impossible; and the one great service which he rendered was the suppression of such Volunteers as were not self-supporting. Nevertheless, his brief administration marked a real turning-point in the history of the war, for he had at least upheld principles that were sound.

“Then came Castlereagh, better known for his work at the Foreign Office than at the War Office, and better remembered, unfortunately, for the Six Acts than for his part either in war or diplomacy. Grasping at once all that was good in Windham’s teaching, he started from the postulate that ‘learning the use of arms should be imposed as a positive duty upon all individuals within certain ages, to be enforced by fine. . . .’ The question was immensely difficult. Time might have brought the answer if, in accordance with Castlereagh’s ideal, every able-bodied man had been compelled to serve his time with the Local Militia upon entering his eighteenth year. But this is no more than to say that things might have been carried



on very efficiently if a proper system had been evolved and practised in time of peace, which, of course, is the indubitable fact, though the British nation, in spite of a thousand proofs, steadily refuses to believe it. Improvisations in time of war can never be thoroughly efficient, and must always be unduly expensive. The wit of man can hardly devise a scheme of military organization for so complex an Empire as the British Empire, which shall be devoid of faults ; and it is far better and cheaper to discover and to correct these faults in time of peace ” (284-287).

“ For the rest,” adds Mr. Fortescue, on the last page of his book, “ the broad lessons to be deduced from the foregoing pages seem to be the following :

England cannot, any more than any other nation, fill the ranks of her Army in a great war without compulsion.

Compulsion cannot be applied for service outside the British Isles.

The admission of the principle of substitution in any scheme of compulsory service leads to ruinous expense, demoralisation, and inefficiency.

Compulsory personal service for home-defence has been tried and not found wanting.

The ultimate end for which all our military organisation must exist is the maintenance of the Regular Army, our only offensive land force. (Windham.)

The true basis of such an organisation is National training. (Windham, Castlereagh.)

‘ Learning the use of arms should be imposed as a positive duty upon all individuals within certain ages, to be enforced by fine.’ (Castlereagh.)

A Volunteer who asks more from the State than his arms, except on active service, is no Volunteer. (Windham.) False Volunteers are alike troublesome, expensive, and useless.

England felt the false measures of Pitt from 1793 to 1798, and of Addington in 1803-4, until the very end of the war in 1814. All measures of National Defence and military organisation must be thought out and tested as far as possible in time of peace. Improvisation doubles the cost of war, while imperilling its success."

No man who is really concerned for the defence of this Empire, and who wishes to see the present War in its true perspective, should omit to read in full the admirable book from which I have taken the liberty of quoting so largely.

## CHAPTER X

### BRITISH VOLUNTARISM SINCE 1815

THE compromise between Voluntarism and Compulsion in Britain may now be brought down to present date.

Castlereagh, while abolishing the substitution system for the Local Militia, had kept it for the General Militia, with the usual result that the Ballot "produced substitutes rather than Conscripts" (Blue Book, p. 6). This system was retained even after the peace; but in 1829 the Militia Ballot was suspended by Act of Parliament. It was not revived even during the Crimean War, when the Army was so weak that we made desperate attempts to hire German regiments, and Disraeli achieved a *succès de scandale* by describing these military guests as "hireling cut-throats." The Militia disappeared altogether with Mr. Haldane's reforms of 1907.

We are therefore still in an anomalous position. Lord Haldane, as Lord Chancellor, has lately reminded us that, by British common law, every citizen is bound to help, if required, to fight in

defence of his country. This common-law obligation is very clearly defined in the 1875 Blue Book : "The Crown has an inherent right to the service of all men to defend the realm, under which prerogative seafaring persons can be lawfully impressed to man the fleets (as in the first line), and other able-bodied men (with few exceptions) to defend the coast or shores (as the second line of defence)." Moreover, by the authority of Parliament they may be sent even abroad. Well-meaning statesmen and journalists, who often talk of freedom from conscription as "the birth-right of the Briton," are simply ignorant of one of the fundamental principles of the British Constitution. We in this country have no more *constitutional right* to escape conscription than the Prussian has. It only happens that (partly by accident, but mainly owing to the enormous supremacy of our Navy since Trafalgar), we have, in fact, escaped conscription for a long time. Government exercised its right of pressing men with considerable hesitation even during the Napoleonic wars, and found no need to assert it again until the year 1916.

But the anomalies created by this habit of ignoring, in peace time, a constitutional principle upon which, in case of war, the whole question of victory or defeat may turn, was admirably illustrated by Mr. St. Loe Strachey's speech on the deputation to Mr. Asquith only a few weeks before the Serajevo murder. "Mr. St. Loe Strachey said

that in a month's time he would be the Sheriff of his county. He had been looking up his duties, and found they were almost entirely ceremonial except one. Under a statute of Henry VI. he had, in case of invasion, to call out all the male population of his county over fifteen. Unfortunately the State had provided no training to enable these to carry out that duty" (*Morning Post*, Feb. 28, 1914). To this and similar representations, Mr. Asquith replied that "the more this matter [of Compulsory Service] is discussed, and the more public opinion can be brought to bear upon the aspects which you have put to me to-day, the greater will be the advantage to the community, both from the point of view of safety and of educational and social problems." Yet one of the ablest and fairest of our daily papers, commenting upon this speech, declared in the name of the political party which it represented, that this party would never seriously consider the question which its own leader had seriously begged the whole country to consider! Such are the results of a system which aims at divorcing peace-time politics from the future contingencies of war.

Mr. Asquith, in that same speech, had given figures with regard to the Territorials. With every effort to put the best face possible on the existing state of things, and without mentioning explicitly the actual shortage of men—50,000 out of a nominal 315,000—he pleaded that, if the

very unusual rate of recruiting of the last seven months were kept up, the Force would be up to its establishment "in a very short time." In plain words, if admittedly exceptional conditions continued steadily to prevail, we should in a little more than four years have attained the very lowest numbers compatible with national safety, this exceptionally favourable rate of increase being 1,000 per month. Again, he admitted that one of the great deficiencies was the lack of rifle-ranges, and that, even of the men we had, over 40,000 had not been able to pass the very lenient musketry-test. Again, nearly 80,000 of these men had not gone through that full fortnight in camp which is the lowest limit compatible with real efficiency. Thirty per cent., admitted Mr. Asquith, had failed in this obligation ; but he compared it with the worse deficiency of about 36 per cent. in 1912, and added complacently, "That is not bad."

If he had judged by the only true standard, and asked himself how far these 80,000 men were fitted to face those emergencies of war for which alone they existed as Territorials, he would have said on the contrary "That is very bad." It was most disquieting that, six years after the formation of this body by a very able organizer, we should still be 50,000 men short ; that there should be no prospect of making good this deficiency, even under the most favourable conditions, before the summer of 1918 ; and that, even if we had all the

men, there should still have been such deficiencies in their training as are tolerated in no other European country. And to this we must add what perhaps was the most disquieting consideration of all—the fact so often officially proclaimed, that the whole constitution of the Force was calculated on the basis of a six months' serious training after embodiment—that is, under modern conditions, after the outbreak (and perhaps after the end), of the actual war.

When so able a minister can find encouragement in statements of this kind, and so large a proportion of the community can accept encouragement from them, must we not echo poor Stoffel's despairing words ?

“ I do not believe that any assembly in any country ever gave such a flagrant proof of inconsistency and levity ! How can we be astonished, after this, if foreigners criticise us severely ? How can we be astonished that, in all Germany, they tax our nation with ignorance and vain presumption, and that they proclaim, with ill-disguised satisfaction, in books seriously written, the decadence of our race ? ”

For it must be remembered that Mr. Asquith's apologia, and the dozens of similar apologies during the last ten years, were not conceived from the moral or ideal point of view : they were not pleas for pacificism, but purported to be business statements. Ministers did not argue then, as less responsible people have sometimes argued since, that our

military unpreparedness has been one of our greatest moral assets. They insisted that, under the existing voluntary system, we *were* prepared for all probable emergencies ; and a special military value was always officially attributed to the system in itself. Not eighteen months before the war broke out, our War Minister publicly assured his own constituents that one volunteer is worth ten conscripts. Even after four months of war, Sir John Simon declared, with the political weight of a Cabinet Minister, that in actual war one volunteer was worth three conscripts, and that "the Kaiser already knew it." <sup>1</sup>

The obvious deficiencies of Voluntarism for war in our generation are defended exactly as the deficiencies of Voluntary education were defended by our fathers. In each case the public has been told that, where faults exist, they must not be whispered abroad. It has been asserted that the Territorials have never had fair play, because Compulsorists have publicly quoted the actual figures of their numbers and their days of training which Government publishes every year. The same argument was used long ago by the educational Voluntarists ; though these gentlemen were quite ready to admit the damaging statistics in private, and though some of the worst statistics came from the very cities which they represented in Parliament, or in which they lived. In each case,

<sup>1</sup> F. S. Oliver, *Ordeal by Battle*, 1915, p. 262.



the cry comes from the last ditch "Wait a little longer; give Voluntarism a fair chance!" Let us answer them now from Macaulay's answer to the educational Voluntarists of 1847.

"I do believe that the ignorance and degradation of a large part of the community to which we belong ought to make us ashamed of ourselves. . . . Only this morning the opponents of our plan [for State Education] circulated a paper in which they confidently predict that free competition will do all that is necessary, if we will only wait with patience. Wait with patience! Why, we have been waiting ever since the Heptarchy. How much longer are we to wait? Till the year 2847? Or till the year 3847? . . . The cause of the failure is plain. Our whole system has been unsound. We have applied the principle of free competition to a case to which that principle is not applicable."<sup>1</sup>

Military Voluntarism has succeeded in Britain only during those generations which have been privileged to ignore the terrible contingencies of a great war. We have kept up an appearance of solvency by drawing bill after bill for a remote date which we hoped would never arrive. By thus ignoring present realities—by postponing every fresh liability to be met some other year, or to fall upon the next generation—even a system of Voluntary taxation could be kept up for a little time with some pretence of success; and, when it broke down at last, there would doubtless be

<sup>1</sup> Speech in the House of Commons, April 18, 1847, republished in *Miscellaneous Writings and Speeches*, 1878, p. 742.

pathetic complaints that it had not been given a fair trial.

As Macaulay based his most serious accusations against voluntary education upon the admissions of its defenders, so it would be difficult to condemn the voluntary army system more strongly than it stands condemned, by implication, in the actual pleas of two of its ablest and most determined champions. Sir Ian Hamilton asserts, with all his authority as a late Quartermaster General, that it produces a class of recruit far below the general average of the population. He writes :

“the majority of eighteen-to-nineteen-year old regular recruits enlist because they have just ceased to be boys and are unable to find regular employment as men. About four-fifths of them come to us because they cannot get a job at fifteen shillings a week. . . . The reluctance of employers to take weedy, overgrown youths of 17 and 18 has markedly increased since the introduction of the Workmen’s Compensation Act. This is good for recruiting. But if, under altered conditions, hungry hobbledehoys knew that they would be called up for continuous housing and feeding during the winter, the Regular Army would begin to shrivel from the roots. I know that all this is not very glorious, but it is true.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Compulsory Service*, with an Introduction by Viscount Haldane, 1910, p. 106. An army chaplain wrote to the *Spectator* (July 10, 1915), questioning the accuracy of this statement. For five years it was his duty to interview every Church of England recruit at a large artillery depot ; “I made a special point of eliciting the lad’s reason for enlisting, and these reasons, in the case of some thousands of recruits, are on record to-day.” Less than thirty per cent. were “out of work.” More than forty per cent. “were country lads of 18 to 20 years of age who had been in regular employment on farms and in gardens, but who were bored

Voluntary recruiting, therefore, is based upon popular starvation; under the better state of things to which most of us look forward in the future when none but actual undesirables will fail to get their 15s. a week, or will be thrown upon the streets during the winter, our Regular Army will begin to shrivel up from the roots! And the same melancholy truth is put still more nakedly by an even more determined opponent of Compulsory Service for Great Britain—by Colonel F. N. Maude, whom the *Westminster Gazette* called in when it needed a Balaam to prophesy against the National Service League. In his bulky and elaborate book on this subject, Colonel Maude writes:

“Ultimately, hunger is the greatest stimulus to human action that can be conceived. Keep men hungry, just hungry enough, and they will swarm to the Colours to end their misery; keep them well supplied, and they will prefer to attend to their own affairs, and will clamour for others to do the fighting for them. But in no case must the hunger be allowed to become excessive, nor must the people be allowed to perceive that they are being played with.”<sup>1</sup>

Here then we have, expressed with the frankness of a soldier, the real foundation of Voluntarism.

to death with the life they were leading.” “It was not the lack of employment that drove the ordinary recruit to enlist, but the dreariness and hopeless monotony of the life of an agricultural labourer.” It is evident, however, that this experience may be reconciled with Sir Ian’s statement on the essential point. These labourers were probably not getting 15s. a week; and, if the determining cause was not poverty, but hopeless monotony, the indictment against society and the Voluntary System remains practically the same.

<sup>1</sup> *War and the World’s Life*, 1907, p. 405.

It is an admirable system so long as a sufficient proportion of the population is kept hungry enough to escape from misery by bearing the blood-burden for other people. It is admirable, again, so long as we can disguise from the people that they are being played with ; so long as we can persuade them that a society which starves men into adopting the army as a profession (with only an infinitesimal chance of promotion from the ranks) is "democratic," and that it would be "undemocratic" for the State to pass every citizen alike through a six months' training in which all recruits would be "rankers," from the peer to the peasant. It is admirable, above all things, so long as we have no real war. In short, it is admirable on paper, admirable as a line of least resistance for politicians ; but it is a broken reed in the time of trial. With real Voluntarism we should never have won the Napoleonic war, even behind our protecting Navy. In the Peninsula, and at Waterloo, Wellington's armies were fed by partial compulsion ; and complete compulsion would not only have fed his armies better, but also would have been less inimical to political and social liberty.

## CHAPTER XI

### AMERICA AND MODERN FRANCE

IN April, 1861, the Civil War broke out in the United States of America. Posterity has endorsed, on the whole, Lincoln's claim that the Northern States were fighting "in order that government of the people, by the people, for the people, might not perish from the earth." Volunteers came forward freely at first, on both sides. The South, however, resorted to forced levies quite early in the war, not because the volunteer spirit was weaker in the South, but because the population was so much smaller—only nine millions to twenty-three. The Southern states put an enormous proportion of their manhood into the field; and for nearly two years they had, on the whole, the best of the fighting.<sup>1</sup> The rush of Northern volunteers during

<sup>1</sup> It has been estimated that "reducing the figures to a three-years' average, the North furnished about 45 per cent. of her military population, the South not less than 90 per cent. for that term" (*Encyc. Brit.* 11th ed. i. 818). Though this disproportion was very much reduced by the fourth year, when the South was thoroughly exhausted, yet the average of the whole war shows a decidedly larger proportion of Southerners than of Northerners in the armies (E. B. Andrews, *History of the United States*, 1895, ii. 170).

the first few weeks had proved more than Government could cope with; recruiting was officially "damped down" because the authorities were not prepared to drill or arm so many at so short notice. "On the 6th of June, 1862, [recruiting] was reopened; but the enthusiasm had abated, and it was hard to fill up the ranks";<sup>1</sup> yet the war had as yet scarcely lasted more than a year, and it was destined to last nearly three years longer. Already the Governors of most of the Northern States were beginning to call for compulsion in some form. A Militia Ballot was tried—in other words, the Voluntary Principle was abandoned and compulsion was applied in a form more satisfactory to the politician than to either the soldier or his commander. The crisis was far too grave for such palliatives; and Livermore quotes the following contemporary verdict:

"It was evident that the efforts of the Government for the suppression of the rebellion would fail without resort to the unpopular, but nevertheless truly republican measure of conscription. . . . Fortunately, the loyal political leaders and press early realized the urgency of conscription, and, by judicious agitation, gradually reconciled the public to it."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. C. Ropes, *The Story of the Civil War*, vol. iii. p. 102. This third volume is in fact by Livermore, who had the use of Ropes's papers and continued the work after his death. Livermore's account agrees in all substantial respects with the much longer story in Nicolay and Hay, *Abraham Lincoln*, vol. vii. pp. 1-55.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* The quotation is from Fry, in *Official Messages and Documents*.

Unfortunately, one of the means by which this "reconciliation" was effected, was a clause permitting substitution for drafted men. The country in general unquestionably approved of this action on the part of President and Congress, but there was naturally a strong opposition. The more moderate opponents were the men who already began to despair of victory, and were willing to grant peace to the Southerners almost upon their own terms. The famous editor and politician, Horace Greeley, whom modern anti-conscriptionists sometimes quote in their favour, may be found declaring publicly, very early in 1863, "in favour of entertaining proposals for peace if, at the end of another three months, the Rebellion remains in full vigour" (*Illustrated London News*, Feb. 28, 1863, p. 214). At this time the Southern States, in spite of their absurdly disproportionate population, had 690,000 men in the field, not far short of the Northern forces in number.<sup>1</sup> About two months after this, the Draft Act was finally passed by Congress. Four months later again, came the victories of Gettysburg and Vicksburg, from which the South never really recovered. By sheer weight of numbers they were gradually worn down. Before the end of the war, the North had more than a million men under arms, while the South, exhausted by draft after draft, was

<sup>1</sup> E. B. Andrews, *History of the United States*, 1895, ii. 170 ; cf. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th ed. vol. i. p. 818.

unable to maintain the unequal struggle; when the final surrender came, she had only about 200,000 men in the field.

There have been frequent attempts in British journals, during the last few months, to explain these facts away. The most distinguished, perhaps, of these special pleaders is Sir Roland K. Wilson, who conducted a lengthy correspondence on the subject in the *London Nation* (June 12 to August 7, 1915) and the *Daily Chronicle* (August 23 to September 3, 1915). Yet, in both of those correspondences, he made no attempt, even under a definite challenge, to dispute the following facts, which I here reprint from *The Nation* of July 3 and the *Daily Chronicle* of August 28:

“(1) Congress passed the Compulsion Bill because, however unpopular, it seemed the only way of raising the numbers needed, before it should be too late. (2) The violence offered to those engaged in working the Bill was almost, if not altogether, confined to aliens and ‘undesirables.’ (3) The country, shortly afterwards, strongly endorsed Lincoln’s policy, one of the most controversial points of which was his support of this Bill. (4) The South having adopted conscription earlier, had for some time been able to offer unexpected resistance to the far more populous North. (5) Lincoln himself expressly pleaded this fact as a compelling necessity, writing of the Southern compulsory method that ‘it produces an army with a rapidity not to be matched on our side, if we first waste time to re-experiment with the volunteer system.’ (6) After the passing of the Compulsion Bill, the necessary numbers were at last forthcoming, and the North won.”



For the paradoxical arguments by which anti-compulsionists, while admitting these facts, have attempted to find in them a triumph for Voluntarism, I must refer the reader to Appendix 9. It ought to be conclusive that Lincoln, true lover of freedom though he was, refused to experiment any longer with Voluntarism; that he frankly and openly defied his most determined political opponent upon this very question, and that he drew up a formal plea to the nation (which, after all, he never needed to publish) justifying Conscription by the precedent of the War of Independence, and ending "Are we degenerate? Has the manhood of the race run out? . . . I feel bound to tell you that it is my purpose to see the Draft Law faithfully executed."<sup>1</sup> Moreover, when his term of office expired, and the opposition to his re-election was based to a great extent upon this contentious law, the nation gave Lincoln an overwhelming majority.

Those who would minimize the effect of this law because it was to a great extent indirect, have forgotten a very recent experience in British politics. It is notorious that the sums that were regularly collected for "voluntary" schools, until the late changes in our Education Law, were only semi-voluntary at the best. Men gave without

<sup>1</sup> Nicolay and Hay, vii. pp. 34, 39, 40, 55. "I am unwilling," wrote Lincoln to his adversary Seymour, "to give up a drafted man now, even for the certainty, much less for the mere chance, of getting a volunteer hereafter."

legal compulsion, for the simple reason that, behind the modest request for a voluntary contribution, stood the Board School with a compulsory rate which would prove far more onerous. Thousands must have said in America as they said lately among us: "We won't wait to be fetched." A friend has kindly permitted me to give here two extracts from some unpublished family letters, which give a more vivid impression than any formal history. The mother of a Scottish family, who had emigrated to the United States less than fifteen years before the war broke out, writes, Sept. 8, 1864, to a son in England:

"The war draft going on . . . cannot tell if your brothers will be drafted. I know that they do not want to fight, but I know also that they will not try any mean way to get rid of it."

She returns to the same subject on Jan. 9, 1865.

"I know how anxious you will be about your brothers. You will no doubt have heard of the heavy drafts made. Some of our neighbours hired a substitute for themselves at the rate of 500 or 600 dollars. But last week this town (Waltham, Illinois) had a meeting and agreed to give so much apiece, and they gathered 7,000 dollars. Some old men that were not subject to the draft gave 180 dollars to this good cause . . . they think they have money enough to pay for substitutes. The draft will not come due till Feb. 15, so they have time to get men before that . . . , but, dear R—, if your brother J— had health and no family, he would have been in the war long ago. . . . When I look at the thing, there is something cowardly in hiring

others to go and fight for you to defend our hearths and homes when we could do it better ourselves."

Most honest young fellows must have been in this frame of mind; and the actual efficiency of Lincoln's Draft Law would probably never have been disputed by modern writers but for overpowering political temptations.

It is well, in this context, to read the verdict of a man who fought through this war as a volunteer, and who deliberately recorded his impressions a quarter of a century later. As one of the last survivors, he felt that many things still needed chronicling, while time and opportunity were fast slipping away; and he passes a severe judgment on the compromises by which the politicians of that day had tried to strike a mean between Voluntarism and Compulsorism.<sup>1</sup> He writes, of course, simply from a citizen-soldier's point of view, and without considering whether, in the case of a nation which has been caught unprepared, any uncompromisingly efficient reform is politically possible at the actual moment when it is most needed. From that point of view, therefore, his judgment must be discounted; but this does not affect his evidence on the question which underlies this present book. The main question is whether, in times of peace and quiet opportunity for reforms, it is wiser to base the national defence on a voluntary

<sup>1</sup> *Recollections of a Private Soldier in the Army of the Potomac*, by Frank Wilkeson. Putnams, 1897, reprinted in London 1898. It is from this reprint that I quote.

or a compulsory basis. From that point of view, the author's verdict in his preface gains still greater force from his later description of his own experiences under training and in war. He writes on p. x :

"I am conscious of imperfect performance of the task I set to myself in the writing of this book. . . . The limited compass of the book forbade the consideration of two subjects about which I feel deeply, and which I propose hereafter to treat with what strength I possess. For much thinking over my experience as a private in the Army of the Potomac has confirmed me in the belief I then entertained, that the two capital errors in the conduct of this war on the Union side were :

*First*, the calling for volunteers to suppress the rebellion, instead of at the outset creating armies by drawing soldiers rateably and by lot from the able-bodied population, between the ages of 20 and 40, of all the free States and territories.

*Second*, the officering of the commands in the various armies with West Point graduates by preference, on the assumption that they knew the art of war and were soldiers, and were therefore the fittest to command soldiers.

It is my purpose in the future edition of this book to show how the resort to volunteering, the unprincipled dodge of cowardly politicians, ground up the choicest seed-corn of the nation ; how it consumed the young, the patriotic, the intelligent, the generous and the brave ; how it wasted the best moral, social and political elements of the Republic, leaving the cowards, shirkers, egotists and money-makers to stay at home and procreate their kind."

The moral degradation of the "bounty-jumpers," and of the miserable crimps who bought and sold

them, is described on pp. 1-17 and 151-2. Of the crimps Wilkeson writes :

“After gathering the foul creatures, they kept them in pens and private prisons. Over the doors of these dens swung signs, and blazoned on them in gilt letters were shameful legends which announced that within a man dealt in alleged men, and that the honour of townships could be pawned there. A Mississippi slave-dealer was a refined and honourable gentleman in comparison with a Northern bounty-broker, who sold men to the townships which filled their quotas by purchase.”

His description of the men themselves, evidently true in the main, though tinged with the exaggerations natural to a true volunteer, is almost impossible to reprint. They, like the English crimp—sold substitutes of the Napoleonic wars, constantly deserted to sell themselves again, and regarded the whole business as a failure if they were finally brought into the actual fighting-line. “When I entered the barracks, these recruits gathered round me and asked ‘How much bounty did you get?’ ‘How many times have you jumped the bounty?’ . . . the social standing of a hard-faced, crafty pickpocket, who had jumped the bounty in say half-a-dozen cities, was assured.” Wilkeson calculates that, of the 500,000 men nominally raised by these drafts, only 169,000 ever stood in battle-ranks (150). But, disgracefully as the main objects of the Draft were falsified by this bounty-jumping, the Law did finally enable the North to utilize something of her enormous numerical

superiority, and created a moral impression from the very first. As Professor Spenser Wilkinson says of the French drafts in 1793: "These measures, which, of course, took time in execution and did not instantly produce troops, were an expression of the national determination not to be beaten." When a Government has taken heavy political risks and given a clear political lead, then the whole people are braced up to a greater effort. The mere recital of Hooker's work in the early months of 1863—the work of reorganization and discipline by which these armies were formed which turned the tide at Midsummer—suggests inevitably a strong government in the background. Without such support, the army would have continued to "muddle on" as it had already done for the two years which preceded the passing of the Draft Law.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, in illustration of these two human documents from the American war, let us take one from our own. A Fellow and Lecturer of a Cambridge College, who in peace time had been an anti-compulsionist, volunteered when the war broke out and obtained a commission in the Buffs.

<sup>1</sup> Ropes-Livermore, iii. 113. Hooker's official report runs: "At the time the army was turned over to me, desertions were at the rate of about 200 a day... my first object was to prevent desertion... During the time allowed us for preparation, the army made rapid strides in discipline, instruction, and *moral*, and early in April was in a condition to inspire the highest expectations." Hooker had been appointed at about the date when it became practically certain that the Draft Act would pass. It finally passed on March 3.

He joined his brigade shortly after, and wrote a letter home which was published in the *Cambridge Daily News* of June 14, 1915, over his full signature. Here are some extracts :

“A fortnight ago I listened to Commander-in-Chief’s congratulations to the Brigade to which my regiment belongs. Those who had done the work were not those to hear it. A week later, after one more bout of the trenches, another 30 per cent. of the faces were absent—and this sort of thing at this pace has gone on for several months. . . . All this squabbling about freedom or compulsion, the merits of this man or that, reads like a grisly jest. . . . We are fighting a mighty people exquisitely specialised in all the machinery and organisation that makes for victory. The other evening I read aloud a newspaper extract from a Cambridge lecturer to the effect that many Englishmen would suffer even death rather than be compelled to fight. The reading of the extract was greeted with jeers. The lecturer is quite safe. He knows we can’t afford to start killing our own folk, but he ought also to know that he’s doing his best to kill his pals who are not endowed with that conscientiousness which secures at once safety and a sense of martyrdom. I hope I’m not bitter. But my main point is this. We shall in any case drain through the major portion of our young manhood. If we do it stupidly or disjointedly or with friction, we shall lose our manhood and at the same time miss the prize. But if the whole of England plunges into the task with the unanimity and devotion of a religious crusade, beside which no interests or so-called principles are of the slightest consequence, then we shall indeed lose men, but we shall win our prize, and the next generation will be glad for it, seeing that this prize is nothing less than the life of England. Between the two there is no middle course.”

It is only in the light of such present events and utterances that we can fully understand the position of Voluntarism in the American Civil War.

So much, then, for the experiences of the great Anglo-Saxon Republic. The South, taking early to conscription, seemed likely at one time to win the war, in the face of enormous disadvantages. Half a year after the North had met conscription with conscription, the tide turned—for, as readers may see in Appendix VIII., conscription had become a practical certainty even before the end of 1862. Lincoln, as we have seen, never doubted the military success of the Draft Act, so far as it went. No attempt, I believe, has been made to produce the evidence of any responsible statesman or soldier who, under actual experience of the Act during the remaining two years of war, denounced it as a real failure; though there were doubtless many who, like Wilkeson, denounced the Substitution Clause which politicians had smuggled into it. Even in Britain, such a thesis could scarcely have been maintained unless the question had become one of party politics.

But let us now forget, for a moment, our assumption that Anglo-Saxondom is the only standard of healthy political life; and let us face the supposition that Republican France may conceivably point the real line of progress, in certain directions, even to the United States and to Great Britain. We are here at once on firm ground, because the



most elaborate and the most valuable of all recent books upon this military problem was written by a French Republican of the most uncompromising type—Jean Jaurès. An abbreviated English translation of Jaurès's *Armée Nouvelle* has lately been published.<sup>1</sup> What this leader of the Socialist party, this pacifist and internationalist, thought of the relations between Compulsory Service and Democracy, may be found in that book. I have already summarized his views, and those of other Continental Socialists, in a penny pamphlet (*Workers and War*. Cambridge: Bowes). My references here will be to the abridged English edition already mentioned. The neglect of this book in Britain admirably exemplifies the conspiracy of silence, even in democracies, against all truths which are politically inconvenient. The *Liberal Nation* was honourably exceptional in welcoming the French original with warm praise (May 26, 1911); and quite lately, again, Mr. H. W. Massingham has referred us to "Jaurès's great book, *L'Armée Nouvelle*" (*Nation*, March 25, 1916, p. 896). Yet, meanwhile, among the floods of correspondence contributed to the *Nation* on this subject, scarcely a single sentence betrays the vaguest suspicion that Jaurès and his fellow-socialists in France have always been compulsorists.

<sup>1</sup> *Democracy and Military Service* (Simpkin, Marshall and Co., 1s. net). The full French original may be obtained at 2 f. 50 (by post, 3 f. 50) from the office of *L'Humanité*, 142, rue Montmartre, Paris.

Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, in the obituary article which he wrote on Jaurès, betrayed the same ignorance (*Contemporary Review*, Sept. 1914). There would be a certain logic, of course, in consistently acting and thinking upon the assumption that Continental thought never concerns free-born Britons, and that insularity is a prime political virtue. But the opponents of compulsory service are, on the contrary, perpetually appealing to a Continental opinion which they imagine to be in their favour. Such self-deception would have been quite impossible but for the subtlest political temptations; under any other circumstances, the truth must have leaked out somehow during the last ten years.<sup>1</sup>

Jaurès writes, he tells us, "from the point of view of National Defence and International Peace" (p. 1). "In fact, the organization of National Defence and the organization of International Peace are but two different aspects of the same task" (5). Again, "I confess that it is this hope, this certainty of peace, which enables me to deal with the ideas regarding war which I am obliged to examine and discuss" (end of Chapter V.). Again, "[Let] the whole nation [be] a vast army for the maintenance of national independence and the preservation of peace; in that way and in that way alone can France be truly free" (21).

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the present writer's article in the *Fortnightly Review* for July, 1916, "Continental Democracies and Compulsory Military Service."

From this standpoint, he has to meet the objections of extremists on both sides. He wants his Nation in Arms to be democratically organized; and militarists object that this will ruin her chances of success in the field; while extreme pacificists fear that he will militarize the nation. The militarist objections will be dealt with later on in this present book; the pacificist objections alone concern us in this present chapter.

For Jaurès (and for practically everybody in Republican France except those few extremists who, before this war, talked of total disarmament as a possible policy) the connexion between Democracy and Universal Military Training is beyond all serious dispute. As a Socialist he repudiates the idea of "leaving the formidable monopoly of armed force to paid troops," and continues: "The whole instinct, the whole thought of the working-classes, in every country, goes in the contrary direction. Everywhere it is the workmen and socialists who demand military service for all" (77). Of course, he recognizes the exception of Great Britain; but he confidently predicts that—unless we can boldly enter upon such a venture of faith as would be implied in disarmament—Britain also must finally follow suit, as her self-governing colonies have shown her the way" (Chapter XV.).

Though he wrote under the immediate impression of M. Briand's mobilization of the army to break

the Railwaymen's strike in 1910, he called upon the workers to face the fact that hired soldiers could be used still more unfairly, and that the people's one chance of avoiding oppression by the army is to make that army their own: in other words, that if only democracy will venture to come to grips with militarism, she will always prove the stronger power. Moreover, he confidently claimed the assent of the French workmen in general to this truth. "The workmen know also that, if they wish to act upon the army, it must be from within; they know that it is a source of strength to the proletariat to bear arms, even under the command of the bourgeois State" (78). He scornfully disposes of the parrot-cry that "the workman has no country" (82, 89, 97). "The proletariat," he argues, "is more truly in the Fatherland than any other class"; and it is absurd to suppose that we are even dimly in sight of the time when class-differences will obliterate political frontiers (Chapter XI.). In short, France (and with her, the world) runs always a double risk of war. If too offensively organized, France might follow aggressive foreign policies, and drop a match into the powder-magazine. On the other hand, a France which was not organized for *defence* to the utmost extent of her resources, would be risking invasion for herself, and a general conflagration for Europe.

Jaurès tries to steer an even course between the

militarist who dreams of conquest and the crank who argues that all military preparations are dangerous. It would be treason to the democratic spirit to assume that a great self-governing people cannot be efficiently armed without proceeding to make an attack upon some other nation. On the contrary, the one hope for world-peace is that democracies should be strong enough to repel aggression. "Assuming that a nation is firmly bent on following a policy of peace and justice, and that her only object in view is self-protection . . . why should such a nation and such a government hesitate to call on every man in the country for the common good? . . . A nation in Arms is necessarily a nation actuated by justice and uprightness." Jaurès dares to enunciate this as a general principle, though he knew the facts of Napoleon I and of Imperial Germany better than most of his readers. But he knew also that, if we are to cast away every institution which has been used as a tool for tyranny, we shall have to return to the state of the noble savage. Jaurès knew too much of history, and was too good a democrat, to fear the final victory of militarism in a democratic military organization.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It has repeatedly been asserted that this policy of Jaurès was purely opportunist, and that, if his proposals for democratizing the French army had succeeded, he would then have gone on to fight against the Compulsory Principle. This argument is never used by those who have actually read his book, or who really know French Socialist conditions: I have exposed its inaccuracy, and the bad faith which often underlies it, in my *Workers and War*.

In all this, Jaurès is only amplifying what had already been said by Vaillant, who at one time divided with him the allegiance of the French Socialist Party. Sixteen years ago, I had occasion to point out how Bebel was using similar language in Germany.<sup>1</sup> Many more instances are quoted in a *Times* article of December 31, 1915. The first Social Democratic Congress, in 1891, proclaimed "it is our desire to establish a national system which will guarantee real universal service, and provide that Germany is armed against any enemy." The Cologne Congress of 1893 put it still more plainly: "Every young man capable of bearing arms should receive preliminary preparation at school and in his youth; and this should be supplemented by a short course of military training, so that if necessary he may be able to take part in the defence of the Fatherland." And the *Times* writer finally quotes the following from p. 58 of a recent pamphlet published at the *Vorwärts* office by a Socialist member of the Reichstag, Dr. Paul Lensch, *German Social Democracy and the War*. He writes:

"That which we Social Democrats understand by Militarism, and what the English mean by it, have about as much to do with each other as the Great Bear in the heavens and the ordinary bear on earth. Fifty years ago Friedrich

<sup>1</sup> *A Strong Army in a Free State: a Study of the Old English and Modern Swiss Militias* (Simpkin, Marshall and Co., 1900). Bebel's pamphlet, *Nicht Stehendes Heer*, was published at Stuttgart in 1898; it is now out of print.

Engels said that our military system is the only democratic institution in Prussia ; and this universal service is what the English are pleased to call 'slavery.' In regard to universality the system is by no means so far-reaching as we socialists wish."

Finally, for those Britons who are such good democrats that they cannot believe any foreign democrat's mere word on this subject, we may cite the actual deeds of the Radical-Socialist *bloc* in Belgium. For thirty years, the Radicals in Belgium took the burden and the odium of working for Universal Service ; the Conservative Party in Belgium has for thirty years been the so-called Peace Party. Universal Service, with far fewer exceptions than those allowed by our present Military Service Act, was finally introduced by a Conservative Government under pressure from the Radicals and the King. In this propaganda, the only difference between the Radicals and the Socialists was that the latter would have preferred the Swiss system. As to the Compulsory Principle in itself, there was no difference of opinion.

We have now completed our historical survey. We have seen that no instance has yet been produced by opponents to prove that Universal Service throws a country backwards in civilization or in political liberty. We have seen that even the two strongest among the apparent exceptions—those of French and German Imperialism—have not shown anything like those abuses of despotism

which were common in France or Germany before Universal Service was introduced. We have seen that the military tyranny in both cases was not in accordance with, but contrary to, the normal operation of a Nation in Arms; that Napoleon, Bismarck, and the present Kaiser could have ruled far more tyrannically if they had obtained equal military successes by means of a voluntary army paid for its work at profitable market rates, instead of having to apply to the nation at large for each fresh draft of men. We have seen that these facts, so new to most Britons even of the educated classes, are assumed as commonplaces by continental writers. Whatever may be the final decision of this country, it is incontestable that the Voluntarists have too often based their arguments upon an appalling ignorance of past history and of modern political conditions on the Continent; and that thousands of people, whose very principles rest upon freedom of thought, have for years violated the freethought principle by practically refusing to listen to any serious discussion of this subject.

Deepest of all, perhaps, has been the general ignorance upon that point which might most easily have been cleared up—for nothing is easier for an editor than to institute a brief enquiry among his continental brethren. The opposition of French Socialism to the Three Years' Law, and of German Socialists to such abuses as were revealed in the Zabern case, have been thoughtlessly construed



into attacks upon the Compulsory Principle. It would have been almost as reasonable for a Frenchman to infer from the opposition of the House of Lords to Mr. Lloyd George's celebrated Finance Bill, that the peers were fighting for the Voluntary Principle in taxation. Apart from the handful of visionaries who advocate general disarmament, the Voluntary Principle for the army has only a small minority of civilized adherents in the whole world outside Great Britain, in the insular sense, and the United States of America. If these great States needed a third voluntarist ally, we should have to go to China, where the soldier is indeed a rare and despised phenomenon, but where the pious paterfamilias puts his superfluous girl-babies to death, and where the late Revolution has displayed a quite unprecedented lack of political sense. Those who believe that the Voluntary system goes naturally hand in hand with steady democratic progress, should study the confession of Mr. G. Lowes Dickinson, a determined Voluntarist and an ardent admirer of Chinese civilization in general. He writes :

"It is remarkable, and, so far as my knowledge of history goes, unique, that in a great revolution in a nation of four hundred millions one man only should emerge with the capacity of government. . . . The young men have ideas in plenty, but they have no experience, and, it would seem, no practical capacity. Too often they have not Character" ("An Essay on the Civilization of India, China and Japan," 1914, pp. 5, 7, 58).

Compare with this John Stuart Mill's illuminating remark towards the end of the last chapter of his essay *On Liberty* :

“ A very different spectacle is exhibited among a people accustomed to transact their own business. In France, a large part of the people having been engaged in military service, many of whom have held at least the rank of non-commissioned officers, there are in every popular insurrection several persons competent to take the lead, and improvise some tolerable plan of action.”

In all civilized States but two, therefore, the people are overwhelmingly in favour of the Compulsory Principle ; and the Continental Socialist differs from the Conservative not as a Voluntarist, but as an advocate for the Swiss system of compulsion. We must pass on, therefore, to study briefly the working of this model Citizen Army.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE SWISS MILITIA

WE have seen that in all countries common-law has proclaimed the duty of every citizen to take as full a share as possible in the work of national defence. The logical corollary of this obligation is, that every able-bodied citizen should also be *trained* in the use of arms, and should be embodied in some military formation, however rudimentary, in time of peace. The two things are, in principle, inseparable; to assert military liability without providing military training is defensible neither from the practical nor from the moral point of view. To call out unarmed and untrained men, even for the simplest labours of home defence, would be not only absurd, but criminal. On the other hand, if it be politically objectionable to introduce military training into our schools and our national life—if it be true that the progress of democracy and civilization demands the abolition of compulsory training on moral grounds, then those same moral considerations would dictate the formal and unqualified abrogation of common-

law military obligations which have become (*ex hypothesi*) not only meaningless but mischievous. Among all the mistakes committed by those who object even to the mildest forms of military compulsion, one of the worst has been their persistent blindness to this obvious principle. If liberalism were really incompatible with what has been called Compulsory Territorialism, then the majority of British citizens, with their political leaders, would stand self-condemned. A statute should long since have been passed to remove the old common-law liability; the sheriffs should long since have been relieved of their obligation to call out citizens for home defence amid conditions which would amount to wilful murder. The more strongly the anti-compulsorist bases himself upon principle (as opposed to mere military expediency), the more definitely he condemns his own lack of political foresight.<sup>1</sup>

Yet this divorce between military *liability* and military *training*, however indefensible in principle and in practice, has in fact too often been made.

<sup>1</sup> An admirable example is supplied by a letter to the *Nation* (Nov. 27, 1915). The writer calls upon the British people to take care that "a national nuisance once booted from our door be not suffered through our neglect to sneak in at the window." This, of course, states very pithily the exact opposite of the actual facts. Military compulsion, so far as it has disappeared, has simply oozed away almost unperceived—has sneaked out at the window, whereas the recent Military Service Bill has brought it back again with the greatest possible publicity, through the wide-opened constitutional door, and with the approval (as even Mr. Redmond admitted), of the large majority of the voters. Yet the *Nation* correspondent wrote in obvious sincerity, and his blunder is typical of the laziness with which the nation has ignored inconvenient facts for so many years.

We have seen how steadily the French kings, retaining the legal obligation to serve, cut it adrift from all practical possibilities of useful service ; how regularly they called for masses of men who simply bought themselves off with money, and were never expected to do anything else. Or, in that minority of cases in which actual military service was enforced upon the Frenchman, we have seen that this was done with a deliberate negation of the universality and equality which are the very corner-stones of the compulsory principle. We have seen a similar tendency in modern Britain, not under the dictates of any consistent or logical political thought, but simply under a policy of drift, and in the hope that voluntarism would always enable us to muddle through. Britons of the last few generations have thus formed a false idea of liberty, as if it were a capital which we could inherit, and lay up in a bank, and live upon the interest of this treasure which we have not won for ourselves. In a world of constant changes and chances, freedom must always be hard to win and hard to keep ; and England was most truly a Nation in Arms during those centuries when she most definitely outran her continental competitors in the long race for liberty. Our naval successes of the eighteenth century have tempted us to forget that, enormously as sea-power may outweigh land-power in importance for the defence of our Empire, we still cannot afford to neglect our land

forces—indeed, that our navy can never attain to its full development, or its full freedom of action, unless the military resources of the kingdom are adequately organized behind it. We have more and more accustomed ourselves to putting all our eggs into one basket, and have accepted with placid fatalism the idea that a single great naval defeat must necessarily bring us to our knees. (To find the national militia which did so much to save British liberties in the past, we must now go to Switzerland.) There we find a Nation in Arms that has come down from the Middle Ages; a compulsory and universal militia system which is as ancient as the state itself, which has been the foundation-stone of Swiss liberties from the very first, and which will endure until wars and rumours of wars are no more.

If, then, the German soldier of to-day is a conscript, so also were the Swiss soldiers who won freedom for the Confederation in so many fights against Austrian or Burgundian invaders. Foreign observers have always been interested in this Swiss compulsory militia; and many details were recorded by Coxe on his journeys of 1778, 1785, and 1787. At his first entry into the country he wrote: "It will perhaps give you some idea of the security of the Swiss republics when I inform you that Schaffhausen, though a frontier town, has no garrison, and that the fortifications are but weak. The citizens mount guard by turns; and

the people of the canton, being divided into regular companies of militia which are exercised yearly, are always prepared to act in defence of their country.”<sup>1</sup> The single canton of Zürich, he notes later on, had 28,235 effective men, while in Soleure and Berne all the males from 16 to 60 were embodied in the militia. In the territory of Geneva the militia was one of the “ancient liberties” suppressed by its powerful neighbours in 1782, and regained by a popular revolution in 1789. The strictness of obligation in those days may be measured by the proportion of militiamen to the total population. In Zürich it works out at 16 per cent., in Soleure at 20 per cent., and in Uri and Schwyz, the earlist homes of Swiss liberty, even at 24 per cent. In terms of the modern population of the German Empire, these figures would mean from eleven million to sixteen millions and a half of armed men.<sup>2</sup> John Moore, who was so much impressed by the militarism of Prussia in 1779, was equally struck by the democratic working of the Swiss system. He wrote from Berne (letter 36): “A people who have always arms in their hands, and form the only military force of the country, are in no danger of being pressed and

<sup>1</sup> *Travels in Switzerland*, 4th ed. 1801, 3 vols. vol. i. pp. 7, 79 (cf. 66), 229 (cf. lxiii.), 300. Other references to militia occur on pp. 28, 249, 287; vol. ii. pp. 249, 402, 408.

<sup>2</sup> Rather less than half of these numbers, however, were reckoned fit for immediate service. In 1782, the Canton of Berne had “63,637 fit for bearing arms, but only 27,218 fit for active service in the field” (Julian Grande, *A Citizen's Army*, p. 22).

irritated with taxes." Adam Smith, about the same time, pointed out the value of general military training for national liberty : " where every citizen had the spirit of a soldier, a smaller standing army would surely be requisite. That spirit, besides, would necessarily diminish very much the dangers to liberty, whether real or imaginary, which are commonly apprehended from a standing army. As it would very much facilitate the operations of that army against a foreign invader, so it would obstruct them as much if unfortunately they should ever be directed against the constitution of the state " : and he goes on to instance Switzerland as the country which approaches nearest to this ideal (*Wealth of Nations*, Book v. pt. iii. art. 2 *ad fin*).

When the French conquered the country, and reorganized it as a vassal-republic, they apparently did what they could to restrict the basis of this military service : " in time of war, the contingent of all the cantons is to be about 15,203 men " (*Monthly Magazine*, 1806, p. 388). The population was then about 1,600,000 ; this war-contingent for Napoleon's armies works out at only 1 per cent.

This militia had, of course, been unable to withstand the seasoned armies of the French republic, though Swiss political discord had also facilitated the task of the conquerors. When the Congress of Vienna restored Swiss independence, one of the first acts of the Confederation was to



reorganize the army (1817). Other reorganizations followed in 1850 and 1874, the latter being a direct result of the Franco-German war. Finally, in 1907, the country accepted by referendum a slight increase in the period of training, with a proportionate increase in the military budget. In its present form, it would be difficult to describe this army better than it has already been described by observers whom the Swiss themselves commend for their accuracy and their sympathy :

“The army is organized on what has been called the ‘voluntary-compulsory’ system, to which the Swiss of their own free will resigned themselves in order to maintain the independence of their country. . . . In Switzerland the army is an essentially citizen force, one which is thoroughly representative of the nation. . . . The Swiss army may be compared in many respects to our militia and volunteer force, but the qualifications of each man in his civil capacity are utilized to a far greater extent.”<sup>1</sup>

The Swiss army system is thoroughly national, thoroughly popular, and thoroughly efficient.

It is national in a sense in which very few British institutions can claim that title. The obligation of service is as strict as in Germany, except that the Swiss make more allowance for emigrants or citizens working abroad. A Swiss citizen abroad is not compelled to come home for his service ; he may repair the omission on his return, or (if then beyond the military age) pay the same tax

<sup>1</sup> Sir F. O. Adams and C. D. Cunningham, *The Swiss Confederation* (Macmillan, 1889), pp. 142-3.

as is paid by the physically unfit. About 48 per cent. of the recruits are rejected as physically unfit for active service.<sup>1</sup> These are liable to a tax in peace-time graduated in proportion to their income from six francs a year upwards, though the poorest of all are in fact excused from any payment whatever. Since the outbreak of war in 1914, this tax has been doubled, to keep some proportion with the increased service demanded from the able-bodied (J. G. 28). The Officers, like the men, are citizens in the first place; there are less than 250 professional soldiers in the whole of Switzerland (D.-R. 27). When we remember that, at times of emergency, even those who have been rejected in peace-time may be called up for different services, we shall realize how truly the Swiss Army has been described by Socialists like Vaillant and Jaurès as simply one aspect of the Swiss nation. It ensures equality of sacrifice so far as this is possible in any efficient military system. And—a fact too often forgotten by those opponents of compulsion who harp upon the fact that no system can arrive at complete equality of sacrifice—the military service has an appreciable effect in redressing the inequalities of civil life. Everybody starts in the ranks; with the result that many

<sup>1</sup> Lt.-Col. C. Delmé-Radcliffe, M.V.O., *A Territorial Army in Being* (Murray, 1908), p. 34. This is still the best book on the Swiss army which has been published in English, though the reader will find much of interest in Mr. Julian Grande's *A Citizen's Army* (Chatto and Windus, 1916). I refer to these henceforward as D.-R. and J. G. respectively.

subordinates, and even workmen, are promoted to command their social superiors. The following experience, related by a Labour Member in the House of Commons, would be impossible to match in British social life. In the debate of March 11, 1910, upon the Army Estimates, Mr. John Ward said:

“I can give the House an illustration of what conscription means in one little State. Recently I was engaged in making some investigations in Switzerland; and I went into a big engineering works at Zürich. I asked the manager what position he occupied in the Swiss army, and he replied that he was a private. I said ‘What! a man of your ability and education a private in the Army?’ He answered ‘Yes.’ I then enquired. ‘How is that?’ and his reply was ‘I cannot shoot. I have always failed at shooting, and as that is considered an important item in the advancement of the Swiss officer, I am only a private.’ Then I enquired ‘Who is the Officer in command of your battalion?’ and he told me he was a fitter in his shop. There you have a country where an opportunity is given to the working-man to be an officer over the manager of his works when they happen to be out for training. Of course, such a thing as that is opposed to all our ideas of exclusiveness. . . . Aristocratic ideas are gradually encroaching upon the military organization of the country, as is the case in other branches of our national life” (*Hansard*, p. 1831).

A similar instance had been given by another Labour Member, Mr. Seddon, who also opposed the idea of compulsion for Britain. He said (House of Commons, March 4, 1909; *Hansard*, p. 1654):

“In visiting a continental country where they have a citizen army, what struck me most was the fact that many

of the officers who were at the manœuvres were the servants of the soldiers who were there as well. I had one concrete case where a major in the Swiss Army was giving orders to a non-commissioned officer, and it turned out that the major was a commissionaire at the bank and the non-commissioned officer was the manager of the bank.”

This is what we get constantly in a truly national army ; and from this it follows that the Swiss army is as truly popular as it is thoroughly national. I collected testimonials to its popularity among all classes during a tour in Switzerland in 1900, and printed the results of my enquiries with the names of my informants.<sup>1</sup> Fuller testimonials, but without names, are given in Chapters VII. and VIII. of Mr Grande's book. In July, 1914, less than three weeks before the outbreak of war, I had the opportunity of interviewing six prominent Swiss socialists and antimilitarists, including MM. Wullschleger of Bâle, who had moved a reduction of the military budget in 1900, and Jean Sigg of Geneva, who had been imprisoned for four months for refusing to turn out when his battalion was mobilized to police the city during a strike. Both of these gentlemen explained that their quarrel was not with the compulsory principle, but with details of its application ; and M. Sigg went out of his way to remind me how much the compulsory army system had contributed to screw up national

<sup>1</sup> *A Strong Army in a Free State* (Simpkin, Marshall and Co., 1s. net), pp. 27 ff. The substance of their evidence is reprinted in Appendix X. at the end of the present volume.

education to greater efficiency. Three of the others—two editors and a printer—were strong pacifists, and had convinced themselves that something like progressive disarmament was already possible for all European countries. But even they did not venture to claim that they could command the votes of half the Socialist party in Switzerland; that is, they thought that 12 per cent. at most of the total register might be on their side. This was early in July; and in August one of the first official acts of the Socialist party was publicly to proclaim its hearty approval of the national mobilization, and to add “we have never combated our Militia system in itself.”<sup>1</sup> Even strong opponents of compulsion for Great Britain have admitted freely that in Switzerland it is the rejected recruit who bewails his fate; and Colonel Seely was substantially right in telling the House of Commons “The Swiss Minister of War assured me that the Swiss system is not now at all a compulsory system. Far from it; any man who is rejected regards it as a disaster, and there is great competition.”<sup>2</sup> Mr. Grande has done good service by printing, in Chapters VII. and VIII. of his book,

<sup>1</sup> *Berner Tagwacht*, Aug. 3, 1914; cf. Appendix XI. here below: “Swiss Socialists and the Swiss Army.”

<sup>2</sup> Debate of April 11, 1913. Cf. Mr. Harold Cox in the *Nineteenth Century and After* for Oct. 1907, p. 524. “That the system is popular with the Swiss people appears to be beyond question. . . . French and Germans, in probably at least 9 cases out of 10, look upon their military service as a painful obligation from which they would gladly escape. The Switzer, on the other hand, likes his service, and voluntarily undertakes even more than is imposed on him by the State.”

the military experiences of many of his Swiss friends, and their cordial tributes to the national army-system.

As the popularity of the Swiss army is based upon its thoroughly national character, so its efficiency is based upon both. Enlisting all the business forces of the nation, it naturally summarizes all the business ideas. It would be difficult to find any commercial or industrial concern which is run upon more strictly practical lines than the Swiss army. The time spent in training is not very much more than the theoretical training-course of a British Territorial; but the average work done in this time is, beyond all dispute, at least twice as great.<sup>1</sup> One very good rough test of business management is the test of economy. Switzerland spends on her army 8s. 10d. per head of the population, or less than half what she spends on her education, which is probably the most thorough in the world. The cost of each Swiss soldier in 1907 was only two-thirds of the cost of a British Territorial; yet this included heavy expenditure on fortifications, and a far more up-to-date armament than has ever been supplied to our Auxiliary Forces; and this difference in economy

<sup>1</sup> A Territorial officer, under exceptionally advantageous conditions, remarked to me about three years ago: "The irregularity of attendance is such that, for every ten drills done by my men, I calculate that we officers have to attend twenty drills." I repeated this to another officer whose company was only a little above the average; and, after a few minutes' reflexion he replied: "I should say that we put in three drills to one drill of the average private."

has since rather increased than diminished.<sup>1</sup> The extraordinary ingenious system by which the Swiss, under great natural disadvantages, have kept up an efficient cavalry force, has often been singled out for special praise. Yet it is modelled on a system evolved in Hanover while Hanover was under our Crown ; the Swiss business-man has picked up what the Briton has neglected and forgotten (D.-R., 31-4). Finally, nothing but the finest business organization could have carried the Swiss army so triumphantly through the strain of the present war. In the first week of August, 1914, the Swiss called out and armed a total force which, in proportion to the British population, would amount to more than three million men ; yet all who, like myself, actually saw the events of those days, were astounded at the small amount of dislocation which this effected in ordinary civil life. Nothing even remotely approaching this mobilization could have been managed under a voluntary system : and there can be little doubt that the efficiency of the army, even more than the geographical conditions, determined the German choice of violating Belgian rather than Swiss neutrality. A very good account of the Swiss mobilization may be found in Chapter IX. of Mr. Grande's book.

<sup>1</sup> Delmé-Radcliffe, p. 128 ; cf. Sir Ian Hamilton and Lord Haldane in *Compulsory Service*, 1911, pp. 178, 186, and Grande, p. 390 ; also a long and interesting article in the *Times* for June 4, 1915.

## CHAPTER XIII

### SWITZERLAND AND BRITAIN

WE have seen how Democrats of all countries, for many generations, have been attracted by this citizen army of Switzerland. Carnot, confessedly, was directly inspired by it in his reconstruction of the armies which saved the first French Republic. Radicals like Gaston Moch and Karl Bleibtreu, Socialist leaders like Jaurès, Vaillant, and Bebel, have preached the Swiss example in France and Germany. Adam Smith implicitly, and John Stuart Mill explicitly, recommended its example to Great Britain. Mill was one of the first among distinguished British thinkers to realize the true meaning of Germany's victory in 1870-1. In spite of his strong personal sympathy with France, where he had chosen to end his days, he maintained uncompromisingly that the Germans were in the right in this quarrel. This, however, did not blind him to the military significance of the German victory, and to the urgent necessity of reorganizing British defences. He wrote (2nd Jan., 1871):



“ Our turn must come. Therefore, our people ought to arm at once. . . . I do not think it safe to trust entirely to voluntary enlistment for the large defensive force which this and every other country now requires.”

And again, a month later :

“ many thoughtful people are now coming round to the Swiss system (of which Chadwick’s school-drill forms a part), but the majority even of army reformers are still far behind. They are prejudiced against making military service within the country compulsory on the whole male population, chiefly because, for want of knowledge of the facts, they have a most exaggerated idea of the time which would have to be sacrificed from the ordinary pursuits of life. . . . It will be an uphill fight to get a really national defensive force ; but it may be a question of life and death to this country, not only to have it, but to have it soon.”<sup>1</sup>

A distinguished Liberal political economist, Professor W. E. Cairnes, urged this same necessity with even more emphasis in the *Fortnightly Review* for Feb., 1871, then edited by the present Lord Morley. This paper is reprinted in Cairnes’ collected volume of *Political Essays*. But Mill and Cairnes died soon after ; the country settled down into apparent security ; and the Boer war, which again revealed the need of army reform, split the country so definitely on party grounds that national defence has since been treated, only too often, as a purely party question. It needed the Great War to bring home to all fair-minded people the truth of Mr. Asquith’s pronouncement early in 1914, that “ home

<sup>1</sup> *Letters*, ed. Hugh Elliot, vol. ii. pp. 291, 303.

defence is a common interest to all parties, and whatever can be proved to be essential for that purpose ought to be universally accepted, as being beyond the region of party controversy.”

Let us now, therefore, look more closely at the lesson of this Swiss system for Great Britain. How would our national life have been affected, in peace and in war, by the adoption of Mill's proposal in 1871? We can best realize this by taking note of what is actually done in Switzerland, under political conditions as free as our own, and by asking ourselves whether there is anything, in all this, which could not be managed just as easily in Great Britain.

The fact that every able-bodied man will have to serve is a standing lesson to him throughout boyhood and youth. It gives an enormous stimulus to physical training in the schools, and to the Cadet Corps, which in some cantons are compulsory while in others they are still voluntary. In 1900, I asked Mr. Hermann Greulich, the well-known Labour Secretary at Zürich, whether there were any changes which he would suggest in the army system.<sup>1</sup> After a moment's thought, he replied, “I would make the cadet corps system compulsory throughout the Confederation.” But, even in the

<sup>1</sup> For the Labour Secretary, see Adams and Cunningham, pp. 276-7; there is one for German and one for French Switzerland. These Secretaries are elected by the workmen, but paid by the nation, which also provides an office and a staff of clerks; their position is that of official intermediary between Government and the workers.

cantons where there is no compulsion in the schools, there are careful systems of physical training which prepare the boys for their service, and keep the older men in training for it. Moch quotes statistics for 1895-6, the last period available when he wrote. Of all Swiss boys between ten and fifteen, 41·9 per cent. had followed a gymnastic course during the whole year, 47·3 per cent. during part of the year, ·9 per cent. had refrained by doctors' orders, and thus only 9·8 per cent. remained unaccounted for. In 1912 this was so far improved that 91 per cent. of the recruits had previously passed gymnastic tests. It is vain for British antimilitarists to insist that equally good results in physical training might theoretically be obtained in a country which had no military drill whatever. They themselves have never put this theory into practice; and, great as have been the recent improvements in our elementary schools, the British youth still lacks anything like the systematic physical instruction which, by common consent, military drill would in fact have given him. Even Sir Ian Hamilton, on p. 106 of his *Compulsory Service*, speaking of our "weedy, overgrown youths of 17 and 18," writes: "the immense work of national regeneration the Army has been unostentatiously performing, by helping these lads and making fine men of them, is quite unknown to the average citizen." Mr. G. F. Shee, in *The Nineteenth Century and After* for May, 1903, points out that the British

recruit, during his first half-year's training, increases in chest-girth by an average of two inches, which is distinctly higher than the increase among French and German recruits. The natural inference is that this is due to the want of gymnastic training among the youth of our poorer classes. Yet the physical education of the poor is still much neglected. There was a significant episode in a debate in the House of Lords on Feb. 10, 1913. "Referring to the remarks made by Lord Herschell on this subject, Lord Lansdowne expressed the hope that he was not mistaken in assuming that the War Office had some plan under consideration for the compulsory training of boys at school and for a year or two after school." Lord Herschell at once put him right on this point. "No such plan is under consideration," he said. This, it must be remembered, was under a War Minister who has interested himself in national education, and talked publicly about national education, far beyond any of his predecessors. The *Arbitrator* pleaded very truly, nearly a year after this :

"Mr. Acland, who is opposed to conscription, advocated compulsory physical training in continuation schools. There is much to be said in favour of such a proposal ; and not the least argument in its favour, as Mr. Acland urged, is that, if generally carried out, it would incidentally destroy the National Service League" (Dec. 1913, p. 136).

In other words, the advocates of Compulsory Service have had the tactical advantage, for many

years, of pressing the immediate introduction of real physical training for our youth; while their opponents, for all their philanthropic professions, have still lagged behind. We are thus brought round again to those memorable words in John Stuart Mill's *Essay on Comte* (1865, p. 149):

“Until labourers and employers perform the work of industry in the spirit in which soldiers perform that of an army, industry will never be moralized; and military life will remain what, in spite of the anti-social character of its direct object, it has hitherto been, the chief school of moral co-operation.”

An army, by its very constitution, is obliged actually to do the things which even the best-intentioned theorists are too often content with merely talking about. In Switzerland, it was the army which found out a good many deficiencies even in the class-room teaching at the schools.<sup>1</sup>

For, in his twentieth year, every young Switzer goes before an Army Board not only for a medical test but for a scholastic examination also. Simple as it is, this examination has incidentally provided a very valuable stock-taking of scholastic results in the different cantons. Considerable local differences were thus brought out in earlier years; but these defects, once brought to light, were rapidly remedied; and emulation has now brought the Swiss cantons very nearly to the same level of

<sup>1</sup> See also Appendix XII. for the extent to which even the Swiss recruit, for all his preliminary physical training, benefits by his military service.

education. So uniformly excellent are the elementary schools, that practically none but the idiots and weak-minded fail in this examination, which turns on (1) reading, (2) simple composition in the form of a letter, (3) mental and written arithmetic. In the physical test, which is very strict, only 52 per cent. are successful. These are called out for the next "recruit school" held in their district, where they are put through a training in barracks, varying in length from sixty-five days (infantry) to ninety (cavalry). For the first twelve years of his service the citizen belongs to the "Elite," and is called out every other year for a "repetition course" of eleven days. In the intermediate years the soldier shoots at his own leisure a minimum of fifty rounds at the most convenient butts, but under strict Government conditions; in default of which he will be called out to go through, at his own expense, and at the place and time fixed by the authorities, a musketry school of three days. As a matter of fact, the volunteer rifle practice enormously exceeds this compulsory minimum. In 1898, 163,409 did their shooting voluntarily, as against only 2,493 who were called to the musketry school. In addition to these, there were 49,248 volunteer members of shooting clubs, including 2,166 cadets. Adding to these figures the 75,000 "Elite" and "Landwehr" who did their training that year, we see that there were 290,000 men who shot at the butts. The same proportion in England

would amount to over 3,100,000 compulsory marksmen, together with 640,000 more who shot entirely of their own free will (*Bericht des Eidgenössischen Militärdepartements über seine Geschäftsführung*, 1898, p. 59). Moreover, these figures take no account of the extra voluntary shooting done, over and above the compulsory fifty rounds, by those who are here counted on the compulsory list.<sup>1</sup>

These, then, are the military duties of the able-bodied Swiss citizen from his twentieth to his thirty-second year inclusive. For the next eight years he falls back from the Elite to the Landwehr, or first reserve. Here he is called out only once, for a course of eleven days' service. During the other years he must do his shooting classes as in the Elite, and he must keep his arms and accoutrements fit and ready for inspection at any moment. With his forty-first year he passes into the Landsturm, or second reserve, which is composed of the whole body of citizens between seventeen and forty-eight (except, of course, the hopelessly incapable, the Elite, and the Landwehr). The Landsturm is never called out but in case of war or

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Delmé-Radcliffe (p. 10) gives an excellent contrast between Swiss and British rifle-practice in 1906. It may be thus tabulated :

	Population.	No. of rifle-clubs.	Membership.
Great Britain	- 42,000,000	1,000	80,000
Switzerland	- 3,300,000	3,800	228,000

We must also remember that the great majority of the British employ miniature ranges, such as are used in Switzerland only by boys ; and in every other respect the Swiss clubs are far more business-like than any but the very best of ours.

other desperate emergency. A considerable proportion are armed, the rest are utilized as porters, etc.

Thus, though the citizen is never allowed to forget his duty of helping in the defence of his country, the actual time required of him is very short. The overwhelming majority serve in the infantry, and a life's infantry service totals only 203 days, a little more than half a year. A man who has reached his forty-ninth year is no longer liable to serve even in case of war, and has spent about *a hundredth part* of his life upon a duty which assures the freedom and prosperity of the country.

The military qualities of this militia will be discussed later on ; for the present, it is only necessary to note that it is, in fact, a system of Compulsory Territorialism. The Swiss citizen performs, by law, not very much more than the same length of service which the Territorial performs, or is supposed to perform, of his own accord. Like the Territorial, he remains all his life a citizen first, and a soldier only in the second or third rank. Unlike the Territorial, his training is taken very strictly ; his little unpunctualities, voluntary or involuntary, do not compel the Swiss officer to put in two or three drills for every one that is put in by the Swiss private. There is no soldier in the world who works harder than the Swiss during his short time of service ; and there is no army in the world that can mobilize so quickly or so easily. Captain Moch



prophesied this in 1899, and Commandant Manceau in 1900; Colonel Delmé-Radcliffe repeated the prophecy in 1908, and the actual success of Swiss mobilization in 1914 even surpassed all anticipations. It is well described by Mr. Grande in Chapter IX. of his book.

Moreover, every Swiss soldier starts in the ranks, and can obtain promotion by military merit alone. So strict is this law that no exception could be made for a foreign officer of real distinction who, in consequence of a duel, had migrated to Switzerland and sought service there as one of the 220 professional instructors. He had to do his recruit-course first among the boys, and was then promoted major-instructor. As a rule, however, even the most efficient officer is promoted by only one step at a time, through all the non-commissioned and subaltern grades. He receives no fixed salary, but simply daily pay while called out on army work; which time, of course, amounts only to a small fraction of his life. He must have his own civil business or profession to live by; and this single condition, if there were no other, binds army and nation indissolubly together. The letter of the law compels every citizen, during his years of service, to undertake any duty for which he is named; but the law provides also that the choice shall be made *strictly by merit*, and not by seniority. Now, nothing would be easier for a soldier than to avoid distinguishing himself sufficiently to run the risk

of promotion. Nothing would be easier ; but I have been assured over and over again that there is no serious practical difficulty of that kind. The rigour of the law is tempered by the sound common-sense of a people educated by centuries of self-government ; and a man who finds it already hard to make both ends meet at home will not be called upon to sacrifice any more of his time for the army, if only for the simple reason that such compulsion would defeat its own ends, forcing upon the man a task to which he could not do justice, and, therefore, upon the army an officer who could not do it credit. For the officer's additional work is no contemptible burden ; a cavalry lieutenant was good enough to reckon up for me the time that his grade had cost him, and it turned out that in four years he had already done more than double that amount of work which, spread over twenty-five years, would have earned a private his release from the army. Yet there is, on the whole, no difficulty in obtaining officers, and in some cases the competition is very keen. In the Swiss army, as in any competition whatever, the higher and better fed and more educated classes must have a long start ; but no start which resolution and real merit cannot overhaul. To anyone who has had the privilege of conversing with a number of Swiss officers it is evident enough that the system does, as a matter of fact, find out a high class of men. Moreover, the same qualities which thus enable the scratch man

to run through his field in the army stand him generally in good stead in the race of life. At twenty he was, let us say, a private and an artisan ; at thirty a captain and already his own master ; at forty-five, colonel in the army and a thriving man in the town. The one work helps the other ; and, by a double channel, merit forces its way to the fore. Here, again, the Swiss militia system shows itself one of the most powerful and beneficent factors in the true education of the people.

How cheerfully this extra burden of hard work is borne by the officers can only be realised by personal intercourse with the men who bear it. One of the Divisional Commanders whom I interviewed in 1900 was also a manufacturer ; his four sons are officers, from lieutenant upwards. At the last manœuvres all these five had been called out together. One or two of them could doubtless have got the service put off to some other time—for when you have so willing an army you can afford to make these little concessions, and I came across several instances of such consideration for civil requirements. But no ; all these five officers turned out together, and were proud to do so ; nor does the business suffer in the long run. Man is a queer animal ; tax all his manly resources, and he will doubly tax himself. These Swiss men of business who spend so much time and energy on army affairs, run neck and neck with us in commerce and industry.

Adams and Cunningham, giving statistics of Swiss trade and industry on p. 227 of their book, add the following comment :

“ When we compare these figures with the statistics of other countries for the same period, we find no state in Europe in which there is so great a general trade per head of population. England and Belgium come next ; then follow France and Germany. . . . These facts are all the more striking when we remember that Switzerland possesses none of the advantages in geographical situation, or in its topographical features, which would enable us to account for the remarkable extent and development of the commerce of the country.”

Moch, on pp. 187 ff., gives an interesting table of the comparative length of service of a private and an officer, up to their thirty-third year. The private, until recently, did only half as much as a sergeant—103 to 145 days, according to circumstances, as against 206 to 222. The lieutenant had done 313, and the captain 488, before their transference to the Reserve : the Major and Colonel sacrificed proportionately more time. The slightly longer service brought in by the Army Reorganization of 1907 (which was put to a Referendum and carried by a considerable majority) leaves these proportions practically unaltered.

Finally, we must consider the numbers furnished by this Swiss system, and their military qualities.

In 1895 the army consisted of 415,505 real effectives, apart from others who could be trained and utilized in cases of emergency. In 1911 (the

last for which we have figures) these numbers had risen to 486,851. (Moch, p. 160 ; J. G., p. 39.) Multiplying these by 13, to bring them to terms of British population, we get 6,330,000 effective fighting-men available at brief notice for home defence.

The military value of these soldiers has always been rated very highly by foreign observers. I have quoted some of these testimonials in my *Strong Army in a Free State* (pp. 24-5) ; more may be found in Delmé-Radcliffe, p. 58 ; Grande, p. 138, and above all in pp. 267-86 of Moch. The first judges that, while the system is cheaper than that of the British Auxiliary Forces, "it would be infinitely more efficient as an army."<sup>1</sup> The second quotes from a neutral military attaché who, after witnessing the mobilization of the second division in June 1915, decided that "[The Swiss soldier] has so much benefited by his previous training in service (from August 6th, 1914, till March, 1915) as to make the Swiss army probably the best-trained army, for its size, in the world to-day." Moch quotes from a French critic who, though anxious to prove that the Swiss system would not be sufficient for France, confesses that, in working military qualities, and apart from mere parade, the Swiss regiments "are not sensibly

<sup>1</sup> This was before Lord Haldane's scheme had begun to take full effect ; but, greatly as that scheme added to the value of our Auxiliary Forces, no responsible person would venture to qualify the improvement with this epithet "infinitely."

inferior to those of France or Germany ” (p. 275). After similar quotations from French, Austrian, and British military attachés, he gives a concrete instance which is even more significant than these official testimonials (p. 284):

“Switzerland took up the repeating-rifle eighteen years before France or Germany adopted it [*i.e.* in 1868]. But ten years later, in 1878, a similar arm was given to the crews in our navy. And, at the same time, we taught in our military schools that these repeating-rifles could not come into general use, since a weapon of that kind was unfit for troops of less fine quality than the Swiss infantryman or the French marine.”

We must, of course, always proceed with great caution in arguing from the experience of one country to another. But are not Britons rather prone to the opposite fault? Do we not often condemn foreign experiences unheard, or at least catch at very flimsy pretexts for rejecting them? The Great War, certainly, has given a real shock to this complacent insularity, and has swept certain objections away for ever. Even those who, a few years ago, protested that British class-feeling would forbid our imitating the Swiss system of promotion, will have been silenced by recent facts. The extreme Conservative who desired no such equality, and the jealous Democrat who, while desiring it, protested that British society was too rotten to permit it, must both have been converted by the deeds of all classes in the trenches, and by

the national oblivion of class-distinction in our admiration for all good fighters for their country. And it has repeatedly been pointed out that all the strong points of the Swiss system rest, not on Swiss geographical or racial peculiarities, but on the bed-rock of human nature. It is simply "Compulsory Territorialism"; simply a systematic exploitation of all available national forces for a national duty which, in Great Britain, is normally borne by scarcely more than one man out of ten. By marshalling all classes to stand shoulder to shoulder in defence of the country's liberties, it rubs off many awkward angles, and solves imperceptibly an infinity of small social or political problems. The working of the Swiss Army system can hardly be better expressed than by saying that it spreads through the whole nation much of the same spirit which it is the unique glory of our Public Schools to foster among our richer classes. It is the same sort of introduction, rough but healthy, to the realities of life. Here, as in schools, the man finds himself commanded by one who has risen from the ranks in which he still is—whom he himself has perhaps even known in those ranks—and hence there grows that highest and most living discipline which is compounded of familiarity and respect in due proportions. The rich learn that they must work to keep their start of the poor, while the poor see that rich men's sons have generally inherited many of the qualities which raised

their fathers before them. The Army ensures hard, healthy, open-air work to thousands who would otherwise have missed it. It arouses the sluggard from his sloth, and focusses the superabundant activities of the energetic man. Without overburdening the citizen, it never allows him absolutely to forget his responsibilities to the country which bred him; and, as the greatest of the Roman popular assemblies originated in a purely military organization, so the Swiss Army has proved itself one of the strongest factors in Swiss political and social education. That nation is confronted at every step by differences of race and religion as wide as any in these islands, and further complicated by differences of language. Yet in Switzerland there is nothing so bad as our Irish question. It is strange that British Liberalism has so long ignored the working, among an exceptionally free people, of this most perfect existing system of national defence.



## CHAPTER XIV

### PRINCIPLE OR EXPEDIENCY ?

IN spite of Lord Roberts's activity and personal popularity, the majority of British citizens were certainly still against him in 1914. The idea of compulsion was steadily gaining ground, as Mr. Harold Cox frankly confessed in his latest and fullest plea for Voluntarism (*Edinburgh Review*, April 1913, p. 485). But, in spite of this gradual advance, the majority of British voters were far from realizing the danger which John Stuart Mill had foreseen forty years earlier, or from seriously considering Mill's suggested remedy. This was doubtless due to many different causes ; but one far outweighed the rest. It was precisely because the country did not realize the danger, that it would not consider the remedy. Lord Haldane, in an Army Debate of 1909, agreed with Sir Henry Craik that every able-bodied Briton is still bound, under common-law, to fight when called upon for home defence (House of Commons, March 8). He only differed from Sir Henry Craik as to the actual need for giving our manhood such training as would

enable it to fulfil this existing common-law obligation. Yet when, shortly after the outbreak of the war, Lord Haldane again publicly admitted the common-law liability of every British citizen to fight in home defence, this suddenly became a Nine Days' Wonder, and the nation woke up in astonishment to one of the fundamental laws of its own Constitution. Nobody had paid any attention to it in 1909 ; now, everybody realized its significance. It had needed a European War to open our eyes.

For indeed this question, which so many people try to treat primarily as a matter of political principle, is really one of military expediency. In cold blood, 99 people out of 100 are agreed on the two main points on which the controversy really turns. On the one hand they recognize that invasion is one of the greatest conceivable calamities, and that scarcely any price would be too heavy to pay for efficient defence. On the other, they wish to pay no price, in money, in service, or in change of policy, beyond what the danger may reasonably be held to require. These two points are conceded by all but the negligible minorities who, at one extreme, desire an extension of militarism because they vainly hope to gain by it politically—or, at the other extreme, preach non-resistance, yet never attempt to construct any coherent theory of the non-resistant state. To the overwhelming majority, the decisive question in this problem is to deter-

mine the exact amount of force required for the defence of these islands or of the Empire. Very great differences of opinion exist within these limits; but those differences, however serious, are only of degree. The primary question, for reasonable men on either side, is to find the necessary degree of military force. This is often lost sight of in the heat of argument; but it remains the real dominating thought at the back of men's minds.

It has been treated as the primary question by political philosophers. John Stuart Mill, in the first chapter of his essay *On Liberty*, insists that the individual "may rightly be compelled to bear his fair share in the common defence." Again, in Chapter IV., he specifies the individual's two main duties to society, of which the second consists "in each person's bearing his share (to be fixed on some equitable principle) of the labours and sacrifices incurred for defending the society or its members from injury and molestation; these conditions Society is justified in enforcing at all costs to those who endeavour to withhold fulfilment." Strongly as Mill objected to unnecessary interference with individual liberties, he justified compulsory drill on the same grounds as compulsory education, of which he wrote: "I do not see anything short of a legal obligation which will overcome the indifference, the greed, or the really urgent pecuniary interest of parents" (*Letters*, vol. ii. p. 107). And Lord Morley, then Editor of the *Fortnightly*

*Review*, recognized equally clearly that in both cases the question was one of expediency; that Voluntarism was preferable so long as it would work, but Compulsion must step in as soon as it was evident that voluntary effort would no longer meet the needs of the time. After emphasizing the notorious deficiencies of British education under the voluntary system, Lord Morley wrote:

“The disadvantages and inconveniences of legal interference with parental freedom are more than counter-balanced by the disadvantages and inconveniences arising from a parent’s abuse of this freedom, to the detriment of other people. These, or some such propositions, seem to be the ground on which compulsion is to be defended. The argument is, in a general way, analogous to that of a country whose geographical position and the menaces of whose neighbours make it expedient for every man in it to be legally compelled to undergo a certain amount of military training.”<sup>1</sup>

Of all British political philosophers there is perhaps none who preached peace more consistently than Cobden. Yet Cobden repeatedly asserted: “I would, if necessary, spend one hundred millions sterling to maintain an irresistible superiority over France at sea” (J. Morley, *Life of Cobden*, letter of Aug. 2, 1860: Nelson’s edn. p. 387). This recognizes the same fact, that *real* military necessity is, at bottom, the paramount consideration.

Our most responsible statesmen, again, have

<sup>1</sup> *The Struggle for Education*, republished in book form, from the *Fortnightly Review*, in 1873, p. 139. On p. 25 the author gives a vivid contrast between British inefficiency, and German efficiency, in education.

followed the political philosophers in treating Compulsory Service as a question mainly of military expediency. Mr. Asquith, replying to Lord Roberts's deputation, said very distinctly that, if military necessity demanded compulsion, no political principles must be allowed to stand in the way.<sup>1</sup> In the Lords' debate of April 21, 1913, when Lord Curzon complained that the Government refused to consider compulsion seriously, Lord Haldane was careful to explain that his objections were not political, but military.<sup>2</sup> Ten days earlier (April 11) Colonel Seeley had spoken even more emphatically in the House of Commons. After pointing out that the Swiss system was no longer compulsory in the invidious sense, but sanctioned by universal consent, he added :

“ But why ? Not because a law was passed, but because the Swiss War Minister would say, ‘ if you don't do this

<sup>1</sup> “ I gladly recognize the truth of what Lord Roberts has said in his introductory remarks, and of what was repeated by more than one subsequent speaker, that it is not a matter which ought to divide us upon what are commonly called party lines ; because home defence is a common interest to all parties, and whatever can be proved to be essential for that purpose ought to be universally accepted as being beyond the region of party controversy. . . . The more this matter is discussed, and the more public opinion can be brought to bear upon the aspects which you have put to me to-day, the greater will be the advantage to the community, both from the point of view of safety and of educational and social problems ” (*Westminster Gazette*, Feb. 27, 1914).

<sup>2</sup> *Earl Curzon* : “ If the Government think Lord Roberts's plan a bad one, why not be willing to discuss the matter with us ? Why regard the matter as taboo to the Liberal Party, as an unclean thing which in no circumstances you would touch ? ” *Viscount Haldane* : “ Not from the Liberal point of view, but from the military point of view. ” *Earl Curzon* : “ I find it difficult to distinguish between the noble Viscount as a soldier and as a politician. ” (Laughter.)

your independence is gone.' I, however, have to say that the General Staff inform me, after the most careful consideration, that the arrangements we now have [in Great Britain] are adequate to prevent us suffering from a blow at the heart which would cause us to lose our national independence. Suppose the whole situation were reversed, and that the only way of saving our hearth and home was by adopting universal service, there would not be a man in this House who would not at once be prepared to vote for it, and whose constituents would not vote for it."

Equally significant are the arguments of an equally able opponent of Compulsory Service, Mr. Harold Cox. While admitting that it works admirably in Switzerland, he contended that we had no use for it in Great Britain. "By adopting this system we should undoubtedly obtain, at a comparatively moderate expense, an enormous number of soldiers. But do we want these soldiers?" Later on, pointing out that the Swiss system would give us four millions of trained men, and that the then experts (this was in 1907) fixed 10,000 as the largest German attacking force for which we need make serious provision, Mr. Cox continued, "and we are asked to create this gigantic machine in order to deal with a raiding force of 10,000 men!"<sup>1</sup> On these premisses, the argument was, of course, perfectly sound; and it is equally natural that, in the autumn of 1914, Mr. Cox was one of the first distinguished voluntarists to admit that the changed military situation now demanded compulsion. But

<sup>1</sup> *Nineteenth Century and After*, Oct. 1907, pp. 527, 531.

perhaps the strongest instance of all is supplied by Major-General Sir Alfred Turner, whose *Knell of Compulsory Service* was published in 1911 as a leaflet of the International Arbitration League. Though emphasizing also the "wastefulness" of military preparations, it deals almost entirely with the military and naval aspects of the question, argues that "our forefathers would have blushed to own to such fears of invasion," and contends that "the bottom has been knocked out of the arguments of the Compulsion party" by Sir Arthur Wilson's official conclusion that "invasion on even a moderate scale of 70,000 men is practically impossible." It is to Sir Alfred Turner's honour that, when facts threw a new light upon this problem, he again was among the first distinguished converts. He wrote to the *Times* (May 24, 1915):

"Everyone who possesses patriotism and common-sense must agree with Major E. H. Richardson that compulsory service is now essential and only fair to the public. There only existed one supposed reason why a large number of people—myself, I regret to say, among them—opposed Conscription as unnecessary, and that was that we were short-sighted and gullible enough to believe in the good faith of the German Emperor and the love of peace and goodwill towards us of the German nation."

The same plea and the same confession were repeated on July 15; and Sir Alfred Turner wrote again on March 29, 1916:

“The only reasons which made us apparently safe without Conscription were that we should not be involved in a European war, and that the German Emperor was, as he pretended to be, determined to preserve the peace of Europe. Both these great illusions have been shattered to atoms.”<sup>1</sup>

This, then, has been the attitude of the most responsible British statesmen, and of those writers who have most clearly faced the problem of compulsory service. But it must be confessed that a very different attitude was taken up until quite recently by a large section—and probably by the majority—of the general public. Sir Alfred Turner’s reason was the real reason at the back of most minds; yet many persuaded themselves that this was a question, not of expediency, but of fundamental principle. In 1900, as I know by experience, it was possible to address a large working-man audience on the subject without prejudice. But a little later, when Lord Roberts’s propaganda brought it nearer to practical politics, it was more and more treated as a party question by a large section of the public—and, it must be confessed, especially by political Liberals. When, on Feb. 27, 1914, Mr. Asquith had freely conceded that the question of Compulsion or Voluntarism “ought not to divide us upon what are commonly called party lines,” the *Westminster Gazette* seized this opportunity of protesting, in its leading article :

<sup>1</sup> Compare the startling change in the general American attitude from the moment that war became a question of practical politics.



“if ever this question becomes practical politics, the Liberal Party will be as solid for the voluntary principle as it is for Free Trade. That contingency is so likely to be deferred to the Greek Kalends that we have no desire to proscribe anyone who holds a pious opinion on this subject.”

It would be difficult to warn the public more plainly that, however the Prime Minister might urge us to keep our minds open and discuss the question in all its bearings, any such discussion would be waste of time in orthodox party-circles. A correspondent put this more plainly, if possible, in the *Nation* for March 11, 1916 (p. 286): “if there was an article in the Liberal creed which was sacrosanct [until this war broke out], it was that which anathematized Conscription.” It is not too strong, therefore, to say that a large number of party-Liberals, and of very distinguished party-Liberals, adopted a purely Conservative attitude towards this question in the days before the war. Both to the *Nation* and to the *Westminster Gazette*, papers second to none in general ability and fairness, the real motto was “j’y suis ; j’y reste !”

It is greatly to the honour of British and American politics and character that this impossible reliance upon abstract principles (crude in themselves and incompletely thought-out), was so soon modified in the face of new and startling facts. Indeed, precious as that power of imagination is which sometimes casts upon our minds a shadow of the coming reality, still more precious is the open mind

which does not hesitate to face the reality when it appears before our eyes. Our national blindness to the risks of war was emphasized in the past not only by compulsorists like Lord Roberts, but by so militant a voluntarist as Colonel F. N. Maude, who in 1907, writing about war scares, remarked :

“ it is true that under ordinary conditions, though people read these things, no one allows them to influence his day-to-day conduct for a moment. House-property in Portsmouth, for instance, is not depreciated because a particular group of dwellings happens to be directly behind certain batteries ; and the fact that every shell passing over its guns must of necessity find a final billet in their best bed- or drawing-rooms does not affect their rent or selling-price. I have made careful enquiry to satisfy myself on this point, yet no one can suggest that Portsmouth is not kept sufficiently alive to the possibilities of modern warfare ” (*War and the World's Work*, p. 408).

The illusion of security has been greatly modified now in seaside towns ; so also has the whole problem of National Defence assumed a different aspect to the nation at large, though we are still in a transition stage here. If the old illusions had now completely disappeared, the present book would be superfluous, since nothing is less profitable than the gratuitous raking-up of bygones. But we still find leading articles here and there, and correspondence and pamphlets in profusion, based upon the old delusion that Compulsory Service is contrary to democratic principles. The authors do not argue the question ; now, as before the war, they

simply beg it, writing as men who have never conceived any other idea, and who have habitually addressed a public unwilling to face any other side of the facts. In any case, it will be a long task to drive out the purely insular delusion that the compulsory *principle* is hated and dreaded by those millions of continental working-men who have practical experience of its working. Time and sober reflection are needed to make our masses understand that the continental masses may hate war, and hate many details in their present system, without dreaming of attacking the compulsory principle in itself.

We must begin, therefore, at the top as well as at the bottom. The real facts of history and of modern continental politics must frequently be put into a form accessible to those writers who now dogmatize upon so slender a basis of fact. Then, and then only, this outcry of "Prussianism" raised against even the Swiss Citizen-Army system will soon be confined to that negligible residuum of writers who cannot or who will not face the plainest facts. Then the working-classes, no longer misled by statements which would be laughed out of court on the Continent or in our own Colonies, will ask themselves whether it is safer for a democracy to hold the armed force of the nation in its own hands, or to depute that force to a paid minority. They will further ask themselves, with Jean Jaurès, whether a population which accepts

the foreign invader with resignation is likely ever to wage a successful fight against the capitalist.<sup>1</sup> They will recognize the fundamentally military character of this question, and will see that a democracy which dissociates itself from military questions is committing political suicide.

All public debates, even in the past, have shown how impossible it is to treat this question mainly as one of principle. Mr. Harold Cox, good voluntarist as he then was, could not resist the temptation of exposing this fallacy in the Army Debate of March 8, 1909. He pointed out that some of those who protested most against compulsion for national defence, were at the same time determined to compel their fellow Trade-Unionists to contribute money for the salaries of the Labour Members. Here and in similar matters, Labour has actually insisted upon Compulsion. At the Swansea Railway Congress of 1914, Mr. A. Whitehead, of Newton Heath, argued "that it was as just and reasonable to coerce men to pay for the benefits secured for them by the Trade Union, as it was to coerce rate-payers to contribute to the cost of sanitary administration for the preservation of the health of the community" (*Manchester Guardian*, June 20, 1914).

<sup>1</sup> "Never would a proletariat which had abandoned the defence of national independence—and therefore of its own free development—never would such a proletariat find vigour enough to conquer capitalism. Having unresistingly suffered the invader's yoke to be added to that of the capitalist, it would never raise its head again" (Jean Jaurès, *L'Armée Nouvelle*, 1915, p. 362; translated in *Democracy and Military Service* (Simpkin, 1s.), p. 82).

The most indefensible of all recent proposals for compulsion, from the point of view of settled principle and real human justice, have been those for conscripting the time-expired Regulars and the boys of 18, and for violating the express contract under which the Territorials had enlisted. Nobody will venture to assert that any one of those three classes would have been treated with such manifest injustice if they had not been practically helpless in the political sense—the first two as having no votes, the third class as unable publicly to express their opinions during the war, and all three as lacking either the numbers or the organization required for anything like an effective strike. Yet the protests against these unjust proposals of compulsion came not from the voluntarist but from compulsionist newspapers; nor had either Sir John Simon, or any member who has claimed to oppose conscription *on principle*, a single word to say against these proposals in the House of Commons' debate (April 27, 1916). Moreover, Sir John Simon's attitude is the more significant because of his personal distinction. He is the most prominent of all our statesmen who irreconcilably resisted the Military Service Bill. Yet Lord Derby had no difficulty in showing that Sir John had not only connived at, but actively employed the principle of Compulsory Military Service in its least justifiable form, before his final revolt in face of Universal Compulsion. In other words, Sir

John had been guided mainly by military expediency. So far as the military position seemed to him absolutely to require it, he had been content to inflict compulsory soldiering upon numbers of his fellow-citizens ; when at last he judged that the Bill overstepped the limits demanded by strict military necessity, he quitted the Government.<sup>1</sup>

In this he was logical enough : it is only illogical to represent such a revolt against military details, however important, as a revolt of *principle* against Compulsion. But the incident is of extreme importance, because it exactly exemplifies the confusion of thought on this subject in the minds of the general public. This war has at last shown clearly that 99 men out of 100, when they spoke of this question as one of pure principle, were really guided in their reasoning by considerations of expediency. Before August, 1914, there seemed to be no military necessity which could weigh against the general reluctance to inflict, or accept, such a restriction of individual liberty as this. The nation has since accepted, on the overwhelming testimony of the experts, an assurance that the military necessities of this war do demand compulsion. The ground, therefore, is so far cleared for discussion after the war, that nearly all disputants will now give due weight to the question of military necessity. The voluntarist, however earnest, will no longer merely say “ j’y suis, j’y reste ! ”

<sup>1</sup> See documents in Appendix XIII., “ Principle and Compromises.”

and plead that his principles forbid him to discuss so distasteful a question. He will confess "National defence is, after all, the paramount consideration ; and, so long as I cannot convince myself and others that voluntarism will give us every reasonable security, I must bow to the exigencies of a situation created not by theories, but by facts."

## CHAPTER XV

### VOLUNTEER RECRUITS

I HAVE tried, up to this point, to prove three main conclusions.

1. That, in past history, the universality of military service has been roughly proportionate to the freedom of the State, while despots have always relied as much as possible upon voluntary enlistments, with compulsion in the background.

2. That to-day, in the civilized world, the majority of democrats treat the voluntary army system as scarcely more practicable than a voluntary system of taxation; that all continental democracies accept the compulsory principle, and only object to some of its applications.

3. That even the Briton, while he imagined his objections to be based upon democratic or individualistic principles, knew at the back of his mind what he now sees plainly enough, that the whole question is one of degree. The country needs a certain amount of military and naval protection, as the child needs education and the workman insurance. In national defence it is even truer



than in education or insurance, that the proved inadequacy of voluntary effort renders legal compulsion a matter of bare social justice.

It is an invidious task to emphasize the breakdown of voluntarism; and we may treat it very briefly. We must begin, however, by dismissing the random talk about ingratitude. It may safely be said that in most cases the men who least believe in the adequacy of voluntarism as a system are most ready to recognize the generous sacrifices made by the individual volunteers; just as those who object most to capitalism as a system have often most sympathy with the workmen who bear its chief burden. Nobody fully appreciates the heroism of our soldiers on the retreat from Mons, who does not also realize that these men bled to redeem other men's miscalculations—that they were pitted against thrice their number of Germans, because our politicians had accustomed themselves to assert that one volunteer was worth five conscripts—and that, even so, their lives were partly thrown away. For, though that retreat has been claimed, truly enough perhaps, as our greatest military exploit since Waterloo, yet nothing can be more certain than that a few such retreats in succession would have ruined the Allied cause.

Nor is it much more to the point to insist that no nation ever has raised such a volunteer army as this of ours, especially for foreign service. The fact still remains that our troops were able to hold

up only a fraction of the German army ; and that we have to thank our Allies and our Fleet for the two years' delay which has enabled us to raise and train a force really proportionate to our population and to our stake in the War. Who will promise us anything like so long a respite on any other occasion? It is perhaps true that no state was so well educated, *under a purely voluntary system*, as ours was in the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century. Yet it is certainly true that, during those two generations, our education was steadily falling behind that of other countries with their compulsory systems, and that the daily cry of the British Voluntarists "give us a little longer trial, and all will be well," was finally silenced by the irresistible logic of facts. As early as 1847, Lord Macaulay gave a conclusive answer to this plea. "Only this morning the opponents of our plan [*i.e.* the voluntarists] circulated a paper in which they confidently predict that free competition will do what is necessary, if we will only wait with patience. Wait with patience! Why, we have been waiting ever since the Heptarchy. How much longer are we to wait? Till the year 2847, or till the year 3847? . . . Our whole system has been unsound. We have applied the principle of free competition to a case to which that principle is not applicable."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Speech in the House of Commons, April 18, 1847, printed in *Miscellaneous Writings*, 1878, p. 742.

As a matter of fact, the voluntary principle was tried for nearly a generation after Macaulay's words, and was finally killed in 1870 by the shocking and unanswerable disclosures of its inadequacy. Here, as in the army question, it is comparatively unimportant to consider whether the voluntary system in Britain has succeeded better than voluntary systems elsewhere. The real point is, has that system succeeded as well as the compulsory systems of other nations with whom we have to compete? If not, it stands condemned. And, indeed, it would seem to stand condemned by one simple historical fact. *There is no instance in history of a country which has won a really great war on the voluntary system.* Even in Great Britain, compulsion had to be revived before we could finish our wars against Charles I., against Louis XIV., and against Napoleon. It is true that these particular compulsory measures were extremely partial and unjust, but this fact, so far as it is relevant at all, tells against the voluntarist plea. For if, in every great war, the country is driven to improvise compulsory measures which, being hastily devised, are almost certain to be partial and unjust; then not only does business efficiency demand a normal and constitutional system of universal service, but civic justice demands it still more urgently.

Yet, in spite of this historical fact, which seems indisputable, it must be admitted that some

British military authorities are opposed to compulsory service on purely military reasons. We may profitably remember that some French experts opposed that mass-levy which saved Revolutionary France; and that still more distinguished experts in Prussia fought obstinately against that system of universal service which lies now at the foundation of German military power. When the king refused to follow the example of victorious France in 1794, it was not only because he feared the possible democratic working of universal service, but also because he held it incompatible with the peculiar merits of his then military system. And even in 1807, after all the lessons of the Jena campaign, there was excellent specialist opinion in favour of the old system. "For there are few notions that have been so much ridiculed by military specialists of the very day to which Scharnhorst belonged, as this notion of a citizen army."<sup>1</sup> Therefore we must not be dismayed by a certain amount of military opposition, even though this were far more important than it is now, or is likely to be when the war is over. We must accept no adverse decision which does not take full account of the fact that great wars have always involved compulsion, or which neglects other equally notorious facts. And probably the British public, with

<sup>1</sup> J. Seeley, *Life and Times of Stein*, 1878, ii. 109. For the king of Prussia, see *European Magazine*, March, 1794, p. 243, or *Annual Register*, for 1794, p. 204.

its present alert and intelligent interest in the military problem, will be astounded to find the havoc which voluntarist military writers have made hitherto with easily accessible facts.

Let us begin with the book most often quoted, and most highly accredited by the names of its joint authors. Sir Ian Hamilton's *Compulsory Service* was written for Lord Haldane, who published it with a preface giving it the stamp of his high authority. It claims on the title-page to be "A Study of the Question in <sup>1</sup> the light of Experience." Besides his experience in the South African war and as an observer in the Russo-Japanese war, Sir Ian Hamilton had been Adjutant-General; that is, Director of Recruiting in Great Britain. It is true that in 1910, when the book was written, he was already ex-Adjutant-General: that there were other ex-Adjutant-Generals who had held the office far longer than he, even under Lord Haldane; and that, of the other four ex-Adjutant Generals still alive, three at least were pretty generally known to dissent from Sir Ian Hamilton on the main issue; Sir Ian was therefore probably the only living Director of Recruiting who could have been found to write against *Compulsory Service*.<sup>2</sup> But, when all has been said, we must acknowledge that Sir Ian's authorship, and Lord

<sup>1</sup> The actual title-page, by an obvious printer's error, here reads "of."

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 7-8 of *Fallacies and Facts*, Lord Roberts's answer to *Compulsory Service*.

Haldane's express approval of the work, justify the attention which it has always commanded as the most authoritative expert attack upon the principle of Compulsory Service for Great Britain.

Nobody, however, who reads that book in the light of present facts, can fail to realize the confusion of thought which pervades it. The issue which the author and his patron had to face was extremely simple. Lord Roberts proposed for Great Britain what was, in all essentials, the Swiss system of national defence behind our present Regulars and Navy ; or (to put it into other words), Compulsory Territorialism. Neither Sir Ian nor Lord Haldane imagined—what uncharitable or unprincipled people have sometimes insinuated—that Lord Roberts was not sincere here. They knew perfectly well that, though he personally would have preferred a longer training, he was transparently honest in proposing to give a full and impartial trial to a six-months' system. They had, therefore, to face an opponent who proposed keeping the Navy and the Regulars at least up to their present strength—who, in fact, was far more concerned to strengthen both Navy and Regulars than either Liberal or Unionist governments, as a whole, have shown themselves—but who wished to have, behind this Navy and these Regulars, a compulsory instead of a voluntary territorial system. Lord Roberts's many speeches, and the formal proposals of his League, left no room what-

ever for doubt upon this point. Yet, on the one occasion on which Sir Ian professes to state exhaustively and with a mathematical clearness the three possible policies suggested for Great Britain, he unaccountably avoids this one obvious issue. The third policy which he formulates bears at first a superficial resemblance to Lord Roberts's proposal ; but, when Sir Ian proceeds to refute it, we find that he is setting himself to refute some scheme which deliberately proposes the abolition of the Regulars, and which therefore differs essentially from anything ever proposed by Lord Roberts. And his only excuse for this is, that the Editor of the *Observer* (if the brief quotation given represents that gentleman's views correctly) had made some such proposal on July 8, 1910. Sir Ian makes no attempt to prove that this was written in the interests of the National Service League, nor even that the writer was a member of that League. The proposal he objects to is expressly contradicted by the official programme of the League, as printed on the cover of its Journal and in its leaflets. No official of the League ever advocated it publicly. Yet, instead of dealing with the League's actual proposal—the only proposal which really commanded public attention and against which his whole book was nominally directed—he deals instead with an altogether casual and irresponsible scheme discovered “ in the widely-read editorial paragraphs ” of a Sunday paper ! In this passage, which professes

an analysis so searching and so exhaustive, we are left still wondering what Sir Ian could possibly urge, from a *military* point of view, against the proposal of John Stuart Mill and Lord Roberts, that we should support our existing Navy and Regulars by a national manhood trained on the Swiss system.

Let us assume, just for the moment, that Lord Roberts could have had his way, and submitted every able-bodied man to a series of military trainings totalling about six months, without prejudice to the existing Navy and Regulars. It is a matter of the simplest arithmetic to show that we should thus have an enormously larger number of trained men than our Territorial system gives us. Nobody who has seen the two systems at work has ever ventured to deny that the average Swiss, drilled by law, becomes far more familiar with the technicalities of his temporary military profession than the average Territorial; or that a compulsory system would enormously improve us as riflemen, even though we should always lack some of the Swiss advantages here. At first sight, therefore, only one conclusion would seem possible. Behind the same Navy and Regulars as at present, we should have a body of trained citizens not only enormously more numerous than anything which the voluntary system has ever given us, but also individually more efficient in every way in which military efficiency can be calculated in times of



peace. Therefore, however exaggerated may be the sanguine expectations of some Compulsorists, it would seem quite impossible to deny a very considerable residuum of clear military gain. If we wish to face the whole truth, these apparent facts must be clearly stated on the threshold of the subject, and unflinchingly faced. Yet here again, though Sir Ian makes a bolder attempt to face them than in the pages where he sets out to be more rigidly logical, he deals with them only piecemeal and confusedly. He takes what seems to be the only possible line of defence. He pleads (1) that Compulsory Territorialism would necessarily and unavoidably hinder recruiting for the Regulars if not for the Navy, and (2) that legal compulsion, by destroying the volunteer spirit, would substitute for the existing Territorials a force so deficient in *moral* as to render it a feebler fighting-machine than the existing Territorial Force of less than a quarter its numerical strength. Before examining these pleas in detail, let us note that they are exactly the pleas which were set up for Voluntarism in education; though these linger now only among those frankly conservative spirits who look upon the Board School as both a symptom and a cause of national decay. Lord Macaulay, Lord Morley, and all the old-time champions of compulsory education, had to point out that the Voluntarists fell back upon this argument only after they had been driven out of all the plainer ground; that

they tried to excuse the grossest and most tangible statistics of defective education by pleading these intangible and delicate spiritual influences; and that, if they could find no better arguments than this, the public would probably judge the "imponderable" advantages to be merely imaginary. They believed in "that blessed word, Mesopotamia," because no other belief would save their cause. With this very close historical parallel before us, we have every right to look sceptically at the argument that Britain should be worse off in war-time for having a peace-establishment of enormously greater numbers, more efficient drill, and better markmanship. What real reason can Sir Ian give for either of these beliefs, upon which (though he avoids explicitly confessing the fact) his whole military case rests? How does he know that recruiting for the Regulars would suffer? or that four men trained under the Swiss system would not be so good as a single Territorial? Let us take his arguments separately.

1. On the recruiting question, beyond all others in this book, Sir Ian speaks as an expert. And here, fortunately, he has left us no excuse for ignoring the main reason which has brought him to his somewhat pessimistic conclusion. In his fullest discussion of the problem (p. 84) he writes: "only one narrow beam from the searchlight of experience illumines the dense mist of conjecture wherein we find ourselves groping. All the more necessary is

it, then, that we should make the best use we can of it." This single illuminating beam turns out to be this : In April, 1902, the War Office formulated a scheme for inducing Regulars who had served their three years to enlist for a further extension of five years, making eight years in all with the colours. The experiment was tried for three years, and then abandoned as a failure, because only about 36 per cent., after serving three years with the colours, consented to extend their service. From this Sir Ian infers that we should not get the number of Regular recruits we need from a population which has been passed through *six months* of military training. The first question which common-sense applies to this argument is : Would this 36 per cent., which the experiment confessedly yielded, be really too few ? And, after a very simple arithmetical sum, we find that it would far exceed our requirements under the Swiss scheme ; we should need only  $23\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of re-enlistments.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Under the Swiss system, we should have 191,000 compulsory recruits yearly (after deducting the unfit, the emigrants, and those needed for the mercantile marine). From these, we should need 8,000 voluntary recruits yearly for the Navy and 35,000 for the Regulars : total, 43,000 or  $23\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the whole 191,000. Moreover, this takes no account of the fact that the majority might enlist in the Regulars from the very first ; by which (as expressly provided by the N.S.L. scheme) they would escape compulsory service altogether. And, finally, it is too favourable to Sir Ian to put the results of the 1902 experiment as low as 36 per cent., which is obtained by taking the average of the three years. The first year yielded 31·60 per cent., the second 36·53, the third, 40·42. The ratio, therefore, was rapidly rising ; and it is more than probable that, if the experiment had been continued, the yearly average would have exceeded 40 per cent., or nearly double our anticipated requirements under the Swiss scheme.

Neither Sir Ian nor Lord Haldane had troubled to apply this obvious arithmetical test to the argument which they put forward as the most effective weapon in their whole armoury. They avoid anything like a clear comparison between the percentage actually obtained in 1902-4 and the percentage required under a Compulsory Service Scheme, and obscure the argument by that vague appeal to the superiority of the Volunteer spirit which we must presently deal with in detail.

When the "one narrow beam from the searchlight of experience" is so vague as this, we need not wonder that Sir Ian's other reasons are vaguer still. He argues from the fact that Russia, Germany and France have no professional colonial force at all comparable in numbers to our 244,000 Regulars; but he does not deny that the 58,000 kept by France are, in fact, as many as she wants or attempts to raise; and he is obliged to admit that all conditions are so different in all these countries as to make comparison with Great Britain very difficult. One single distinction, which he does not mention, is, in fact, sufficient to upset his whole analogy. It is notorious that the brief Swiss system of service, with which it was Sir Ian's real task to deal, is felt by the population to be incomparably less burdensome than the prevailing continental conscriptive systems. Therefore, instead of wandering about among other continental failures to procure any large number

of long-service recruits, it should have been his first business to face the fact that Switzerland, in spite of her compulsory system, never had any difficulty in providing enormous numbers of volunteers for foreign service, until the hiring of Swiss soldiers was put down by law for weighty reasons of public policy. And, even if we confine our attention to present-day Switzerland, the lesson is the same. The Swiss, *in addition to their compulsory service*, do as much volunteer military work as would suffice, if they had our population, to create a volunteer force equal to our Territorials; and many observers have emphasized the fact that the Service Law has rather quickened than dulled their volunteer energies. For instance, Colonel Delmé-Radcliffe writes (p. 40): "I have heard the argument used that the introduction of a system of compulsory service in England would kill all volunteering and the voluntary spirit. If the Swiss nation is any guide, it would seem difficult to make a more incorrect statement." These words were printed in 1908, but already spoken in 1907 before an audience of military experts, including several members of Parliament especially invited to hear it. It is very strange that, more than two years later, neither Sir Ian nor Lord Haldane should know anything whatever of this evidence. It may be added that the Swiss mobilization of 1914 produced numerous offers from volunteers in the first few days, until the War Office

publicly notified that the country had all the men it needed, and could entertain no more offers.

Sir Ian should have faced, also, facts which were at once brought forward by his critics, but of which he took no notice whatever in his second edition. The *Nation in Arms*, "Fallacies and Facts" (pp. 31-4 and 171-181) and the *Spectator* (Dec. 3, 1910) proved clearly that the general evidence is strongly against Sir Ian. The U.S.A., the least militarized of all civilized nations, is the nation which finds most difficulty in raising an adequate force of Regulars by voluntary recruiting. Though the U.S.A. pay the highest price in the world for soldiers, their numbers are always far below the establishment; and *Whitaker's Almanac* puts the situation in a nutshell, "recruiting unsatisfactory, desertions frequent."

England, again, has never boasted such military superiority over a first-rate adversary as during the Hundred Years' War. Yet in those days her military system was far more strict in its compulsion than that of France, and from these compulsorily trained men she raised volunteer armies larger in proportion to her population than the French.

Again, a case which Sir Ian quotes from Canadian history tells, in fact, dead against him (p. 139, note). It has since been pointed out that the men whom he mistakes for pure volunteers, and whose glorious exploits he extols, were, in fact, men who

had been enrolled in the militia by compulsion, but had afterwards volunteered for further fighting—in short, that they were just the sort of men whom we might count upon getting (so far as the cases are analogous at all) under a system of Compulsory Territorialism.

Moreover, he ignores still more unaccountably the notorious facts of the Napoleonic War, as recorded in the classical book on that subject—Fortescue's *History of the British Army*. From 1805 to 1813 we raised 227,510 militiamen by a most odious form of compulsion—the ballot, with pecuniary substitution. These men were treated more roughly than the French or German conscript of to-day. Yet 99,755 of them volunteered at different times for the Regular Army, where the discipline was just as harsh. That is, 44 per cent. of these men volunteered after an incomparably more unpleasant taste of compulsion than any responsible person has ever suggested for the British population of to-day.<sup>1</sup>

Again, there are three well-known boys' schools in which military drill is compulsory, and the whole discipline is military—the Duke of York's, the Royal Hibernian Military, and lastly, the

<sup>1</sup> This is fully dealt with in *Fallacies and Facts*, pp. 30 ff. ; and Lord Roberts there quotes from a recent letter received from Mr. Fortescue, in which that historian says, "Sir Ian Hamilton totally ignores the history of Napoleon's conscript army. . . They had a very hard time [in the Peninsula] . . . yet there was less desertion of born French (as apart from foreign contingents in the French service) than of born British to the enemy—not very creditable to the voluntary British soldier."

Gordon Boys' home, which is not even, like the other two, a school for sons of soldiers. From the first two, more than 80 per cent. volunteered for the army in 1907, and from the third 60 per cent. went to army or navy. The case of Colonel Pollock's "*Spectator* Company," fully described in the *Spectator* for Dec. 3, 1910, is perhaps even closer to the same point, but is too long for description here.

Nor is Sir Ian happier when he stands upon general principles. He writes on p. 88, "which of us, knowing his own countrymen, will not allow that the freeborn Briton tends to become incurably prejudiced against any form of work, *or even amusement*, he may be forced into?" The words I have italicized show great ignorance of every-day facts. Compulsory games have long become the rule at nearly all our Public Schools; the standard of performance has risen enormously under that system; and the few voluntary schools generally make a poor show beside the rest, in proportion to their numbers. Moreover, the South African War brought very interesting evidence as to military training. The *Spectator* for Jan. 27-March 10, 1900, contained a series of letters from Mr. J. G. Legge, H.M. Inspector of Reformatory and Industrial Schools; Mr. A. C. Burmester, a manager of one of these schools; and Mr. R. F. Cholmeley, assistant master at St. Paul's School, where compulsory drill was adopted. All these



gentlemen bear independent testimony to the fact that a reasonable amount of compulsory training developed a taste for more.

Finally, I have recently written to the *Spectator* reciting Sir Ian Hamilton's thesis, and asking whether any reader could supply real facts in favour of it. I received no reply, either publicly or privately. Indeed, his own silence in the second edition, in the face of the very plain facts brought forward against the theory by his critics, would seem tantamount to a confession that he could not give definite reasons, though he still adhered to the theory as a matter of private judgment. In the abstract, the mere judgment of an ex-Adjutant General ought, of course, to weigh heavily in a case of this kind, especially when it is so formally published and commended by the War Minister with a preface of such hearty approval. But this is not a case for abstract considerations. We must remember firstly, that, of the five ex-Adjutants-General then living, Sir Ian had held the office for the briefest period; and secondly, that he was apparently the only one of the six who disapproved of Compulsory Service. Two at least—Lord Wolseley and Sir Evelyn Wood—were public supporters of compulsion; and Lord Roberts asserted (I believe without shadow of contradiction) that the rest were "well-known" to lean the same way (*Facts and Fallacies*, pp. 6-8).

## CHAPTER XVI

### VOLUNTEER FIGHTERS

IF, therefore, we are to accept this theory of recruiting at all, we must accept it as the general public did at the time, on the bare personal authority of the authors. But the war has made us more sceptical; and it is important to notice what the authors published at the same time, with equal deliberation, on a subject which comes quite as strictly within their own special province. On p. 120 we read :

“In the Territorials there is hardly a man who has not joined for the express object of having a good fight if any fighting happens to come his way. There is hardly a Territorial, I believe, who does not, at the bottom of his heart, hope to go into one historic battle during his military existence. Otherwise why should he be there, sweating and toiling during his holiday—attacking, defending, aiming? Defence of hearth and home? Yes; but he will be delighted, not downhearted, like some others of his fellow-countrymen, when he hears that the invaders have landed.”

In the light of these words, and of the last two years, few readers will now feel inclined to attribute

professional infallibility to the writer who penned them, or to the statesman who gave them his express approval. Few will be ready to accept without specific proof, and on the mere authority of the writers, this theory that the Briton cannot do what the Swiss does—that he cannot serve his country first by law, and then, if need be, as a volunteer.

The fact is, that the whole idea rests upon a common but fallacious conception of *Voluntary* and *Compulsory* as mutually exclusive terms. In strict logic, no doubt, each excludes the other; in human life they are inextricably intermingled. In almost all our acts there are voluntary and compulsory elements. Few married men ever realize that they are living under the strictest legal compulsion to support their wives and families—a law which makes allowance for no Conscientious Objector. Compulsion, in this case, does not break the back of Voluntarism. By raking among the dead rubbish of the old Compulsory Education Controversy, we may find plenty of confident prophets who predicted that you might drive the boy to school, but would never make him learn. Lord Morley, on p. 127 of his now almost-forgotten booklet, had to meet seriously the “alleged danger of discouraging the so-called voluntaryists.”

Let us thank him for that critical “so-called”; and let us cast this same critical side-light upon Sir Ian’s contention. How much real voluntarism

is there, by his own confession, in the old system which he defends ? On p. 106, he writes :

“The majority of eighteen- to nineteen-year-old regular recruits enlist because they have just ceased to be boys and are unable to find regular employment as men. About four-fifths of them come to us because they cannot get a job at fifteen shillings a week. The immense work of national regeneration the Army has been unostentatiously performing by helping these lads and making fine men of them is quite unknown to the average citizen. But that by the way. The reluctance of employers to take weedy, overgrown youths of seventeen and eighteen has markedly increased since the introduction of the Workmen’s Compensation Act. This is good for recruiting. But if, under altered conditions, hungry hobbledehoys knew that they would be called up for continuous housing and feeding during the winter, the Regular Army would begin to shrivel up from the roots. I know that all this is not very glorious, but it is true.”<sup>1</sup>

Compare this with a similar passage from another expert who is never tired of writing against the Compulsory System for Great Britain—Colonel F. N. Maude, C.B. On p. 404 of his *War and the World’s Life* he writes :

“Napoleon in his earlier years fully understood this, and his campaigns of Ulm and Jena are masterly instances of the application of this great power, for ultimately hunger is the greatest stimulus to human action that can be conceived. Keep men hungry, just hungry enough,

<sup>1</sup> For further light on this question, see Appendix XIV., “The Motives of Recruits,” and the extract from Mr. John Ward which I give a few pages below.

and they will swarm to the Colours to end their misery ; keep them well supplied, and they will prefer to attend to their own affairs, and will clamour for others to do the fighting for them. But in no case must the hunger be allowed to become excessive, nor must the people be allowed to perceive that they are being played with.”

The last two years, however, have made this nation far more quick to perceive when it is being played with ; and we must look very closely into the alleged contrast between the Conscript and the Volunteer.

We see that the contrast of *circumstance* is, by the confession of these Voluntarist experts themselves, quite different from what is often assumed in argument. There are magnificent cases of self-sacrifice in volunteer armies—especially in war-time, and especially when the sacrifice comes almost, if not altogether, too late. On the other hand, there are terrible injustices sometimes in conscript armies of the stricter continental sort.<sup>1</sup> But, in the overwhelming majority of cases, the “volunteer recruit” does not really contrast with the “conscript” as the patriot contrasts with the slave. The so-called volunteer, under economic pressure, has undertaken to do a job which he would not have touched if he could have got a better wage for less work. The conscript, nearly always in Switzerland and often under other more burdensome systems, goes through his service

<sup>1</sup> We must here specifically exclude Switzerland. For the extent to which civil courts control the Swiss Army, see Appendix XV.

with no more oppressive sense of compulsion than an elementary schoolboy ; while he is sustained by a grown man's sense of the service he is doing for his country. This experience is admirably analyzed by Professor Léon Guerard, in a short description which is by far the best I have ever read ; the author has great knowledge of the world, great powers of analysis, and a great wish to say the exact truth, beginning with his initial confession that he was, on the whole, a prejudiced witness against the army. His summary runs : " On the whole, a very unpleasant experience for any person of fastidious tastes and habits ; tolerable for healthy individuals of an adaptable type ; satisfactory for the great majority." <sup>1</sup>

In conscripted France, therefore, where the service is unusually strict, only the minority emerge from it with a sense of oppressive coercion even in peacetime. In time of war, nobody but Tolstoyans and visionaries seriously contemplate any other alternative. In voluntarist Britain, again, while the majority of soldiers speak well of the army, quite a considerable minority speak bitterly of it as a job they would never have touched if they could have helped it. And what were the feelings of many clerks in those great firms which, with Lord Haldane's approval, decided that all new applicants for employ-

<sup>1</sup> Printed on p. 237 of Principal Jordan's *War and the Breed* (1915). The rest of the book, however, must be read with great caution ; Dr. Jordan himself is extraordinarily inaccurate, even on the simplest matters of fact.

ment must "volunteer" for the Territorials, or take themselves off to some less patriotic employer? A well-known journalist confessed to me, early in the war, that he had been converted to the compulsory system by the extreme prevalence of veiled conscription: "I have seen cases," he added, "which have made my blood boil."

Over-zealous writers, therefore, have often grossly exaggerated the actual contrast between the circumstances of so-called "volunteers" and "conscripts"; and they have exaggerated still more fatally the supposed contrast in their behaviour. We have seen how our Peninsular soldiers deserted to the enemy in greater numbers than the French conscripts did. There were many more surrenders among our troops in the South African War than among Japanese conscripts in the Russian war. No doubt special circumstances played their part here; the offenders in both cases were, doubtless, hunger-conscripts under the name of volunteers. But why, then, do we persist in attributing all the manly virtues of voluntarism to persons whom, a few pages later, we find it convenient to describe as "fourteen to fifteen shillings a week hobble-dehoys"? (*Compulsory Service*, p. 116). The absurdity is patent; yet a policy of the greatest national importance has been built in times of peace upon this very absurdity.

A war-minister like Colonel Seeley told us, only three years ago, that one volunteer was worth

ten conscripts ; it was on some such basis as this that all our pre-war military calculations were made. Even a Cabinet Minister of Sir John Simon's importance and personal responsibility, after the retreat from Mons, ventured to assert that one volunteer was worth three "pressed" men—"and the Kaiser already knew it."<sup>1</sup> Upon this and similar assumptions was built a great part—perhaps even the greater part—of the opposition to the Military Service Act.<sup>2</sup>

Next to Sir Ian Hamilton and Lord Haldane, perhaps the best-known military critic of Compulsory Service before this present war was Colonel Maude. He also, in his *War and the World's Life*, insists upon the difference in *moral* between the volunteer and the conscript, though with far less unreasonable emphasis. He expressly notes, for instance, the difficulty of comparison, since "there never has been such a thing as a purely compulsory army, or a purely voluntary one" (p. 256). He admits, on comparing voluntarism with compulsion, "that neither system in itself is a panacea for unsteadiness in the field, and that other factors must be searched for if we are to find a satisfactory answer to our problem" (255). But he decides

<sup>1</sup> Speeches at Heanor, April 26, 1913, and Ashton-under-Lyne, Nov. 21, 1914, quoted in F. S. Oliver's *Ordeal by Battle*, 1915, pp. 262-3.

<sup>2</sup> It is of such importance for the public to have an opportunity of testing the statements of experts upon this point, so hotly debated and so vital for national policy, that I have collected in Appendix XVI. some further criticisms on the book *Compulsory Service*.



on the whole for voluntarism on this ground, and quotes as his main instances General Meckel's description of Wörth, and Hoenig's of Gravelotte.

Both these distinguished writers, speaking from what they themselves saw, criticize very severely the general behaviour of German conscript regiments under fire. But (even if we take these criticisms at their face value, without asking ourselves whether similar faults might not have been found in French regiments, and whether frank spectators of the Boer War have not often told us similar stories), what do they amount to? The individual German conscript, according to the confession of Meckel and Hoenig, was distinctly inferior to the individual French soldier of 1870, who was a long-service man nearly of our Regular type. Yet this war was not, nor will any war ever be, a contest of individuals. At Wörth, the Germans brought 100,000 men against the 45,000 French, and inflicted a disastrous defeat upon them. At Gravelotte, the German superiority of numbers actually in action was perhaps as great; and again the Germans won. But it was no mere chance or trickery which enabled the Germans everywhere to produce superior numbers: it was Universal Service. Stoffel had given the French Emperor fair warning: he wrote from Berlin in August 1869, "The North German Confederation will dispose of 1,000,000 trained, disciplined, and strongly-organized soldiers, while France has barely

300,000 to 400,000 men" (*Reports*, p. 144). This expert warning was neglected by those who trusted the "voluntary spirit." Therefore, though Germany's population was very little larger than that of France, she began the war with an overwhelming numerical advantage; and her victory inaugurated one of the most marvellous eras of national expansion in the whole history of the world. If (as we are told) the Germans outnumbered us at Mons by five to one, this was because their total force of trained fighting-men outnumbered ours in even more than this proportion.

The test of war is victory, and those who oppose Compulsory Service on military grounds must set themselves first of all to explain away the damning fact that the volunteer army has scarcely ever, if ever, won a great war against a conscripted nation. So far from meeting this difficulty, they seem never to have realized its existence; Colonel Maude went on repeating Meckel's criticisms from year to year—in the *Contemporary Review* for July 1911, and the *Westminster Gazette* for Dec. 9, 1912—until this present war raised the subject again.<sup>1</sup> Then, in the *Nineteenth Century and After* for Jan. 1915, he was obliged to strike a different note, and to admit that "compulsion has carried the Prussians forward to almost certain death in a

<sup>1</sup> Meckel's words play an equally conspicuous part in the official handbook of the Volunteer Service Committee, formed under Lord Haldane's auspices in 1913. Nobody who quotes them seems to ask himself who actually won the battle of Wörth, and how it was won.

manner which has excited the admiration of our men and officers." But this was "machine-made devotion, carrying the men forward against hitherto almost unheard-of punishment, *only to collapse and leave them helpless against the bayonets of our determined counter-attacks.*" Very few responsible military authorities would have dared to endorse the words I have italicized even at the time they were written; fewer still would have accepted Colonel Maude's almost contemporaneous prophecy that the German reserves of men would be exhausted by the end of March, 1915 (*Sunday Times*, Jan. 15, 1915). It seems a ghastly mockery to read these words, now that the Great War of 1914 has added two more to the great historical instances of compulsion accepted reluctantly as the only alternative to bitter defeat.

The only other military specialist whose plea for voluntarism deserves notice is Professor Spenser Wilkinson. To the *Westminster Gazette* for Feb. 2, 1915, he contributed an article discouraging the adoption of compulsion as an emergency-measure during this war. It was not then his business to discuss what might have been done *before* the war; his article, therefore, scarcely touches this, the real question of all. He does, indeed, plead that even if we had had compulsion since 1887, this "would have given us only half a million men of the best age more than we now have"; and on this ground he seems to justify our past military

policy. But he omits to note that these 500,000 would have been trained men, available in the first days of the war ; that there would have been a further trained 500,000, equally available, of older men from 38 to 45 ; and that, of the " men we now have [in February, 1915]" something like a third were too untrained to send to the front ; so that he really ought to have described them as " the men we *shall have* in from four to six months."

In short, no ingenious manipulation of figures can get over the fact that a business-like system of compulsion in the past would have given us, at the outbreak of war, at least half a million more effectives than we actually had : and, (in the opinion of most unbiassed judges), better effectives than those whom we counted at the outbreak of war. By Mr. Asquith's own admission, less than half a year before the war broke out, our Territorial Force in 1913 was 49,000 short of its establishment ; and, even of the 266,000 men on the books, 40,000 (or 15 per cent.) had not qualified in rifle-shooting, while 80,000 (or 30 per cent.) had not done their full camp of 15 days—the briefest training compatible with any pretence to efficiency. Mr. Asquith might have put it still more plainly, and said that, out of 4,725,000 days of camp-training theoretically performed by the whole Territorial Force, only about 2,237,000 had been actually done, even in this year for which he claimed so

great an improvement. Then he pleaded that there had recently been still more improvement, and that if the present very exceptional rate of recruiting were kept up, the force would "be up to its establishment" in a very short time—*i.e.* in about three years. But this is a very vague "if"; and nobody can imagine that a Minister of Mr. Asquith's ability and good intentions could possibly have been driven to such apologies in countries like Switzerland or Norway, where the whole nation accepts Compulsory Territorialism.

There is, after all, a very good test of comparison. Foreign attachés have come to our Territorial manœuvres, as to the Swiss manœuvres. We have treasured up and quoted in our papers all the praise they have given us: none of them has attempted to give our volunteer force the same serious and reasoned testimonials which they have given to the Swiss "conscripts."<sup>1</sup> And one of the main grounds on which Professor Wilkinson contested the advisability of compulsion during this war implies, apart from mere questions of the moment, one of the most serious possible criticisms of the Voluntary System as a national policy. "It is a matter of common knowledge," he wrote, after six months of war, "that the supply of arms has lagged behind the supply of men. If and when the number of weapons begins to be in excess of the number of men, it may be desirable to accelerate

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix XVII., "A French View of our Territorials."

recruiting." Yet it is also a matter of common knowledge that Switzerland actually armed, *in the first ten days of this war*, a force of from 200,000 to 220,000 men, which, in figures of British population, would amount to between  $2\frac{1}{2}$  and 3 millions.

When Professor Wilkinson wrote, it is doubtful whether we had many more than half that number fully armed, even counting our sailors and our Regulars. Indeed, the Professor's whole point of view would seem to be coloured by the belief expressed in his next sentence, which facts have now falsified. He continues: "I am reluctant to believe that, for this purpose [of recruiting], more can be required than a simple statement by the Prime Minister expounding the magnitude of the task, its urgency, and its vital importance to every man, woman and child in the kingdom." - But how can ministerial eloquence effectually move a population of whom the enormous majority, all their lives long, have been kept in dense ignorance of the facts which you now find it vital to force upon their notice? One incontrovertible advantage of the compulsory system is that, in so many quarters, it substitutes tangible facts for such vague beliefs and hopes as these which supported Professor Wilkinson even in February 1915. If you compel a certain number of men to drill, that compels you to keep a certain number of weapons for them; if you pass the business-man and the working-man through the army, they, for their

part, will insist upon its being a working business army ; the privates will educate their officers, and the officers their Government.

We thus come back to our first point. The only refuge of the military voluntarist is to build his whole theory upon the supposed enormous superiority of the individual volunteer to the conscript ; to this, therefore, we must return for a moment before finally passing away to non-militarist objections.

Three considerations of primary importance are ignored by those who attempt to force this contrast.

(1) Other things being equal, the superiority of the true volunteer is unquestionable ; but other things are not equal. No volunteer army, in peacetime, has ever comprised the cream even of the artisan and peasant class, let alone the educated classes. Sir Ian Hamilton puts this very plainly where his argument requires it, though it never occurs to him to face the obvious inference in other places. He enforces with almost brutal emphasis the native inferiority of the Regular to the Territorial :

“ When a large number of the Regular officers are by degrees brought into contact with our citizen soldiers they will learn to appreciate the full difference between a fourteen to fifteen shilling a week hobbledehoy and a twenty-five shilling to thirty shilling a week man (a type they have never handled). They will then be in a better position to understand how more instruction than seemed heretofore possible can be crammed into a period of time which would

be of very little value to the regular recruit" (*Compulsory Service*, p. 116).<sup>1</sup>

Yet even the Territorial, unfortunately, has never been up to the average standard of able-bodied Britons. In 1912, 40,000 (or 15 per cent.) were under nineteen; boys whom a continental army would not accept in peace-time. The educated classes—even the better artisans and small tradesmen—are incomparably less represented in the ranks than they would be under any compulsory system. And, in modern war, education is perhaps a more important factor than even the volunteer spirit. It is notorious that Napoleon's army owed much of its efficiency to the educated privates whose very presence forced up the standard of intelligence and education among the officers. And Stoffel urged this (vainly as usual) upon Napoleon III. He wrote in April 1868 (p. 44) to point out the enormous intellectual superiority obtained under the German system; and in August 1869 he urged again, with despairing emphasis:

<sup>1</sup> Compare the words of Mr. John Ward, M.P. (himself a working man and an ex-corporal in the Engineers) in the House of Commons' debate of March 11, 1910 (*Hansard*, col. 1831): "Is it not a matter of fact that the Army is looked upon by the working classes to a great extent as a channel for giving employment to men who are practically unfit for any other occupation? There is not the slightest doubt about it that it is only when there is difficulty in getting employment that the best men go into the Army. . . . You get the worst type of working classes in the Army—I do not mean as a whole, I only mean that the tendency is in that direction." Mr. Ward at that time, and until the outbreak of this war, was a very strong voluntarist.



“ [The German Army] embraces all the manly portion, all the intelligence, all the *vis viva* of a nation full of faith, energy, and patriotism, while the French army is almost entirely composed of the poorest and most ignorant portion of the nation. The German Army, from the fact that it does embrace, without any exception, all the manly portion of the nation, feels itself strengthened and supported by the unequalled esteem and consideration it enjoys in the country, while the French Army, looked on by some as a useless institution, attacked by others, who sow corruption and insubordination in its ranks, feels itself bowed down by a want of consideration, and has no consciousness of the mission it has to fulfil ” (p. 144).

If, as Mr. Fortescue has said, Sir Ian Hamilton’s purview “ totally ignores the history of Napoleon’s conscript army,” it shows equally unaccountable ignorance of Franco-Prussian history.

(2) Again, military history is full of instances which prove that a man’s behaviour in the field cannot be gauged merely by his willingness or unwillingness to enter the field. We have already seen Professor Firth’s verdict on the English levy of 1651 : “ It was remarkable that the men raised by impressment were better than those who had voluntarily enlisted.”<sup>1</sup> The standard history of the French Army tells the same tale of the Revolutionary levies. The best of all, of course, were the early volunteers—the first 84,000 men who came forward out of a population of 23 millions ; but, after that, the pressed men developed into the best

<sup>1</sup> *Cromwell’s Army*, p. 36.

soldiers.<sup>1</sup> For these first volunteers, Dussieux quotes the testimonial of General Dubreton (vol. ii. p. 386); but he also points out how brief and evanescent this truly volunteer outburst was: "Enthusiasm for liberty and voluntary service gave one good pull, and that was all." And he sums up: "We must end this chapter by noting that it was France which, for the first time in modern history, established and organized compulsory service; and let us add that, after a very confused beginning, this system gave to France its best soldiers" (ii. 378, 385). In the present war, when General Botha called up a forced levy for the campaign against the Germans, he gave as his reason that much of the best military stuff would not otherwise be available; the men would not come forward unless Government showed its sense of the need by taking this most serious measure of all.

(3) Quite apart from good or bad conduct in the field, a national army is far fitter than a hired army to conceive and express the real needs of the nation. A force raised by the compulsory enlistment of all able-bodied men represents the totality of national feeling and national ideals in a sense in which no other force could. Among Emile Ollivier's ingenious attempts to explain away the failings of the French Government between 1866 and 1870, this truth emerges with startling force.

<sup>1</sup> For these figures, and other details, see Appendix XVIII.: "The Volunteers of the French Revolution."

The army was out of touch with the nation.<sup>1</sup> The Government was tempted to content itself with soldiers on paper, and with the mere mockery of reform in military organization—as, for instance, when that force of 500,000 Mobiles was created, without more than the pretence of training, on the principle of receiving its real military education after war had broken out. The people, on the other hand, greedily drank in the flattering assurance that all was well, that the Mobiles would form a magnificent line behind the invincible Regulars, and that “all was ready, down to the last button on the last gaiter.”<sup>2</sup> On the strength of the partial reforms in the Regular Army, and of these 500,000 Mobiles who were to be embodied if war ever broke out, Marshal Niel presented a brilliant picture of the French Army to the Parliament of 1869. Then (writes Ollivier, who was one of the ministry), “these triumphant conclusions were welcomed with loud applause in the House and outside. The nation was proud to live under the protection of an invincible army; and only one symptom of un-

<sup>1</sup> See Dussieux, iii. 251, for the almost incredible deficiencies revealed by the war.

<sup>2</sup> Ollivier, *L'Empire Libéral* (vol. x, pp. 227-367, and vol. xv, pp. 60-64, 579 ff.) and *The Franco-Prussian War* (tr. Ives, 1913, pp. 81-4). It is especially important to note the “parliamentary” and unreal sense in which Ollivier conceives the question of military preparedness. It is a libel (he argues) to assert that we were not ready: only we could not mobilize in time! Such false conceptions as these of Ollivier’s are inevitable when the nation is technically ignorant, and mainly anxious to be reassured; in that case, the Government is tempted to look upon reassurance as its chief function. From beginning to end, this able and eloquent lawyer-statesman moves in the region of words, not of realities.

easiness sometimes appeared ; men feared lest the Empire, intoxicated with the feeling of its own strength, should drift into fresh warlike adventures ” (*l.c.* p. 353). If the people had also been the army, they would have known very nearly how things stood ; and the warlike feeling which did so much to support Napoleon in his provocative diplomacy would have been non-existent.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For this feeling see Acton, *Essays on Modern History*, pp. 221 ; Ollivier, *L'Empire Libéral*, vol. xv. p. 60.

## CHAPTER XVII

### NON-MILITARY OBJECTIONS

IN turning to meet objections which have been made on non-military grounds, I shall relegate to Appendix XIX. one which has been already falsified by the patent facts of this war. It might seem, at first sight, superfluous to rehearse such arguments at all, since, for the moment at least, they linger now only in holes and corners. Yet a brief record is demanded, not only on the principle of completeness, but also as a matter of right perspective. It has often happened, in the past history of this discussion, that statements of plain fact have been answered by mere surmises or prophecies. When we have urged that Switzerland does visibly steer, with admirable judgment, between the Scylla of unpreparedness and the Charybdis of militarism, some have replied curtly that Switzerland is not Britain: an argument which, of course, ignores the burden of proof incumbent upon a disputant who thus asserts that one man will probably fail where another (whom he generally looks upon rather as his inferior) has evidently succeeded.

Others, again, equally unable to deny the Swiss success, have cast about for various detailed reasons for refusing equal possibilities of success to our own people. These reasons have often been of a speculative character, and very plausible in average times among average people who are naturally anxious to be reassured, comforted, and told that there is little call for further effort. It is true that a speculative reason may really be a very good one; it may often correct our too superficial judgment based upon what seemed the plain fact. But we must judge the speculative philosopher, as we judge the plain man, by his own fruits. When a disputant tries to explain away the apparent facts of the present moment by prophecies which time proves to be ludicrously mistaken, then we must discount all his other surmises with the same severity which we should apply to the plain unprophetic man whom we have caught tripping over statements of fact. Therefore, a brief rehearsal of objections which were treated very seriously in their own day, however dead they may seem at the present moment, is essential now to a full conspectus of this subject.

So far as I am aware, the following are by far the most responsible anti-compulsorist writings, apart from those already dealt with. Mr. Harold Cox published two articles in (i) *The Nineteenth Century and After* for October, 1907 and (ii) *The Edinburgh Review* for April 1913. (iii) The

Voluntary Service Committee, formed under Lord Haldane's patronage, published as their first penny pamphlet his speech on "Democracy and Military Service," delivered at Caxton Hall on November 24, 1913. (iv) The same Committee, about the same time, issued an official sixpenny handbook, *The Case for Voluntary Service* (P. S. King & Co.). (v) Mr. C. P. Trevelyan, M.P., then Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, wrote in 1913 a pamphlet on *Democracy and Compulsory Service*, which was published by the League of Young Liberals at a penny. (vi) In June 1915 the International Arbitration League published a leaflet by Mr. F. W. Goldstone, M.P., *Is Conscription Necessary or Desirable?* Let us deal with the most important objections emphasized by these writers, who naturally often repeat each other's arguments.

First comes the "Blue Water" objection. We are told that, the real bulwark of National Defence being our Navy, this throws all merely military considerations into the background.

This is the first, and apparently strongest, objection which we have to face—apparently strongest, because it always begins by rehearsing incontestable truths, and only enters upon doubtful ground where it begins to come to the real point. All voluntarist writers emphasize it; and it is expressed in two forms.

(a) Sometimes we are told that we cannot strengthen our land forces without weakening the Navy. Either (it is argued) compulsory training will hinder recruiting, or at least we shall put ourselves in false perspective; the attention and money given to the Army will be deducted from the Fleet, which will thus be neglected and starved; in pursuing the shadow we shall have lost the substance.

The recruiting question has already been dealt with. On the other hand, these prophecies of neglect, and this attempt to represent Army and Navy as rivals for public favour and money, would seem as false in fact as they are uncomplimentary to the national spirit. Before the war, while Lord Roberts was carrying on his propaganda, seventy-four retired admirals were on his League, and of course it is only the retired who are free thus to take a side. Presumably these seventy-four experts knew a great deal more about naval prospects than the writers who invoke the Navy as an obstacle to any national system of training in arms. Again, the Navy League and the National Service League always cordially supported each other: each appealed to the same class of people—those who were seriously interested in National Defence.<sup>1</sup> Thirdly, if that were not enough, the present war

<sup>1</sup>This is confessed, indeed, by the author of *The Case for Voluntary Service*, p. 136. "We are aware that the advocates of compulsory military service profess to be as zealous for the Navy as for the Army."



has shown very clearly in which quarter the Navy must seek its best support. It has been constantly pointed out that the members of Parliament who held out longest against compulsion for the Army were precisely those who had voted most steadily for naval reductions ; and that the Press showed exactly the same line of cleavage ; the anti-compulsorist has also been, in most cases, the little-Navy man. It was always maintained by the National Service League that Compulsory Territorialism would immensely strengthen the hands of the Navy, by setting it free for purely naval duties.

(b) This brings us to the second argument, which is perhaps stated most clearly, and with least exaggeration, by the leading article in the *Westminster Review* dealing with Lord Roberts's deputation to Mr. Asquith (February 27, 1914) :

“The danger can only be that the Fleet is incapable of protecting us from invasion ; but how, if this were true, we could be saved by the Army has never been explained to us. The loss of the command of the sea would be for this country a disaster which could not be retrieved by any army, however numerous or however well-trained. It would stop our supplies of food and raw material, cut us off from communication with our Empire, reduce us to a position in which an enemy could impose his own terms on us. It is doubtful whether in such circumstances an enemy would take the trouble to invade us ; it is certain that no resistance to the invader could help us more than temporarily, *unless we recovered our sea communications.*”

Surely the words I have here italicized convey the clue to the mystery which "has never been explained" to this ingenious leader-writer. *If* we can recover our sea-communications—a by no means improbable hypothesis—then it will have been of vital importance that, during the period of collapse, our Army shall have been able to do its duty. For the theory that no German would take the trouble to invade us, but would prefer to wait and take his chance of starving us out, is one upon which even the most determined voluntarist would not dare to build after the experience of this war. With an adequate National Defence Force, we could say to the Navy: "Even if fortune goes against you for a while, we can keep our end up." Otherwise, we are compelled to say: "The Navy must never make a single mistake—it must do the work of Navy and Home Defence Army in one—or the country may be lost." Is this fair to our sailors, who, after all, are only men? Is this kind of thing really an honour to them? or is it like the medieval ideal which put women theoretically on a pedestal, and treated her in fact with a great deal of brutality? What right have we to demand from our sailors an infallibility more than human, in order that the rest of us may be free to do less than our manly share of national defence? Here again it is significant to note that this argument is constantly used by politicians and writers who are by no means enthusiastic advocates for naval expenditure.

Common-sense is opposed to treating this as a question involving two absolutely opposite alternatives. In real life nearly all matters of doubt, even the most vital, are simply questions of degree. Between absolute command of the seas and absolute loss of the seas there are thousands of possible degrees : it is therefore idle to argue that with absolute command we are triumphantly safe, and with absolute loss we are hopelessly ruined. The real crux of the question is that sentence which the *Westminster Gazette* slips in at the end of the argument, and takes no further notice of—what is to happen while we are “recovering our communications ?” We have, before now, lost command of very considerable parts of the sea, and regained it afterwards. These bad intervals have sometimes been long, sometimes short. To any unbiassed mind, therefore, the real question here is fairly simple, though not of such geometrical simplicity as the extreme Blue Water School tries to imagine. The problem is : By what means can we ensure the longest possible staying-power to these islands and to our great Dominions, in case of temporary or partial loss of sea-control ? What measures of precaution will enable us to cease saying to the Navy :

“ You must be infallible ; for your first grave failure will betoken a betrayal of the country’s trust in you ” ; but rather “ We believe in you as much as man can believe in man, but, if misfortune should overtake you, remember

that we hold out to the bitter end, for the country's sake and for yours. Refit when you can ; retrieve your sea-losses when you can ; we, behind you, have neglected no wise precaution. Every able-bodied man is prepared to do on land what we trust you to do at sea ; and the national system, which organizes these fighters in your support, has made it easier for us to organize many other equally necessary means of resistance.<sup>1</sup> We have a national, long-thought out provisioning system ; the blockade has not found us altogether unprepared. And, moreover, every one of us grew up from his boyhood under the prevision of this possibility ; we have known all our lives that, at any such supreme crisis, our stake and our work would be as heavy as yours in the Navy ; we are a disciplined nation, a nation that has faced the facts ; and no man can say that the measures of national defence now taken are a breach of any political truce. In doing what our generals and our admirals now beseech us to do, we are not ' dividing the nation.' ”

From the technical naval point of view, the facts can scarcely be put more clearly than they were stated, early in 1914, on p. 42 of the *National Service League Handbook*. Lieut. Alfred Dewar, R.N., there wrote, in answer to the arguments of the Voluntary Service Committee :

“ This question of degree of control is neglected by superficial writers, but it is emphasized by men like Mahan, Corbett and Colomb. A navy does not immediately and

<sup>1</sup> Compare an article in the *Times* for Jan. 5, 1917, entitled, “ The Quartermaster General, a Record of Success.” The writer there shows in detail what an intolerable strain was thrown upon all departments of national organization by “ this sudden expansion of an Expeditionary Force from 150,000 to 1,500,000 men, and then to the three times larger figure of to-day.”

at one stroke obtain command of the sea. It may gain a limited control in one area and lose it in another, and in the same area the degree of control may vary from time to time. If a fleet, 'even at its greatest,' has its ups and downs, it will require intervals of recuperation to regain its position. It may even sustain a temporary defeat in the North Sea, and during that time we must be secure against attack. We must be prepared to see ourselves masters of the sea for several months and then perhaps by a sudden torpedo attack lose the command for several weeks. This is wholly borne out in the history of the Dutch wars, where the principal theatre of operations was the North Sea. In the first Dutch war, which began in May, 1652, De Ruyter commanded the entrance to the Channel and the Soundings from August 15th to the end of September, but in the North Sea the command was in dispute till the battle of the Kentish Knock on September 28th. From September 28th to November 29th we had a fair degree of command in the North Sea and Channel, but after the battle of Dungeness on November 29th we lost command of the Channel and never properly regained it till the battle of Portland on February 18th, though the Dutch were not finally and definitely beaten till the battle of the Texel in July, where Tromp was killed. In the Mediterranean, on the other hand, we lost control completely and never tried to regain it. Here we have varying degrees of control in different areas, and varying phases of command in the same area, corresponding to the 'ups and downs' mentioned by Mahan."

Again he quotes from p. 283 of Mahan's *Naval Strategy* (1912) :

"A fleet charged with the protection of bases, whether at home or abroad, is so far clogged in its movement and is to the same extent in a false position. An egregious instance

of this at the present moment is the fear in Great Britain of a German invasion. This is due to the great inferiority of the Army in the British Islands to that of Germany; the British Islands are inadequately garrisoned; they depend for defence upon the fleet alone and the fleet is, consequently, tied to British waters. As things are, since all depends upon the fleet, the fleet must have a wider margin of safety to ensure a crushing superiority, that is its freedom of movement and range of action are greatly impaired by the necessity of keeping with it ships which, under other conditions, might be spared."

The Extreme Blue Water plea, Lieut. Dewar rightly urges, is the plea of a fatalist or sluggard: "Close the door, Tom, there's a draught coming in." "No use, Dad, for the back door's open as well."

There is, finally, one consideration which no man has a right to advance publicly without a strong sense of responsibility, yet which none has a right to turn away from.

The opposition to Compulsory Service bases itself on the principle of the Free Contract, not only from the point of view of justice, but also from that of efficiency. Mr. Cox puts this with his usual clearness and moderation (*Edinburgh Review*, p. 501):

"Taxation, if we have the wisdom to observe the canons laid down by Adam Smith, can be made to press with approximately equal severity on every member of the community. Therefore, the fairest way of providing for national defence is to compel all citizens to contribute money in proportion to their means, and to employ that money for the remuneration of those men who voluntarily

undertake a military career. On these lines the nation—if it is willing to pay adequately—can obtain as many men as it wants for the period for which it wants them, and such men will make far better soldiers than men forced against their will to undertake a service which is inconvenient or repugnant to them. Doubtless, if we were only separated by a land frontier from a great military Power, we should be obliged to ignore these considerations of equity, and to compel every man to give personal service—*salus reipublicae suprema lex*. But there is no reason why we should wantonly throw away the advantages conferred upon us by our insular position, which enables us to ignore the magnitude of the armies maintained by our neighbours, provided only we are careful to preserve beyond question our naval supremacy. As long as that proviso is secured—and if it fails all is lost—England only requires military service from relatively few of her sons.”

The principle is clear: we are to get a juster arrangement, and better value for our money, by freely contracting with men to fight for us, just as we freely contract with others to dig coal for us. And, on this principle, the sanction of both contracts is pretty much the same. The miner sometimes strikes; why should not the sailor? In a sense, we actually invite the miner to strike by our unwillingness or our incapacity to take his place underground: that is only human nature, and, on the whole, human justice also. Is it, therefore, so inconceivable in human nature that, after generations of this growing division between the civilian and the military or naval specialist, our soldiers or sailors also should find the tempta-

tion irresistible? If we go on preaching to them "We, of course, are human, but we pay you to be superhuman," may they not some day ask whether the wage is proportionate to the requirement? One of the stock instances of lost sea-command is precisely a story of this kind—the mutinies at Spithead and at the Nore. We all know how much justice there was on the men's side in those cases. Again, there was a great deal more to be said recently for the South Wales miners than many people recognized. Large numbers of them were honestly unwilling to embarrass the country, and only followed the rest through the force of class-loyalty and class-principle. They urged very truly that society drives a hard bargain with the miner so long as it has him at its mercy, and that society cannot reasonably beg for mercy when the miner gets the upper hand. It is notorious that, even after the improvements made in our generation, much might still be done to better the sailor's lot. Mr. Stephen Reynolds may exaggerate in *The Lower Deck*, but many of his criticisms bear the stamp of reality; and, indeed, I have heard some of them admitted by those who know the facts. In plain words, there have been times when some of our great ships have drifted into the condition of sweated factories without Government inspection.

Let us try, therefore, to view this policy of Free Contract dispassionately, as it might appear a



couple of centuries hence to the writer of a simple school history of England.

“ In the Nineteenth Century, our country had very nearly lost the idea of direct personal service to the State as a test of citizenship. The large mass of the population paid no direct taxes, except for their own insurance, and were equally free from direct personal service of any kind. Schooling was, indeed, compulsory ; but it ended very early, and the children probably were less systematically instructed in the duties of citizenship than those of any other great State. Alone in Europe Great Britain refused to recognize the universal obligation of military training. It was considered a great advance in civilization to have reduced National Defence to a commercial contract ; and political philosophers defended this Chinese system as being juster and more efficient than the Continental, under which all citizens shared as far as possible in the burden and privilege of defending their homes. The system broke down temporarily during the Great War of 1914 ; but, after the Peace of Paris, the nation settled down into its former groove. In spite of the great democratic advance of the years following that Peace, this commercialization of patriotism went from worse to worse ; because the Army, and, even in time, the Navy, were thus kept outside the main current of national development. Old traditions of loyalty decayed in ‘ the Services,’ as they were called, because these old traditions had hitherto been intimately bound up with class-distinctions. No new traditions of loyalty could form, because military service was now definitely recognized as one small corner of the labour-market. Soldiers and sailors at last began to take political philosophers at their word, and to treat their engagement frankly as a question of wages. This progress was the more rapid since the theory of paid patriotism was inseparably

bound up with the tendency to put the man of peace upon a higher moral level than the man of war. It became a subject of national pride that so vast a majority of the citizens should be engaged in purely 'productive' occupations, and that Army and Navy should be cut down to the narrowest limits compatible with efficiency. Under this essentially false direction of thought, even the virtues of democracy tended more and more to accentuate the national impotence. In all doubts as to this minimum of efficiency, civilians had naturally the last word, and sometimes almost the only word. The fighting-man was dependent upon civilian paymasters, and the nation was naturally loth to tax itself in so unpopular a cause. While National Defence became more and more a question of wages and money; while national security depended more and more upon the hired fighter, few people recognized the inevitable consequences so long as the Great Peace lasted. The soldier and sailor grumbled that their pay kept no reasonable pace with their indispensability: but society, in peace-time, was too strong for the grumblers. Yet that same society was frankly organized on the principle of competition of private interests. The miner, the railwayman, the builder had long been accustomed to fight their way onward by refusing to work except for the pay which they claimed as commensurate with their indispensability as servants of society. Though *actual* strikes became less frequent as the organization of these groups progressed, yet the *potential* strike became a more and more definite factor in the social system: the rival forces stood always arrayed against each other, waiting for the first favourable opportunity for action, or (as it more often happened) of gaining advantage by the threat of action. On the whole, this worked well in the commercial world, and tended gradually towards the redress of social inequalities; though it was remarked that the strict collective discipline

necessitated by these conflicts tended to enforce Compulsory Group-service upon the very men who were most opposed to Compulsory State-service; and that, within the Trade Unions themselves, the individual's freedom was always severely limited. Those who most frankly faced the situation admitted that, under stress of another national war, such a system must either break down itself or break the back of the nation; but though people still went on spending heavily on the Army and Navy, there was a very common hope and belief that the world had now settled down into such an equilibrium as rendered the contingency of a national war very remote indeed. It was, in fact, this belief which rendered the nation deaf to the warnings of naval discontent. The sailor, though theoretically the most indispensable of men, was treated in fact with far less consideration than the miner or railwayman. When the Great War of 2014 broke out, the sailors had the further excuse that an active minority of the nation stigmatized it as a war of aggression under the cloak of self-defence. If the men had once put to sea and become hotly engaged, it was still possible that their loyalty to the splendid traditions of the past would have triumphed. But several ships mutinied against the first measures of mobilization, demanding immediate concession of the just demands which had been steadily refused in peacetime. The Government temporized, as nine Governments out of ten would naturally have done. The mutiny spread to many other ships, while on others, again, it was severely suppressed and the ringleaders shot. This fanned the flames, giving the men another claim which it was almost impossible for the Government immediately to satisfy. Meanwhile, Admiral X. was forced to sail with such ships as he could trust, after a delay which might have been fatal even to his full fleet. If the Battle of the Fifth of May is in British history what Waterloo is to the French, or

Jena to the Prussians, that is because all three battles found the beaten nation drifting in a false direction. It seems incredible to us that our forefathers should for generations have committed their whole salvation to a tiny minority of paid men ; or that, having thus made National Defence mainly a matter of pay, they should so blindly have refused a just wage to those who admittedly held the fortunes of the nation in their hands."

This supposed history is, let us hope, a mere flight of fancy. But it, or something like it, must inevitably come true if we persist in treating this mainly as a question of Capital and Labour, and yet deal with it as no sane employer would. If an employer founds his whole fortunes on the work of a minority who alone are skilled to use certain tools, he must pay that minority in some pretence of proportion for their work. If we deliberately intend to make the Sailor and the Regular as essential to national existence as the *Westminster Gazette* would have it, then the private or the A.B. would be ill-paid for his work by the salary of an average journalist. It is well to see our own systems as others see them. The *Grande Encyclopédie*, under the article "Armée," asks why Great Britain has not adopted compulsory service, and answers : "because . . . the English, more than any other nation, treat money as the sinew of war ; hence their incoherent and anti-democratic system of enlistment" (vol. iii. p. 1004).

## CHAPTER XVIII

### EDGED TOOLS

2. PERHAPS the next most influential argument has been the accusation of "Militarism" or "Jingoism" or "Aggression" against all proposals for a Citizen Army.

Here the opponents contradict each other. Lord Haldane and Sir Ian Hamilton are distressed to think that a Citizen Army will not be aggressive enough (*Compulsory Service*, pp. 41, 50-51, 121, 142, 148). They write of Compulsory Service: "its tendency is in the direction of the merely defensive"; and again: "it is less aggressive, less of a danger to the world at large." Of the Voluntary System they say: "all the other classes . . . pay for war, not with their persons but with their purses. For this very reason the bulk of the nation views war with less tragic regard." . . . They complain that this defensive spirit is incompatible with "the inheritance of our people from Chatham and from Nelson." They argue again: "there is hardly a Territorial, I believe, who does not, at the bottom of his heart, hope to go into one historic

battle during his military existence"; "if a rich nation turns its mind entirely to defence, it commits the deadly sin of tempting others to transgress." And Sir Ian's final solemn warning runs: "Whatever you do, remember, I beg of you, that the best defence to a country is an army formed, trained, inspired by the idea of attack. If I have succeeded in bringing prominently to your notice the dangers of the mere defence, then, indeed, I shall feel I have not written in vain."

At the same time as this book was written, Jean Jaurès was writing his *Armée Nouvelle*. He fully agrees with the two British authors—and indeed with almost all observers, that the tendency of Compulsory Service is in the direction of the merely defensive. But he presses this to a very different, and (it would seem) a far sounder conclusion. Jaurès, socialist, internationalist and pacifist as he was, never flinched from the compulsory principle. So long as armies were needed at all, he saw that the most democratic and least dangerous army, in normal cases, would always be the Nation in Arms. So far is he from quarrelling with this defensive spirit, that he welcomes it for the people's sake. It is one of his great glories as a statesman to have prophesied the enormous advantages of the defensive, provided that it be a far-seeing, long thought-out, consistent and deliberate defensive. His theories on this subject have been startlingly confirmed by this war: nobody doubts now that,

if Germany had known she would be faced with such trench-warfare as has developed now on every front, she would have reconsidered her Great Adventure of 1914. Jaurès, therefore, welcomes the defensive spirit, so long as this defence is really national and scientific, born not of timidity but of reason. And he insists, with admirable logic, that our best hope for world-peace must be to cultivate defensive diplomacy and defensive tactics, and to interest as many citizens as possible in the frightful risks of war. To him, it seemed absolutely immoral that the mass of citizens should pay for war, not with their persons, but with their purses. By what process of logic Lord Haldane and Sir Ian Hamilton propose to reconcile their own military views with sane democratic opinion, they have never explained.

But there is no doubt, fortunately, about the main fact that here concerns us. By almost universal consent, the normal spirit of a Nation in Arms is the defensive spirit. Extremists on both sides have, indeed, denied any real distinction between the offensive and the defensive in warfare. Bernhardt on the one hand, and a non-resister like Mr. Bertrand Russell on the other, argue from the alleged identity of offensive and defensive. The one, no doubt, does shade into the other; even the outside observer cannot always exactly trace the dividing line. But so it is also with truth and falsehood, justice and injustice; yet here we know

very well that a real distinction does exist. A householder, in the night, may wrest the burglar's knife from his hand and kill him with it; yet this action may be purely defensive. There is as little real doubt about the general morality of defence, and the general immorality of offence, as about the general principle that the spirit of a Nation in Arms is defensive.

A heavy burden of proof, therefore, lies upon those who would persuade us that a nation which must pay for war with its person is more likely than a purse-paying nation to lapse into militarism, jingoism, or aggression. The objectors generally evade this burden by ignoring it. They fix our attention on the most superficial considerations, and argue that a nation with four million armed men is necessarily more "militarist" than a nation with only one million. By this simple calculation, modern France, which offered arbitration to avoid this war, is about twice as militarist as the France of Louis XIV., which deliberately set itself to dominate Europe by arms: and Frederick the Great's Prussia was distinctly less militarist than the Switzerland of that day.

The real question is very different. Would Compulsory Territorialism increase or decrease the chances of war? It might increase those chances in two ways: (1) by leading us into aggression, or (2) by leading some rival (let us say Germany) to attack us. And Germany's attack,



again, might have one of two causes: (a) the aggressive desire to crush us at once, before our new system should be ready, or (b) a sincere fear that we contemplated attacking them.

1. It has already been seen that common consent rules out the first alternative: there is practical agreement on both sides as to the defensive spirit of the citizen-soldier. It is a libel on the average Briton to say that, by passing him through six months of training under a far more democratic officer-system than that of our present Territorials, you would turn him into a fire-eater. To cap this absurdity (if more were needed), the very men who urge it are the same as those who insist that such a training would sicken the average man of military things, and kill the Regulars and Navy for lack of recruits.

2. There remains the chance of Germany's attacking us. The argument was not only used before the war, it is already being urged against the idea of our continuing the compulsory system after this war. We should become, we are told, a danger to our neighbours.

(a) That the German ruling classes would have looked eagerly for the opportunity, will probably be conceded now even by those who most doubted it two years ago. But the question is, Would they have found a better opportunity than they found in

1914? The Voluntary Service Committee argues (p. 11 and Appendix III.) that compulsion could not have been introduced without an "intervening period of chaos," lasting several years. We were told exactly the same by some prophets a few months ago, and with more reason, since the introduction of Compulsion in the throes of a great war certainly involves far greater risks of disorganization. We could, of course, conceivably have introduced it ten years ago in a manner that would have disorganized the Forces and provoked Germany; but what right have we to assume that this blunder was necessary, or even probable? There is a bad way and a good way of doing these things; why should we argue on the assumption that Government and War Office would have chosen the bad way? Is it not evident, on the contrary, that the dangers here emphasized would have been obvious to our authorities? Would not our diplomacy have been all the more cautious, our transition from Voluntary to Compulsory Territorialism all the more carefully managed, and both Triple Alliance and Dual Entente far clearer as to the real chances and significance of our intervention in the case of attack upon France or violation of Belgium?

(b) But "the Germans—not only their rulers but the population—would have convinced themselves that such an increase of our forces was a direct threat to them." This is urged by those who

tell us in the same breath that the change would really have weakened us. We may take for granted that they would have preached this doctrine very emphatically during the whole critical period. The Peace Party in Germany would, very properly, have taken care to circulate these arguments, as in fact they have circulated similar arguments in the past. Reasonable and educated Germans, therefore (on this assumption), would have had a chance of seeing that we were really weakening ourselves for aggression ; that we were committing the error fatal for Britain, but comfortable to all timid Germans, of wallowing in what Lord Haldane and Sir Ian Hamilton call "the dangers of mere defence." They would gladly have left us wallowing. Other Germans, no doubt, would have been less reasonable. In spite of Lord Haldane and Sir Ian Hamilton, they would have thought that the new system gave us a far better Home Defence force, with large numbers of trained men behind who would be of very little use, perhaps, for a few months, but who could be called up by law for home training at any moment, and whose voluntary efforts would supplement those of our Regulars far more efficiently than the fitful, unsystematic flow of those absolutely untrained men who formed so large a proportion of Lord Kitchener's Armies. That is how all moderate papers in Germany read the Military Service Act of 1916, and that is how they would have read a

Military Service Act in 1906. But where would have been the excuse for complaint here? When all the Imperial forces had been counted, what neutral expert would have decided that Great Britain's powers of defence were greater than those of Germany? What neutral politician, again, would have judged that our temptations to plunge into warlike adventures were greater than hers?

Driven into the last corner, the objectors urge that men are not always reasonable—not even Germans—and that Germany would in fact have considered herself threatened even by our attempt (however futile) to increase our defensive forces; an increase which, if ever war broke out, would gradually develop into an increase of our offensive forces also. To put this argument into plain English, the objectors are here found urging that this country is not free to take the defensive measures which (*ex hypothesi*) her statesmen have judged necessary for national security, lest their designs should be misunderstood by the less reasonable portion of a rival country. We must trust in the friendly intentions of a Germany armed to the teeth; and we must beware of irritating her by taking efficient defensive precautions. There is something to be said for absolute non-resistance; it is at least logical in theory, though nobody dreams of attempting to practise it. But there is neither rhyme nor reason in this theory

of spending £90,000,000 a year on national forces which we dare not reorganize for fear of bursting our boiler. It is as essentially absurd as the similar, and thoroughly undemocratic, argument that you cannot give our people a very brief and simple training in arms without inspiring them with the desire to go and kill some one.

## CHAPTER XIX

### LAST OBJECTIONS

SOME of these can be dealt with more briefly.

3. It has frequently been argued that the Continental Democrats and Socialists, who almost unanimously accept the Compulsory system as the nearest approach to justice yet achieved, are wrong; and that there is more justice in the system which, as a matter of fact, must always end in devolving the duty of National Defence upon a small minority. We have seen Mr. Cox urge this; it is emphasized also by the Voluntary Service Committee (iv. 144). The facts of this war have rendered it really unnecessary to answer this argument, however plausible it may seem in peace time. The country has now been able to compare both systems in this respect, and can be trusted to make up its mind. But it is important to note that the very writers who urge this plea of justice are willing to face the most patent injustices under a cover of voluntarism. Lord Haldane and Sir Ian Hamilton both deliberately contemplate the possi-

bility of a ballot for compulsory oversea service—one of the unfairest forms of compulsion.<sup>1</sup>

A kindred objection is to complain of the term *Universal Service* as misleading. The compulsory system “is not to apply to any woman; and, according to the calculations of the National Service League, it would only affect about half of the young men who each year reach the age of eighteen. To apply the epithet ‘universal’ to such a system is an abuse of the English language” (ii. 501). The best answer to this objection is a further objection stated by the same writer at the bottom of the same page. “It is therefore in the highest degree mischievous to speak as if military service were the only national service.” No reasonable compulsorist ever speaks so; we have always insisted that many other services also should be made national; and the present war has shown us the way. Under a well thought-out scheme in time of peace, places could have been found for all conscientious objectors to sweep out the wards of civilian hospitals, and to do a thousand national jobs as remote as possible from war, while the rest were training. The physically unfit, as in Switzerland, would have paid a tax according to their resources, to equalize to some extent the burden of sacrifice. Above all, women’s

<sup>1</sup> *Compulsory Service*, pp. 40, 135, 146, 202 ff. It is true that Sir Ian very cautiously decides against it on *military* grounds; but Lord Haldane certainly does not definitely reject it; and neither writer seems seriously to consider it from the moral point of view.

energies could have been utilized as they are being utilized now, only far more systematically. It is dinned into our ears that the man munition-worker is doing the work of a man in the trenches. We now confess the same of the woman munition-worker; and this war is bringing us far nearer to agreement on the vexed principle of Universal Suffrage—a term that has always been used as approximately as the other, yet without deceiving anybody who does not wish to be deceived. Even our disjointed emergency-efforts of the last two years have proved this. How much more clearly would any matured measure of Universal National Service bring out the distinction between the large majority who are willing to take their share of *all* national burdens, and the small minority who, through conscientious scruples or through other causes, stand in fact apart from their fellow-citizens. Perfect justice, perfect universality of service, are doubtless unattainable; but let us at least get as near to both as we can; and, above all, let us not find excuses for refusal in two separate reasons which contradict each other.

4. Again, it is argued that Compulsory Service is inseparable from immorality. There is scarcely any point on which objectors collect evidence with as little discrimination as on this. The fullest treatment of the subject, perhaps, is by Mr. Trevelyan (pp. 18-21); we may examine this as typical.



To begin with, all his quotations are taken from France ; he has not a single word to say about the working of the system in Switzerland. Considering that he professes to be dealing directly with adversaries who expressly base their propositions on the Swiss model, and who for years have been vainly protesting against the rhetorical device of confusing the Swiss system with that of the great militarist nations, this argument of Mr. Trevelyan's shows extraordinary mental confusion, to put it in the mildest possible terms. It is notorious that Jaurès's attempts to bring France to a system modelled on that of Switzerland was looked upon as revolutionary, and by extremists even as treasonable ; it was this, in fact, which had a great deal to do with his murder. Bebel's similar attempts in Germany seemed equally revolutionary to the average German. The Swiss and the Franco-German systems are both compulsory, as beer and sherry are both alcoholic ; but they differ both in quantity and in quality as a glass of beer differs from a quart of sherry. The Franco-German training-time is more than four times as long as the Swiss—a quart to a glass. In anti-democratic organization, in difficulty of promotion from the ranks, in difficulty of redeeming military injustices through the civil courts, even France is as much more " militarized " than Switzerland as sherry is more alcoholized than beer. Therefore, even if we admitted without question all that Mr. Trevelyan

tells us about France, we should still have to compare him with one of those well-meaning temperance cranks who ignore the difference between a glass of beer and a debauch of strong wine.

But of his French quotations all are taken from the debates on the Dreyfus case. It would be as reasonable to accept Ulstermen or Nationalists as impartial witnesses to Irish conditions, as to quote these speeches without making some allowance for their circumstances. To give only one instance: the notorious M. Drumont, who is Mr. Trevelyan's "most striking" witness, speaks of a three-years' barrack system, in the same breath, as destroying the conscript's morals and his "religious faith." Mr. Trevelyan knows very well that, if the modern Frenchman is anti-clerical, military service is certainly not the main factor in his loss of faith. Sixteen years ago I pointed out that even the bitterest critics in France, who knew the facts, were less random in their denunciations than our well-meaning fellow-countrymen who are so ignorant as to treat Swiss and French conditions as identical. Urbain Gohier's *L'Armée contre la Nation* had a *succès de scandale* in 1899, and earned its author the honours of prosecution. Yet Gohier, after his scathing condemnation of the three-years' system, ends by frankly admitting (p. 18): "One year of service at twenty is not unhealthy; it wakes a young fellow up and has a bracing effect."

The reader may find in my Appendix XII. what careful Swiss parents think of the brief barrack-course there. The Labour M.P.'s and Trades Union representatives who visited Switzerland on the 1907 commission had two private interviews with representative bodies of Swiss Socialists; these had no complaints of moral corruption to report (*ibid.*). Jean Jaurès, one of the greatest idealists of our generation, had no hesitation in prescribing for the French youth a period of six months in barracks—nearly double the Swiss period.

The moral objection has been stated more recently by Dr. Starr Jordan in his *War and the Breed*. Dr. Jordan attempts to make the barracks greatly responsible for the prevalence of venereal diseases (pp. 110 ff.). This is "a scourge fostered especially by militarism" (p. 113). Yet his own table of statistics, on the next page, shows how blind the learned professor is to all facts that do not square with his own prepossessions. The yearly average of cases among soldiers in Germany is 19·8 per thousand; in France 28·6; in Great Britain 68·4, and in the U.S.A. 167·8! Of course we cannot take these figures altogether at their face value; but it is obvious that they warn us against the rash generalizations of antimilitarist writers. It is significant, also, that the anti-militarist description of the German army which Dr. Jordan prints in Appendix C, does not emphasize this accusation of immorality. Still more

significant is the particularly straightforward description of French barrack life by Professor A. L. Guérard, in Appendix D of Dr. Jordan's book, which ought to have warned him even more plainly than the statistics.<sup>1</sup> Professor Guérard expressly attributes what was worst in his barrack-life to the fact that he served at Havre, and that his fellow-conscripts were Normans. In Normandy, as he explains, alcoholism is terribly prevalent; "children seemed to be brought up on cider brandy. The result can be imagined." He makes no attempt to trace this alcoholism to militarism; in fact, this war has given us the spectacle of military authorities taking downright measures against drink which civilian governments have been too timid to take. At Havre, again, he was in "the second seaport in France. The barracks rose right on the quays; and I could see in all its hideousness the gross immorality which prevails in all shipping centres." The conscript, that is, learned his worst moral evil from the voluntarily enlisted sailor; and we Anglo-Saxons are to maintain, in the name of higher morality, an army-system which infects a proportion of soldiers at least twice as great as under the conscript system, and a naval organization which seals the bluejacket to long years of celibacy or of separation from home. Thus "the gross immorality which prevails in all

<sup>1</sup> I stated these objections in greater detail in the *Eugenics Review* for Jan. 1916, p. 288. Dr. Jordan, answering me, on p. 65 of the April number, made no attempt to defend himself on this point.

our shipping centres ” is a sort of open sore which purges the rest of the British population ; nine pharisees remain moral, because the tenth publican (Regular or Sailor) is segregated to immorality ! We must, of course, have sailors ; we must have a long-service Army and Navy ; but do not let us pretend that it is morality which decides us to keep these things as they are. Dr. Jordan is Principal of an American University ; Mr. Trevelyan, when he wrote, was a Cabinet Minister. When men of this prominence carefully avoid the evidence from a country like Switzerland, and misinterpret so extraordinarily even their own chosen witnesses, we are entitled to judge that they have a very bad case. I have never seen even an attempt to prove, by common-sense evidence, that six months of military training—of which four, at most, would be in barracks—would tend to the deterioration of British morals.

5. The objection of expense loomed very large in this discussion before the war. Lord Roberts calculated the extra cost of such a system at four millions a year ; Lord Haldane and his advisers contended that it would amount to eight millions ; but this contention took strange liberties with the figures (see Appendix XVI.). Let us, however, for the sake of argument, accept this higher figure. It would then have cost us to prepare for this war (or rather, to do all in our power to avert this war)

an annual sum equal to what we are spending every thirty-two hours at the present time.<sup>1</sup>

6. But, it was argued, this addition to the budget is not the whole cost. Let us take three typical quotations. (a) "Neither calculation takes any account of the expense imposed upon industrial undertakings by the simultaneous withdrawal of a large number of employees. This would be a very important part of the total cost to the nation" (ii. 496). (b) "There are many employers who say that if all the men liable to train under a compulsory system were called out it would mean shutting down work for the fortnight, so that five or six men would be rendered idle for every one called out for training" (IV. 5). (c) "The profound moral and economic upheaval which will be caused by the herding of all the most active of our young men of 18 to 21 in barracks or permanent camps for months together" (V. 18). Have we not here (as the greatest of our political economists complained in 1871) "a most exaggerated idea of the time which would have to be sacrificed from the ordinary pursuits of life?" (J. S. Mill, *Letters*, II. 303).

Apart from my general enquiry of 1900, I made special researches in Switzerland three years ago, addressing 100 printed forms of enquiry to as

<sup>1</sup> The rate has risen even since this book began to go to press. It may be safely said that we are spending now, *every single day*, a sum nearly equivalent to the annual cost of Lord Roberts's scheme.

many employers, whom I asked my Lausanne printer to choose at random from his directory. Forty-six were good enough to reply, together with a few more who employed only female labour, and were therefore useless for my purpose. By choosing the firms thus at random, it was possible to secure a very great diversity of size and quality and occupation. One firm, for instance, employed as few as nine men; nine others less than 50; the highest total for a single firm was 2,296. The grand total of men employed by the forty-six firms was 9,263, a number large enough to ensure correct generalizations. I had asked in plain words: "Do you judge Compulsory Military Service to be disadvantageous to Swiss trade and commerce?" One only returned a doubtful answer: even he did not quite venture to say *Yes*. The forty-five others all said *No*; often with special emphasis, as *pas du tout*; or with an enumeration of the causes which, in their judgment, more than counter-balanced the small loss of time.

We are here confronted, however, with leaflet 11 of the International Arbitration League, which distinctly asserts the contrary, and bases the assertion on the alleged experience of a factory near Zürich in 1907. With great trouble I succeeded in identifying this factory as one of the only two which had been officially visited by the Commission of 1907. The managers of both factories energetically repudiated the assertions

of the writer of the leaflet. *E.g.* he had written that "nearly half" of the hands had been called out simultaneously for manœuvres; the managers showed by their books that only 7 per cent. had been called out in one case, and 3½ per cent. in the other. The Under-Secretary of the Labour Bureau at Zürich, to whom I had previously applied, answered (*italics his own*) "such a case [as you quote from the leaflet] has never happened among us, *and we should never even discuss its possibility.*" Finally, one of the colonels to whom the writer had appealed for corroboration replied: "The gentleman who publishes this story has either been egregiously hoaxed by his informant in Switzerland, or else has misunderstood him."<sup>1</sup> It is almost impossible to exaggerate the unanimity with which the Swiss maintain that the energy which they expend in military training brings its full compensations, even in trade and industry.

There seems little doubt that the same may be said even of the German system. Professor Hadley, President of Yale University, lectured at the end of 1908 to his fellow-citizens on "What we can learn from the Educational Institutions of Germany." In this address he said:

"The majority of intelligent and patriotic Germans will to-day tell you that the German Army gives the German

<sup>1</sup> See fuller details of this case in my *Main Illusions of Pacificism*, Appendix, pp. xxii-xxviii. The colonel in question is now Commander-in-Chief of the Swiss Army.



nation habits of discipline, cleanliness, and efficiency which cannot be obtained in any other way; and that two years of withdrawal from active industry is a very cheap price to pay for training which makes a man a more efficient worker and a more useful citizen for 20 years thereafter" (*Nation in Arms*, January, 1909, p. 9).

Similar evidence is given by Mr. W. Harbutt Dawson in his *Evolution of Modern Germany* (1908, p. 151). Speaking of educational influences which give the German workman an advantage over his English rival, he says: "The first is the continuation school, and the second is the institution of military service." "Ninety-nine per cent. of my men come back to me," said the manager of a large machine works in the Rhineland, "for I always keep their places open for them and they are more valuable to me than before." None of the pre-war prophecies has been more hopelessly falsified than the idea that conscription would so disorganize industrial life as to make a great war insupportable for more than a few months at most. On the contrary, it is we who have had to learn from Germany and France how to adapt industrial conditions to the exigencies of war.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *E.g. Westminster Gazette*, Dec. 9, 1912, where Colonel Maude prophesied: "If any other European nation [than ours] ventures to mobilize, the paralysis of her industrial system is in precise proportion to her industrial development . . . the outbreak of war hits more than only the financial credit of firms—it *practically suspends their operations altogether.*" Compare the words I have italicized with the testimony of the very sober neutral witness in the *Morning Post* for Jan. 13, 1915, who pointed out that German industries were showing amazing vitality, and that new houses were being built in Berlin.

7. *Trade Disputes.* "There is another aspect of compulsory service which the experience of foreign countries is emphasizing. A conscript army makes the central government much more powerful in case of civil disturbance. . . . It is no wonder that the Trade Union Congress has repudiated the objects of the agitation. The labour world has recently seen in France the most summary and successful method of strike-breaking invented by the French Government. During the recent railway strike the railwaymen were simply called out by the government and ordered to work as soldiers where they had been working as civilians. They were mobilized to blackleg themselves" (V. 21-2).

This argument, we see, professes to be an appeal to *experience*; yet the system we propose is that of republican Switzerland and democratic Norway, in which experience shows the working classes to be at least as well off as in Britain. The writer (Mr. C. P. Trevelyan), appeals to one special case, the strike-breaking in France by M. Briand in 1910. Yet French Radicals and Socialists, who knew far more of that case than he, and had far more reason to resent it, were not thereby shaken in their allegiance to the compulsory principle. Jean Jaurès published his *Armée Nouvelle* only a few weeks after the strike; he speaks very bitterly of the Government action. Yet he shows very plainly that, so long as a country keeps up an efficient army at all, that army will be a more unscrupulous instrument of Government repression if it is composed only of paid soldiers; and he points out that, on the Continent, "the whole instinct, the whole thought

of the working classes, in every country, goes in the contrary direction"—that is, against the idea of a paid army, and in favour of the Nation in Arms.<sup>1</sup> These are the words of a man who really knew the classes in whose name he spoke; Mr. Trevelyan's supposed appeal to "experience" is simply a proof of his own superficial reading of the facts.

Take the example of Switzerland, again. Public opinion there would scarcely permit the mobilization of troops as blacklegs; though there is, I believe, no positive law against it, such as might easily be passed among us.<sup>2</sup> Troops are called out only to keep order during the strike, and especially to ensure that large bodies of strikers should not be tempted to illegal violence, whether against the persons of non-strikers or the property of employing classes. For such purposes a Citizen Army is not only far more efficient than the Regulars, but it also provides its own safety-valve. A classical instance is the great Geneva strike of 1898, described by Moch on p. 276, and on p. 43 of the present writer's *Strong Army in a Free State*. It began among the masons (most of whom here, as elsewhere in Switzerland, are foreigners); but it spread to other trades. The general public were

<sup>1</sup> Ed. 1915, p. 357; translated on p. 77 of *Democracy and Military Service* (Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1916).

<sup>2</sup> The law forbidding the use of Territorials, as such, in labour troubles might easily be applied also under any system of Compulsory Territorialism.

convinced that some of the leaders intended to make good their violent threats, and to attack persons and property. A battalion was therefore called out; the strikers were forbidden to parade the streets in such numbers as to impede the business of the city; and in process of time the strike fizzled out. But the really significant fact is that 30 per cent. of the men thus mobilized were strikers or sympathizers, and that their mobilization was recognized as an act of exceptional courage on the part of the City Council. If anything like half the population had been in favour of the strikers, no mobilization would have been possible. The Swiss Militia, therefore, so far from being a tool of social oppression, is a real barometer of public feeling. It will not be denied that this calling out of citizens to keep order in their own city was less objectionable in itself, and likely to end more pacifically, than the importation of a battalion of hired soldiers. Nor can the justice of the proceeding be seriously contested. To contend that 30 per cent. of the population has a right to wrest, by violence or threats of violence, certain concessions from the remaining 70 per cent., and that this majority has not the right to keep the peace by a resort to strictly constitutional measures, would seem quite indefensible on the principles of any civilized state. It is sheer Larkinism and a reversal to primitive individualism; and those states are best constituted in which

the military system makes it perfectly clear from the very first what numbers and what organization are on the side of law-keepers and law-breakers respectively.<sup>1</sup> Half our civil conflicts, like half our international conflicts, spring from gross miscalculations on one side or on both.

Therefore, neither experience nor sound political theory are in favour of this objection. There is no working-class in continental Europe which does not prefer the compulsory system, on the whole, to the system of hiring soldiers.

#### 8. *Illusions as to Physical Training.*

Although this objection is founded (as will be seen), upon the grossest misconceptions, yet the general public, naturally unfamiliar with the literature of this subject, has hitherto allowed great weight to it. Let us state it in the words of Mr. Trevelyan, whose position as Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education naturally lent his words great authority, and who goes into more details than most. Following upon his objections, let us print the official proposals of the National Service League, against which his whole pamphlet was directly aimed. These proposals were not only regularly distributed as leaflets by

<sup>1</sup> At a later Zürich strike, a *county* battalion was sent to keep order in the *city*. This certainly lends itself to serious criticism, though to less than the importation of hired soldiers; and, in any case, it could easily be checked by making it a penal offence to import a foreign battalion unless the order could later be justified in the law courts as a necessary emergency measure.

the League, but appeared also *on the cover of every issue of their journal*, in order to leave no possible doubt in the public mind.

(A) Trevelyan, *Democracy and Compulsory Service* (V. 14).

“What becomes, then, of the claim that compulsion will improve national physique, if *the half of the youth* who most need training *will not be affected*? Compulsory service will only train a little more those who are already the most fit. . . . If there is to be a national health campaign which is sensibly to affect the physique of the rising generation, it must be undertaken in a far larger spirit. *All the youth* ought to come within the scope of the training. It is even more important that the mothers of the race should be strong than the fathers. But because they are not wanted for fighting, the girls are forgotten by the militarist. And among children of both sexes, it is the weaker who require most and not least attention. In fact, the course of national training must have a medical basis. It must begin, as it is now beginning, in the elementary schools. It must be continued *between fourteen and eighteen*, a period when military training of a serious kind cannot be undertaken. It must *not be merely drill*. Indeed, the purely military exercises are of comparatively small value for general development. They are being discarded as irrelevant by informed and scientific opinion. All these things can be done by an educational system. The foundations are now being laid.”

(B) *Proposals of the National Service League*. These are put as briefly as possible, to occupy only half the cover of the journal. The detailed proposals are only three, of which the last runs as follows:

“(3) *Military and physical* training shall be compulsory for all youths between the ages of 14 and 18, and such training shall be carried out either (a) as part of the *curriculum of all Schools*; (b) in affiliated cadet corps; or (c) in organisations for boys’ training duly selected and authorised.”

Let readers compare the words here italicized in both quotations, and ask themselves how Mr. Trevelyan could possibly have maintained his objection if he had done the League the elementary justice of looking at their proposals before sitting down to attack them. For the mention of girls is altogether beside the point. No member of the League would have had the least objection to including better physical training for girls as part of the school training they advocate for boys; indeed, it was taken for granted that girls’ schools would follow the improvements in the boys’ schools, as soon as these could be introduced. Again, even if the League had tried intentionally to rule out the girls, it must still have been obvious that their scheme offered a far bigger loaf than has ever been given yet to the advocates of physical training in elementary schools. If Mill could have had his way, we should have had this system for more than a generation, as in Switzerland. Compulsory Territorialism would have involved here, as there, a real system of physical training in our schools; indeed Mill expressly contemplated this. The voluntary system, meanwhile, has procrastinated from year to year, and, even in 1913, we get more

promise than actual assurance of progress from this Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education himself. "All these things *can* be done by an Educational system"—which has now been running for nearly forty years! "The foundations are now being laid"; and, by way of laying these foundations, he refuses even to see what is being done by a body which, if it had had its way, would have completed the whole edifice ten years ago! As the *Arbitrator* said only a few weeks after Mr. Trevelyan's pamphlet was published, the best way of destroying the National Service League would have been to introduce a system of compulsory physical training in continuation schools (December, 1913, p. 136).

It must be frankly recognized, therefore, that the compulsorist has been hitherto the best friend of physical training, not only for the 58 per cent. or so of males who would be taken for their recruit course, but for all children at school and up to the age of 18. Jaurès, for instance, would begin such training with a definite military purpose, from the age of 10 onwards. When we speak of *military purpose* we do not necessarily imply that the exercise itself is of an exclusively military character; far from it. Jaurès would compose it of Swedish and similar exercises, activities of the Boy Scout description, and finally formal drill squads, companies or regiments. The National Service League, it will be seen, specially provided also for a similar variation of activities. To deny that a system of



that kind would do more for the national physique than any voluntary effort has yet succeeded in doing is simply to ignore facts for oneself, and to presume on equal ignorance on the part of the public. For, of course, the general public has little time to look into these matters, and must take most of its information either from its newspapers or from its accredited teachers.

The whole population, under any reasonable constitution of the Nation in Arms, would be trained up to the age of 18 ; and if, after that age, the minority who were not taken as recruits relapsed into carelessness, that would no longer be chargeable to the slackness of our educational machinery. Moreover, even these could never lose, through mere indolence, all the good which had been done to them in childhood and in youth.

9. Side by side with other objections which have been killed by the experience of this war, one has, on the contrary, sprung into special prominence recently. " Militarism," it is asserted, is the deadly enemy of " feminism " ; the soldier-society is one in which woman cannot possibly come to her rights. It is not worth while to follow in detail the arguments by which this thesis has been supported. The writers do not exactly define either " militarism " or " feminism " ; and, in the fullest and most widely circulated pamphlet on the subject, the former term is used even of our own Volunteer

movement in 1859, and of our attempts in the seventies to raise the standard of Volunteer efficiency!<sup>1</sup> No attempt is made to explain why Mill, the great champion of Feminism, was also a champion of Compulsory Service; why New Zealand, with its Women's Vote, was one of the first Anglo-Saxon communities to enforce military training on the able-bodied population, and again vote actual conscription during this war; or why Norway, with a Compulsory Military system, is more feminist than Great Britain with her Voluntarism (pp. 5, 42, 53). The historical side of the argument is weaker still. All sorts of nations are cited into court, barbarous and civilized, ancient and modern; but the authors ignore two of the best known—ancient Germany and modern China. The German, Tacitus tells us, transacted no public business but in arms; his ideals were essentially warlike; yet the power and consideration enjoyed by his women astounded the Roman observer. China is the least militarized of all great nations in the modern world; yet in China woman is bought and sold, and superfluous female infants are murdered. Burma, which is taken as the model feminist state by the authors, is not only defenceless against any foreign invader, but even against the invasions of modern commerce; "everywhere trade is falling into stronger hands, as elsewhere

<sup>1</sup>*Militarism versus Feminism . . . demonstrating that Militarism involves the Subjection of Women*, no author's name, London, 1915, pp. 40, 53.

in the world ” (p. 18). To many people, the clue to this may be found in the passage from Mr. Hall’s travels, which the authors cite with approval ; “ his instincts [*i.e.* the Burmese man’s] make him like hunting, lead him to kill noxious beasts and reptiles. But in every home the mother and wife enforce the prohibition against taking life.” He may not, it appears, even kill a mouse within his own walls. These brief instances, among many more which might be given, show how little the authors have thought out the consequences of their own theories.

May we not say that this war has created many cross-cleavages in older social ideas, but has given no justification whatever to those who would find the main social cleavage in sex-differences ? Did it not show great obtuseness for these authors to write “ even early in 1915, *in war-time, only men matter* ” (p. 60, italics their own). Has not the real cleavage been not between sex and sex, but between men and women who take national defence seriously, as against men and women who try to talk these things away ? Has not the war revealed to all of us, even the most optimistic, how much woman can do when her heart is in the matter ? And will not all this bring us far nearer towards a solution of the feminist problem ? This, at least, seems to be the hope of most supporters of the women’s vote ; and when we look critically into the reasons at present advanced against it, we can scarcely deny that they rest upon very slender logi-

cal and scientific foundations. That unadulterated Bernhardism is difficult to reconcile with feminism would be granted by everyone. But common-sense would rather suggest that sane feminism has a great deal to hope from any frank recognition of the fact that all inhabitants of a country are equally concerned in national defence; that each may, if he or she will, contribute a very valuable share; and that legal privilege should go hand in hand with legal responsibility, both in peace and in war.<sup>1</sup> Man is not, on the whole, a wicked animal; and the best hope of avoiding war would seem to lie in bringing the realities and responsibilities of war home to as many people as possible, of all possible classes and private interests. For the general interest is always against war; let us therefore generalize as much as possible.

10. *The Thin End of the Wedge.* This is the last objection which need seriously be discussed. Others—even some of those urged at length in the responsible publications above enumerated—have either been stultified by this present war, or are calculated to appeal only to a population unwilling to face the urgent necessity of military reorganization. The author of *The Case for Voluntary Service*, for instance, spends nearly three pages (127-129) in attempting to prove that we should never find a real body of citizen-officers to command our citizen-

<sup>1</sup> It is hardly necessary to point out how completely this prophecy, written a year before, is borne out by current events (June, 1917).

army. He proves clearly enough that those who do not want to solve this problem cannot solve it ; but there is not a word which would appeal to that great majority of our fellow-countrymen who are now sincerely anxious for a democratic yet efficient system, and who know very well that such systems work admirably in Switzerland and Norway, from the private to the colonel.

But the Thin End of the Wedge is a specious objection which is still urged, and will be urged more strongly when the real discussion comes after this War.

It is perhaps most clearly expressed on pp. 4 and 41 of the official handbook which has just been quoted. We there read :

“ Finally, there is the consideration that the step once taken is irrevocable. A voluntary system can be adapted to the changing circumstances. Once start on the road to universal compulsion and there can be no return.”

And again :

“ There is reasonable ground for suspicion that if the comparatively small army on lenient conditions of training demanded by the National Service League were once conceded for home defence, it would rapidly be extended on the plea of military necessity, until it became an army on the Continental scale, with the length of service and rigorous training required by warfare as practised in Europe to-day. The first step, once taken, would be irretrievable, and would more and more entangle this country in European militarism.”

Mr. Trevelyan (pp. 16 ff.), while following the

same line of argument, ventures to accuse Lord Roberts of disingenuous diplomacy for having frankly confessed that some supporters of the National Service League were in favour of longer periods, and for having added: "there would be no difficulty in adjusting the details of the scheme" later on (*Fallacies and Facts*, p. 14). The best answer to this is the answer which Lord Roberts gave in the *Morning Post* for February 6, 1914. Mr. Philip Snowden, M.P., in a letter of February 3, had in effect repeated this accusation, writing:

"There is no doubt whatever that the aim of the National Service League, and the compulsory service agitation, is the enforcement of compulsory military service for the purpose of Continental wars. . . . Without Conscription we could never raise a force which would be of any use to 'our friends,' and without years of continuous training our soldiers would be of little use as allies of the conscript armies of the Continent."

To this Lord Roberts replied in words which I need make no apology for quoting at some length, since they constitute his fullest official pronouncement on this subject in the days just before the war:

"The National Service League is fighting for three main points; for a home militia (1) training *all* the able-bodied population with very few exceptions, (2) for home defence only, and (3) under a system in which all recruits, of whatever class, would start in the ranks. Moreover, our draft proposals include a fourth point, that the term of service should only be about one-fourth as long as in the great Continental armies. It is perfectly true that I have once admitted (with perhaps more frankness than political

finesse) that, if this period were found insufficient, it might be extended. But by whom would it be extended? 'By Lord Roberts and his friends, if once they could get their main principles established,' says Mr. Snowden. But no man has a right to forget—least of all has a Labour Leader any right to forget—that not I but the votes of the people must decide this question. As he himself has said most emphatically only twenty lines higher up, in an argument where this common-sense reminder was necessary to his purpose, '*Lord Roberts is not going to work the system if it is established.*' I gladly underline these words to emphasize my hearty agreement with them, and with the other passage in which Mr. Snowden points out that 'in a democratic country like this the system could not work permanently unless it secured the considered approval of the working classes.' This is why we of the National Service League are doing all we can to secure, at least, free and open discussion of this question before working-class audiences. The fact that the Swiss and Norwegian compulsory militias are frankly accepted by all political parties does not depend merely, or, even mainly, as Mr. Snowden argues, upon different geographical conditions. It is because the working men of these countries have thought on these questions and have had the truth put before them. Mr. Snowden and his friends (as I have already shown) put before our working-classes assertions on matters of the greatest importance, matters easily verified, which are flatly opposed to the truth.<sup>1</sup> That these falsehoods are disseminated through mere carelessness and prejudice does not make much practical difference. The British working-classes will never have a real chance of facing the

<sup>1</sup> Lord Roberts, just above, had quoted from Jaurès to show how grossly Mr. Snowden misrepresented the real views of Continental Socialists. To this letter of Lord Roberts Mr. Snowden never ventured to make any reply.

question of National Defence until their leaders give them a chance of hearing the truth. We of the National Service League advocate above all things—I seize this opportunity of officially repeating it—a system which may be described as Compulsory Territorialism *minus* that caste-system among the officers which Mr. Snowden deplures, and *plus* an efficiency in training and organization which is quite impossible so long as that admirably devoted force remains un-national. *Home defence is our first motive.* If, beyond this, we point out that war is a possible, though a lamentable contingency, and that our expeditionary force might conceivably have to be sent abroad, we are true here again to our motto of Compulsory Territorialism. Lord Haldane, in creating the Territorials, explained officially that ‘the Territorial Force is thus designed to enable both the Army and Navy to operate with greater freedom at a distance from these shores, where defence of British interests may require their presence,’ and later on he repeats this in other words: ‘to free the Regular Army from the necessity of remaining in these Islands to fulfil the functions of Home Defence’” (Memo. on Army Estimates for 1908-9).

It is scarcely necessary to point out how strikingly experience has confirmed these words since they were written. It was the rising feeling in the country which forced compulsion upon the Government; it will be the real feeling of the country which, when our immediate military necessities are over, will determine whether to continue compulsion, and, if so, for how long a period of training. And, if every man in the country had received a previous training for home defence more thorough than that of our 260,000 Territorials, this would have left no possibility for the epigram



attributed to Lord Kitchener in the *Westminster Gazette* of January 11, 1915: "I don't know when this war will end: but I know when it will begin, and that is in the month of May."

The "thin end" objection ignores the striking fact that, with comparatively insignificant exceptions, the tendency of all compulsionist countries has been to *shorten* the service as time goes on. During the First Revolution, the French conscript served five years with the colours. In Prussia, at the introduction of the full compulsory system in 1807, the period was three years with the colours. Both countries gradually cut this down to two years; and nothing but the growing menace of German armaments and diplomacy induced France to accept, by no very large majority, a reversion to the Three Years. In Switzerland the service was lengthened by about three weeks, by a considerable majority of the whole people, at a Referendum in 1907. But, even thus lengthened, the Swiss period of service is far shorter than it was in previous centuries. If, as is very possible, France goes back to the Two Years again, and Switzerland decides to add a few weeks more to the training, the decision in each case will be the deliberate decision of a national majority, anxious to adjust military and civil considerations as accurately as possible. In either case it will be a truly democratic act, liable to reconsideration after further experience by the same democracy which has now adopted it.

## CHAPTER XX

### CONCLUSION

IN the foregoing chapters the author has attempted to prove that history shows us the principle of compulsory service for home defence as an integral factor in democratic freedom. For freedom can be founded only upon sane discipline ; to obtain the greatest liberty of action for the community at large, we must necessarily impose certain restrictions upon the individualism of the minority ; and the whole history of civilization is a history of principles, first accepted as beneficial, then enforced by law, and at last so completely accepted by the vast majority as to lose all the galling nature of compulsion, while they retain its full collective force. The effect of the law compelling all husbands to support their wives and families may be called wholly beneficial. We can conceive of a society so advanced as to drop that law, finding it useless, a mere survival of the distant past. But, in practice, we recognize the vast distance which separates us still from that Utopia. Those of us who are completely frank with ourselves

echo readily the memorable words of George Washington: we are "actual men, possessing all the turbulent passions belonging to that animal." We cherish the law which protects wives and children; and we have reason to admire the Swiss for cherishing a similar law which protects their country at a similar cost—theoretical rather than practical—to individual freedom of action. Compulsion freely accepted is no longer compulsion. This consideration removes all suspicion of paradox from the historical generalization which connects compulsory national defence with democratic governments, and which shows enlistment by "free contract" as characteristic rather of the despot. So long as armies are needed at all, the people can control the National Army only by entering into it. It is mere self-deception to say "we will stand outside the Army, and we will control it by law." Under such a system the time would surely come when the Army would make its own law. When our Regulars, rightly or wrongly, showed themselves disinclined to march against Ulster, it was perfectly logical that democratic papers like the *Westminster Gazette* should threaten to revolutionize our military system and create a People's Army.

I have tried to show, again, that military preparedness and militarism are two very definite things. To return to the case just cited. The attempt to force a new system of government upon

Ulster, by the bayonets of hired troops, might, with some show of reason, be stigmatized as militarism. But, if every able-bodied man within the four seas had been drilled and armed as in Switzerland, and if the Government had been able to reduce resistance to absurdity by pointing out that the Home Rule Bill was supported by the same proportion of rifles as of votes—this would have been less a military than a civic victory. Incidentally, most reasonable people would admit that a system of this kind would even reduce the chances of armed conflict. Our real danger is not from the arming of the average responsible citizen, but from the vapouring of irresponsible hot-heads and secret societies, who can calculate (not altogether unreasonably) upon taking society by surprise. Switzerland, with far greater diversity of races and languages than ours, and with the same religious divisions, has nothing like an Irish question. It was Jean Jaurès who insisted that the real danger of wild shooting and thoughtless violence comes not from the soldier (who has learned to see human society in something like its true proportion), but from the irresponsible individualist, who has scarcely even begun to recognize the value of co-operation on a great scale, and who mistakes the eccentricities of his own mind or his own clique for eternal principles of justice.

It was Jaurès also who emphasized the value of a rational military education: this is, as he

insisted, "an integral part of human knowledge."<sup>1</sup> It is idle here to turn our eyes away from all the uses of military training, and to dwell only on its abuses. The race of controversialists who lived upon the defects of the Board School system is now almost defunct; there is no room in the modern world but for those who are willing to accept compulsory education, and to make the best of it. Civil education is a power lending itself to great abuses—witness the indoctrination of the German people with a State-made system of political theories. Military education lends itself, as most people would admit, to still greater abuses. But its *general* effect, as in the case of civil education, is to raise the individual and the society, giving a wider outlook, and teaching the paramount social value of united effort under intelligent leadership. To fix our attention solely on its abuses is to go wilfully astray. If we look steadily at history as a whole, we shall see that the abuse of general military training for anti-social or anti-democratic purposes is exceptional. And it is precisely the business of civilization to distinguish between the normal and the exceptional working of any general principle; to seize all its potentialities for good, and to eliminate its potentialities for evil. The ignorant savage fears further complexity of organization as a force which will transform him against his will. The civilized man passes boldly to higher

<sup>1</sup> *L'Armée Nouvelle*, 1915, p. 308; *Democracy and Military Service*, p. 69.

social complexities, confident of bending them to the general purposes of human progress.

† Moreover, it is beside the present point to object that there is no lesson of co-operation, or duty, or self-sacrifice in military life which cannot also be learned and practised in civil life. Undeniable as this is in theory, no society has yet come near to realizing it in practice. It remains almost as true now as when John Stuart Mill wrote it in 1864, that “until labourers and employees perform the work of industry in the spirit in which soldiers perform that of an army, industry will never be moralized, military life will remain what, in spite of the anti-social character of its direct object, it has hitherto been, the chief school of moral co-operation.”<sup>1</sup> When this other ideal has come into practical politics—when it becomes possible to bargain with trade-union leaders as one military commander bargains with another, knowing that the rank and file will obey—when mutinies and breaches of faith have become as rare in trade organizations as in military life—when the workmen are as ready to lay down their lives for a common cause as the soldier has always shown himself—then, at last, there will be little excuse for the soldier’s survival, and we shall beat our swords into ploughshares. Until then, let us not reject “the chief school of moral co-operation” on the vague plea that some better school is theoretically possible.

<sup>1</sup> *Essay on Comte*, 1863, p. 149 ; cf. 146.

The present war has cleared our ideas. Few men believe now in Imperial Separatism; and few would venture to propound a thoroughly co-ordinated scheme of general Imperial Defence except on a basis of such uniformity of effort as practically postulates legal and general compulsion. Again, the clear separation between the conscientious objector and the ordinary citizen is welcomed by many thinking people as a gain. The worst hardships of which conscientious objectors complain are due to the haste and disorganization of our present emergency measures; temperate disputants on both sides are already so near each other as to foreshadow a fairly easy settlement in this field when peace gives us leisure to look around. We shall then be able to distinguish clearly between two ideals which lived confusedly together in our days of ease, when so few theories of this kind could be brought to any practical test. On the one hand there is John Stuart Mill's ideal of liberty, which permits the community to demand of each individual a proportionate share in the burden of common defence. On the other hand, there is the Friends' or Tolstoyan ideal of escaping war by ignoring war, and of claiming complete liberty of action and expression for each individual, even during the most perilous national crises. When once, in time of peace, practical statesmanship has clearly delimited these conflicting ideals, the two parties will be able to propagate their views

as definitely as two rival religious denominations ; and the world will judge them not only by their arguments, but by their fruits. If the non-resistant party, now clearly marked out from the rest by law and by legal registration, differentiates itself with anything like the same clearness in moral and intellectual qualities, we shall have gained one of the greatest steps forward towards world-peace. If their business-capacity, their probity, their self-sacrifice, their breadth of view and intelligent sympathy with adverse opinions, if their fortitude in face of the ordinary hardships and burdens of life makes it probable that conscientious objectors could preserve through adversity, by sheer moral force, something of that unity and determination which the soldier shows in the face of the enemy, then the world will begin to believe in the possibility of a non-resistant State. If their indifference to worldly goods proves equal to their dislike of the forcible methods by which alone the possession of worldly goods has ever been defended, here again their good example will effect what no mere words can ever do. They will show us how essentially false is the conception of the strong man armed, keeping his goods in peace.

Few, however, really believe in the possibility of civilized existence without self-defence. Nearly always, in the last resort, the antimilitarist falls back upon the fear lest efficient defensive forces should be used for offence. He looks upon every



drilled man as a potential murderer. He has never realized, probably, that the proportion of murders in the United States is enormously in excess of those committed in any "militarist state."<sup>1</sup> Worst of all, he does not realize the degradingly low estimate of human nature which his own argument postulates.

The present book, then, appeals to all who believe in human nature, and who love their own country without hating other countries. It appeals to those who are ready to admit, with Jean Jaurès, that the world would be brought one great step forward if all nations were prepared for war on the maximum of defensive organization, with the minimum of offensive—and that the great Anglo-Saxon Empire, with its small temptations to aggression in these days, with its fixed determination in self-defence, and with its age-long traditions of political liberty, is destined to inaugurate a new era in world-politics by providing a concrete example of a community coveting nothing further, yet organized down to the last man and the last penny in defence of what it now possesses.

<sup>1</sup> Mulhall, *Dictionary of Statistics*, 4th ed. (1899), pp. 168, 172.

## APPENDIX I

### COMPULSORY EDUCATION AND "PRUSSIANISM"

IT is curious to go back only two generations, and read what was written by Sir Edward Baines, the parliamentary leader of the Liberal Nonconformists, against Lord Lansdowne's very mild project for a system of State Education which would at last bring England nearly into line with the civilized world. Baines writes: "At a time when education is far more extensive than in any former period of our history, when it is every day advancing with giant strides . . . there are, it now appears, many Members of Parliament, and many writers who love Government surveillance for its own sake; or, at least, who have got so much of the police spirit that characterizes the statesmen of Germany as not to be satisfied without something like a universal espionage—a system of inspection, dictation and control by public functionaries, of regimental uniformity, and of dependence on public funds, characteristic of the continental despotisms. These persons, many of them able and distinguished men, but forgetting, in their zeal for mechanical completeness, the much higher value of a living spirit, demand that we should imitate the Prussian or some similar system, and place the education of the whole people under the care and control of the Government. It is true there are not many writers who as yet go avowedly this length; but there are many who manifestly admire compulsory and State education, and who only shrink from

recommending its immediate adoption, because they believe the nation is not prepared for and would not endure it." Baines protested against ruining the good work which was already being done by Voluntarism: "it would be as reasonable to plough up the wheat in spring because it did not yet bear full corn in the ear,"—yet, at this very time, great progressive towns like Manchester, as well as Baines's own Leeds, were not providing more than 75 per cent. of the children with even the pretence of school education! But he was hypnotized by the conviction that "Prussian" education would "Prussianize" our political and social life. He wrote: "The destruction of our liberties will be complete if we are to imitate Prussia and France in their degrading and enslaving system of functionalism. It is obvious that the schoolmasters and pupil-teachers will become nearly as dependent on the Inspectors as a slave in the United States is on his master. . . . What must be its effect upon the character of their teaching, and the principles and spirit of the rising generation of England?" This, and much more to the same effect, may be found in Sir Edward Baines's two pamphlets: *An Alarm to the Nation on the Unjust, Unconstitutional, and Dangerous Measure of State Education*, and *A Letter to the Marquis of Lansdowne on the Government Plan of Education*. I have given further quotations on this subject in the *Nineteenth Century and After* for January, 1915. Macaulay dealt with these old wives' alarms in one of the most pungent of his speeches (April 18, 1847). Exceptionally wide-minded Nonconformists like R. W. Dale of Birmingham supported compulsion, and "complained that many people interpreted voluntarism as 'freedom to give nothing'"; but for a long while Dale and his friends "were in a small minority" (*Life*, by his son, A. W. W. Dale, 1898, pp. 162-3, 266-274). Nor was this hypnotism confined to one party. A Conservative published, anonymously, a pamphlet

entitled *Compulsory Education Opposed to the Liberty of the Citizen* (Ridgeway, 169, Piccadilly). This author, like Baines, harped on the evil example of "the bureaucracy of Prussia" and on "the highly-coloured statements of some enthusiasts who attributed the great material prosperity of [Prussia and North America] to the more advanced state of national education therein established." Moreover (by way of 'dishing the Whigs'), he sought to rouse the working-man against his middle-class oppressor (pp. 3, 5). "Both Liberals and Conservatives alike stand forth before the public eye as supporters of the Doctrinaire Government and as oppressors of the poor. For it must be conceded that this legislation is calculated to limit the liberties of the working classes especially. The more wealthy could find no excuse for entirely neglecting the education of their families; to them it costs comparatively little to provide for their instruction superior to any that could be forced upon the poorer classes. . . . At a time when power has been put into the hands of the lower orders, the opportunity is taken of inflicting oppression and insult upon vast numbers of them; they are wounded in the most sensitive points, they are punished for the shortcomings of their children; the fathers, more especially, are arbitrarily and capriciously punished for the errors of their wives and children which they themselves are quite powerless to correct or to prevent. All this is done to gratify the craving for power of a comparatively few enthusiasts, who press forward the realization of their theories without regard to the rights or liberties of those who fall victims to their doctrinaire zeal, in the promotion of what they affect to consider the improvement of the rising generation. This system of vicarious punishment of parents seems to have originated with the despotic government of Prussia, and it is, to a certain extent, carried out by the despotic democracy of America; but

it is a system wholly opposed to the spirit of British constitutional government. In former times, the greatest jealousy existed in England with respect to the liberty and rights of the person; but of late years the ever-increasing power of the Liberal party has emboldened them to treat with contempt their opponents who have Conservative tendencies, and, in spite of them, to coerce the great mass of the people. . . . In former times the Englishman's proud boast was that his house was his castle. This can no longer be said, for the poor man, at any rate. His home is ruthlessly invaded by officials of various kinds, and now recently by the school board visitors, a body of men, from position and training, totally unfit for carrying out inquisitorial and restrictive measures among the humbler classes. . . . The poorer classes are daily taught to feel that they must be on the defensive in the war thus waged against them by the higher classes; by the working man it is, in fact, regarded as a war constantly carried on between the rich and the poor, for the still further aggrandisement of the rich."

This was the cry, then, between 1847 and 1871. In the autumn of 1915 Mr. H. G. Wells writes to the *Times* against Compulsory Military Service, and bases himself expressly upon the exactly opposite experience of two generations. The main obstacle to the introduction of compulsion at this time (according to Mr. Wells) is that the people have now been educated for more than a generation, and are too "alert and suspicious to fall into a trap." Superficial as this view is, it is less superficial than the ancient fear of national education as a "Prussian" thing, alien to the spirit of the free-born Briton.

## APPENDIX II

From the *Annual Register* for 1793, p. 259.

“THE moderate party in the convention, who were greatly influenced by Barrère, endeavoured to divert the attention of the public from these disastrous contests to objects of public utility ; and the following decrees were proposed by that deputy in the name of the committee of public safety, to improve the system of public instruction, and to make some necessary change in the regulation of the army.

1. There shall be a primary school in every place, which contains from 400 to 1.500 inhabitants. This school may serve for all less populous places within a specified distance.

2. In each of these schools there shall be an instructor, charged with teaching the scholars that elementary knowledge which is necessary to enable citizens to exercise their rights, and to manage their domestic concerns.

3. The committee of public instruction shall present a proportionable mode for towns, and the more populous communes.

4. The instructors shall be charged to give lectures and instructions once every week to citizens of all ages, and of both sexes.

5. The plan of a decree, presented by the committee of public instruction, shall irrevocably be the order of the day on every Thursday.

The requisition of the public force [for the army] was ordered in the several following classes :

“The first requisition shall extend from the age of 16 to 25 ; second, that of 25 to 35 ; third, from the age

of 35 to 45. The names of all citizens above that age shall be inscribed, in three classes, in registers kept by the municipalities. Every citizen burthened with three children, and who can prove that he is unable to maintain them, except by his labour, shall be ranked in the third class, whatever may be his age. All bachelors, under the age of 45, shall be placed in the first class. The municipalities shall inscribe in the same registers the number of fire-arms which they have at their disposal, and which shall be distributed among the citizens of the first class. The municipal officers shall take care, under pain of being dismissed by the directories of departments, that all citizens of the first class be exercised every Sunday."

Five years later, under this new school-system, France was already putting Great Britain to shame in educational progress, though the loss and suffering of war had fallen far more heavily on the French than on ourselves during all those years. We read in the *Monthly Magazine* for January, 1798 (p. 26), "The establishment of national schools in France may, at least, be considered as one benefit arising out of the progress of the revolution, and (in proportion as the design matures and becomes general), must eminently promote the ends of a good government, inasmuch as every citizen will be taught to feel his weight and consequence in a State where talent and virtue form the criteria of promotion. Such institutions, on a similar plan, have long been the *desideratum* of this country. In England the education of youth has been uniformly, except in some few instances, entrusted to the most ignorant and incapable, or to school-men who, heated with the prejudices of a college, view the progress of the mind with distrust, and treat its aptitude with neglect."

It is worthy of remark that Adam Smith treats of compulsory military training under the heading of education ;

that he speaks in the same breath of our deficiency in military discipline and in school-system; and that he blames the state-neglect which breeds cowards almost as severely as the neglect which breeds dolts (*Wealth of Nations*, bk. v. pt. iii. art. 2, "Of the Expense of the Institutions for the Education of Youth"). Part of this section will be found quoted on p. 162 of the present work.

### APPENDIX III

#### MORRIS BIRKBECK ON FRENCH CONSCRIPTION

AFTER noting that the calling-up of males had made far less difference to French industry and agriculture than English people had imagined, Mr. Birkbeck proceeds:

"Much has been said of this horrible conscription by which Buonaparte was enabled to repair his wasted legions; but it is rather the abuse of the practice than the principle which is the proper ground of complaint. When irresistible power became united in the same individual with insatiable ambition, it is no wonder that in order to promote his views the most righteous institutions are perverted. Thus the conscription, which under a free government would be the surest and most equitable principle of defence, and at the same time the best security against the adoption of mad schemes of offensive warfare, became a dreadful engine in the hands of a despotic ruler. I know nothing of military affairs, but from what I have seen of French officers and soldiers I am struck with the difference in character from all ranks between an army, drawn from all ranks by conscription, and whose officers rise by merit, and one formed from the dregs of lowest orders, or



from the scum of the highest. And their demeanour when disbanded differs as widely as their composition. The former return to their homes, resuming their stations among their peaceful fellow-citizens, whilst the latter are too often wretched vagabonds, the terror and pests of society, and the officers probably a burthen to themselves and a tax upon the community.”<sup>1</sup>

## APPENDIX IV

*Extracts from “Military Reports (1866-1870).” By Colonel Baron Stoffel. Translated for the War Office by Captain Home, R.E. Printed by H.M. Stationery Office. 1872.*

“BUT the most important lesson to be obtained by a study of the Prussian army is that connected with its *moral*. Two things are very striking :

1. The intellectual value of the army.
2. The principle of justice and morality which is the basis of its organization.

I. *The Intellectual Value of the Army.*

This is due to the intellectual state of Prussia, which is very high, and to the effects produced by the law of compulsory service, which causes all the talent of the country without exception to serve in the army.

Prussians are not remarkable for either the elevation or nobleness of their ideas. Greatness of soul, generosity, and the attractive gifts of mind are not their inheritance. But they possess, in a marked degree, sterling qualities : industry, a strong sense of duty, a love of order, economy, and obedience. Their Electors and their Kings have almost

<sup>1</sup> *Notes of a Journey through France in 1814*, London, 1815, Appendix, p. 12.

always been an incarnation of the national character. Wanting nobleness and greatness of soul, this nation would never have produced a Louis XIV. But it must be admitted that neither would it have produced a Louis XV. The army represents the nation much more than the French army does the French nation, and it possesses all the sterling qualities I have named.

Under the head of general education it is far superior to the French army, and, as I have already pointed out in my first report, this superiority is to be found in every grade. The officers are better educated than ours, so are the non-commissioned officers; and finally, the soldiers surpass the French not by their natural intelligence, which is certainly as great amongst us, but because their primary education is less superficial" (p. 11).

### *"II. Principle of Justice and Morality.*

Prussia has given the brightest example of justice and morality, by applying the principle of compulsory service for all her citizens. On this basis her military institutions rest.

How is it possible to compare an organization based on a principle so just, so pregnant with valuable results, with the French organization, bearing on its face the horrible stain of substitution by means of money payments? A thing which demoralizes the army, nay the nation itself. We do not reflect on the dangers of this fatal institution; men gifted with common-sense have long ago discerned, and said all that can be said against a principle so unjust, so immoral, and which, in the long run, saps the very foundations of the nation.

Prussia has proclaimed loudly that military service is

the first duty of the citizen ; that nothing is more demoralizing to a nation than allowing the rich, by reason of their wealth, to free themselves from this duty. For, say they, how can a nation but believe that all duty may be bought and sold, if this the most sacred of all duties is so treated ? What a gulf do not such principles open between the rich and the poor ? How can it be hoped, if such principles are allowed, that the army can enjoy that respect and that consideration which is so essential to its very existence ? It is impossible to describe how the consideration in which Prussia holds her army strikes one ; it can only be explained by the application of universal military service, which fuses, as it were, the nation and the army ” (p. 12).

“ I proceed to make observations on the Prussian Army.

*Elements of Moral Superiority.*

Under the head of moral superiority, two things have given the Prussian Army an undeniable advantage over all European Armies.

1st. The principle of compulsory military service.

2nd. The general instruction diffused through all classes of society.

*Compulsory Service.*

It is needless to point out again (I have already done so in my reports of 1866) the moral superiority which the presence in the ranks of all classes of society, and the respect that the army and landwehr taken together represent the entire nation under arms, confer on the Prussian Army. Whatever faults may be found with Prussian military organization, it is impossible not to

admire a people, who, having recognized the truth, that for nations, as for individuals, the first necessity is existence, have determined that the army should be the chief, the most honoured of all its institutions; that all healthy citizens should share the danger and the honour of defending the country, increasing its power, and that they should be respected and esteemed before all others.<sup>1</sup> To speak only of the officers, what an excellent example they give to other classes. In Prussia, those privileged by birth or fortune do not, as elsewhere, spend their lives in deplorable idleness. Far from it, men of the richest families, the most illustrious names, serve as officers, enduring the labours and exigencies of military life, instructing by example. When such a spectacle is seen, not only does one feel respect for this rough but grave people, but dread also, for the power such institutions give its army.

#### *Compulsory Education.*

The principle of compulsory education has been adopted in Prussia for more than thirty years; it may even be said since the time of Frederick the Great; consequently the Prussian nation is the most enlightened in Europe, in the sense that education is diffused among all classes of society. . . .

#### *Feeling of Duty.*

I cannot omit to mention one quality which characterizes the whole Prussian nation, and which helps to augment the moral value of the army—*it is the feeling of duty*. It exists to such an extent amongst all classes in the country, that the more the nation is studied the more one is

<sup>1</sup> I have already said that in Prussia all the honours, all the advantages, all the favours, are for the army, or for those who have served in it. He who for any cause has not been a soldier receives no employment. Both at home and abroad he is an object of contempt to his fellow-citizens.

astonished at it. This not being the place to examine into the causes of this trait of character, I limit myself to referring to it " (pp. 43-45).

" The War Minister has asked me to inform him what is thought in Prussia of our new law of military organization, dated the 1st February, 1868, more especially of the institution of the National Guard ' Mobile.' I replied in my report of the 29th March, 1868; but my replies were very brief, as I proposed to report in person on the subject in Paris. I return now to this important question.

When the law was promulgated last year, it was at first thought at Berlin that its application would augment the military resources of France; but, after a closer study, the opinion at first conceived is now greatly modified. In Prussia, where the application of the principle of compulsory service has taken deep root in the country, and contributed so materially to its greatness, they generally consider our new law of military organization as a step in advance, so far as it enunciates (although only for war) the principle, so just, so moral, of compulsory military service for all citizens. But they cannot understand the inconceivable inconsistency by which a statesman having admitted the principle can stop there. For the law does not allow the National Guard ' Mobile ' to receive any military instruction. Looking at it in a broad point of view, it is thought nonsense, or rather an abortive law, adding nothing to the power of France, but rather, on the contrary, weakening her resources. As will be seen, this view of our new military organization, a view taken here by practical reflecting people, is unfortunately too true.

This law having put at the disposal of the country, as an auxiliary to the army, a force of 500,000 men, under the

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name of National Guard 'Mobile,' adds this indefensible Article (Article 9) :

'The young men of the Guard "Mobile" have (except absent with leave) to attend—

1. The drills which take place in the parishes where they live or are domiciled.
2. The company or battalion meetings which take place in the company or battalion districts.
3. Each drill or meeting must not cause the young men who attend it a greater loss of time *than one day*.

These drills and meetings can be repeated only fifteen times a year.'

One is perfectly confounded, when one thinks that a proposal so absurd could have been brought forward and seriously discussed by the Parliament of a great country, and that a Government could be found willing to consent to accept and introduce such a law.

How! Was there not one man in the assembly who could say to his fellows, 'This law that you are going to enact is a deception. Be assured, you deceive yourselves, you deceive France. How! You wish to increase the military force of the country by several hundreds of thousands of young men, under the name of National Guard "Mobile," and you, at the same time, take away every means for instructing these young men! For what military instruction is it possible to give a man who, in the greater number of the departments, must, in one single day, go four or six miles in the morning from his home to the place of assembly, and return the same distance at night; and who, in the same day, must be present at the roll calls, parades of all kinds, issues of arms, clothing, and equipment? Do you not see that it is a physical impossibility to find in this same day a single quarter of an hour for drill, properly so called? . . .

. . . Nothing more is requisite to show that, so long as Article 9 is in force, the institution of the National Guard " Mobile " is a deception.

But (say some) the National Guard Mobile may be drilled during war itself ; to which it is only requisite to reply—*How, if the war be of short duration ; if France is smitten with sudden disaster at the outset, and finds herself suddenly invaded, how can you then give these young men, assembled in haste, that cohesion, discipline, and instruction, which is so requisite ?*

Thus common-sense condemns at once our new law of military reorganization, so far as the National Guard Mobile ' is concerned ; yet this law has been enacted by the Chambers !

Thus one has seen (an incredible thing) a great nation give itself solemnly, by means of its representatives, an increase of 500,000 men for the defence of the country, and at the same moment, by a stroke of the same pen, so to speak, deprive these men of all means of obtaining military instruction.

I do not believe that any assembly in any country ever gave such a flagrant proof of inconsistency and levity.

How can we be astonished after this if foreigners criticise us severely ?

How can we be astonished that here, and in all Germany, they tax the French nation with ignorance and vain presumption, and that they proclaim, with ill-disguised satisfaction, in books seriously written, the downfall of the Latin races ? I declare that all intelligent and studious officers (and the Prussian Army has a great number) with whom I have spoken on our new military law, judge it with great practical sense to be simply without results of any kind.

But we, we do not limit ourselves to making a defective law. From presumption, as much as from ignorance, we

deceive ourselves, and declare it to be perfect, and superior to all others! It is sad to say it, but it is nevertheless true, for any one who has lived amongst foreigners and followed the development, both moral and intellectual, of other nations for fifty years, that the French, notwithstanding the eminent qualities for which they are remarkable, live above all others in ignorance and presumption, each of these faults tending to increase the other. These words continually recur when one compares France with other countries, especially Prussia, so well-taught, serious, and keen for her interests " (pp. 129-132).

"How can I avoid being profoundly affected by these comparisons, believing as I do that war is inevitable? But (it must never be forgotten) in this war, Prussia, or rather the North German Confederation, will dispose of 1,000,000 trained disciplined and strongly organized soldiers, while France has barely 300,000 to 400,000 men.<sup>1</sup> But the Federal [*i.e.* German] Army embraces all the manly portion, all the intelligence, all the *vis viva* of a nation full of faith, energy, and patriotism, while the French Army is almost entirely composed of the poorest and most ignorant portion of the nation.

The German Army, from the fact that it does embrace, without any exception, all the manly portion of the nation, feels itself strengthened and supported by the unequalled esteem and consideration it enjoys in the country, while the French Army, looked on by some as a useless institution, attacked by others, who sow corruption and insubordination

<sup>1</sup> It is said that the institution of the National Guard "Mobile" will raise the military forces of France to more than 800,000 men; but I have already explained in the first part of this Report what may be expected of that abortive institution.



in its ranks, feels itself bowed down by a want of consideration, and has no consciousness of the mission it has to fulfil. . . .

Chief among these regenerative institutions there are two, as the history of Prussia superabundantly proves—compulsory military service, compulsory universal education.

To speak only of compulsory service, we must first ask, Has the French nation the requisite qualities to adopt and apply it? The reply, unfortunately, is not encouraging. Infatuated with itself, and perverted by egotism, the nation will with difficulty conform to an institution of which it does not even suspect the strong and fruitful principle, and the application of which requires virtue it does not possess, self-denial, self-sacrifice, love of duty. Like individuals who correct nothing in their lives, except taught by the stern lessons of experience, nations never improve the institutions which govern them until compelled to do so by the rudest trials. Jena was requisite in order that Prussia might probe herself, and feel the necessity of invigorating herself with healthy manly institutions. She then adopted the principle of universal compulsory service for all her citizens. And it must be allowed that if this institution did not now exist, Prussia would find it impossible to introduce it.

Only once in fifty years has France been in a position favourable for the introduction of compulsory service. In 1848, when, thanks to the rapid growth of ideas produced by the revolution of February, the National Assembly found itself in an excellent position to show, by the adoption of universal service, that it understood how to apply practically those principles of equality that it so loudly vaunted. It did, indeed, attempt something in this sense by seeking to abolish the hideous plague spot of military substitution, and it named a Commission of which General Lamoricière was reporter. This law would have been adopted but for

the interference of M. Thiers, who made himself in the Chamber the champion of the egotistical and paltry ideas of the bourgeois. By thus preventing France from entering in 1849 on the path which would have led her later on to adopt compulsory service, so fruitful, so moralising, so suited to regenerate her, this man, to whom nature has denied feelings of true greatness, firm convictions, or the power of serious thought; this man, I repeat, has been more fatal to his country than twenty disasters" (pp. 144-145).

## APPENDIX V

Extracts from Sir J. R. Seeley's *Life and Times of Stein*. (Cambridge, 1878, Vol. II.).

"NOTHING is more attractive than the thought of a universal service—of every youth, without exception, paying his debt to the country. But suppose, as in the United States, that the country does not need defence, or, as in England, that the danger of invasion is speculative and remote, so that though the country needs a protecting force, it could make no use whatever of such a vast army as universal service would call into existence. Suppose again—this also is the case of England—that the country, though it needs a large army, does not need it for defence but for other purposes, such as maintaining possession of distant dependencies. It cannot so easily be argued that it is proper that every youth should give some years of his life to tasks like these, as that every youth should take a personal part in the work of national defence. And thus countries which have few wars of self-defence and many wars of empire cannot adopt this system, but are driven

to form one of those purely professional armies in which war assumes a less interesting aspect.

These, then, are the two military systems which suit nations, according as they are or are not in danger of invasion " (pp. 97-98).

" We have spoken of the compulsory national system as being nobler and more beneficial in its working, where it is admissible, than the voluntary system. But it is to be observed that there is a compulsory system very different from that of modern Prussia and plainly less defensible than the voluntary system. Compulsion works well in modern Prussia because it strikes all alike and because the object of imposing it is to preserve what all value inexpressibly. But where it does not strike all alike, where exemptions are allowed, the system is not merely damaged but converted at once into a bad system, chargeable with an injustice from which the voluntary system is free. That war should be a man's chosen profession and means of livelihood, so as to give him a positive interest in war, is perhaps not altogether satisfactory, but no one is injured by such a system ; and so long as the soldier enters no service but that of his own country, he devotes himself to a noble object. Conscription with exemptions, on the other hand, is glaringly unjust and oppressive ; not only are the exemptions themselves unjust, but so long as they exist it is impossible to put upon any high ground the constraint laid upon the rest. It is a mockery to speak of the duty of defending one's country where this duty is not made universal, but those may pay in money who do not care to pay in blood ; under such a system compulsion is a shocking tyranny, similar to the levying of the *taille* upon the common people in old France, and such as could

only be enforced in a population accustomed to despotism. Moreover, if we suppose the exemptions to be very numerous so as to comprehend the whole classes, and at the same time the population of the country to be not large, and its danger from foreign enemies very great, we shall have a case in which it will be necessary to make up for the exemptions by requiring those who serve to serve for a very long time. By serving many years such soldiers will acquire the character of a professional caste and become distinguished from the rest of the community, even though they did not originally enter the army by choice. The army of old Prussia was of this kind. The greater part of it was raised by conscription ; but from this conscription large classes of persons, as well as whole towns and districts, had exemption. In the main the citizen class were exempt, while the peasantry were subject to compulsory service ; and in order to maintain so large an army it was necessary to make twenty years the term of service ” (pp. 99-100).

[The Prussian minister, Hardenberg, is laying down in 1807 the main principles upon which this new Universal Service must be conducted.]

“ All the exemptions hitherto allowed must be abolished without exception. Everyone who does not serve the State in some other appointment must be bound to effective military service in the regular army and in the reserve. But the military class must be made a true order of honour. Foreigners are only to be admitted when they are of good character and offer themselves voluntarily, and they are then to be treated as if they were natives. But as a rule we must not count upon foreigners. Every degrading punishment must cease. The private soldier must be treated with strictness, yet

with respect. The term of service must be made short, in order that the pressure be not overwhelming; it must be six years."

Upon which Seeley remarks :

" We have here in one view the whole military reform. The impression it made, when it had been carried into effect, upon a bystander, may be seen in the following remarks of Henriette Herz :

The time was past when every simple peasant and every honest citizen of the towns subject to the conscription might fear to have to receive into his house after the expiration of the term of service, instead of a well-conducted son, an inmate corrupted in the depths of his nature by the society of those foreigners, for the most part *mauvais sujets*, from whom the Prussian army was partly recruited, and completely degraded by the lash ; the time was when I and many ladies of my acquaintance would not walk the streets, if we could help it, during certain hours at review time, for fear of being sickened by the repulsive sight of punishment, inflicted often on men of advanced years, who, perhaps for some neglect of their pigtail which only a professional eye could detect, would be flogged at the order of a lieutenant of fifteen or sixteen, when the least involuntary cry of pain was counted for a new offence to be punished by flogging ; . . . But now the nation began to regard the army as a school, not only for the anticipated war, but also for life " (pp. 114-116).

These words of Henriette Herz, a woman of advanced opinions and remarkable culture, are strikingly corroborated by Stoffel's reports from Berlin two generations later. He drew the most unfavourable contrast between punishments in the French professional army and in the German

army raised by Universal Service. He strikes this note at once in his second report (October 4, 1866, p. 9): "Is it not advisable to alter our rules of discipline? Do we not punish the French soldier too much? Can we find no means of increasing amongst our non-commissioned officers and soldiers that feeling of duty which so distinguishes the Prussian army, and which causes punishment to be so rare? . . . The number of punishments inflicted in the French army is prodigious when compared with those of the Prussian army." This same point is emphasized by Colonel Maude (a strong opponent of Compulsory Service for Great Britain) on p. 11 of his *War and the World's Life* (1907). He writes: "I do assert from personal knowledge, that, relatively to their respective stages of civilization, the treatment of the Prussian soldier since 1815 has been fairer and more humane than in any other army."

Finally, much the same effect was observed in Belgium in 1913, when military service was made practically universal, and all classes began to drill together. M. Albert Mechelynck, the Deputy who represented the Radical party on the Parliamentary Committee for settling disputed points in this new Army Bill, assured me in the spring of 1914 that the new law had at once made an immense difference in barrack life and in the status of the soldier.

## APPENDIX VI

### THE HESSIAN PRESSGANG IN 1780 OR 1781

From J. G. Seume's *Autobiography* (Leipzig, 1813, pp. 108 ff.).

SEUME, a small farmer's son of promising parts, had been sent to the University of Leipzig. Here he lived somewhat as Dr. Johnson lived at Oxford; and finally he made up

his mind to run away. When he reached Hessian territory, he was snapped up by the pressgang. "They brought me, half under arrest, to the fortress of Ziegenhain, where lay already many other poor devils from all four corners of Germany, to be sent to America next spring under Fawcett's escort. I resigned myself to my fate and tried to make the best of a very bad job. We lay long at Ziegenhain, until the necessary number of recruits was raked together from plough and highroad and town. The story and the time are notorious enough; no man in those days was safe from the clutches of these soul-mongers; all methods were employed—persuasion, cunning, trickery or force. Nobody asked by what means the damnable job was done. Strangers of every kind were arrested, locked up, and packed off. They tore my university matriculation certificate from me; and I had no further proof of identity. At last I resolved to quarrel no longer with my fate. . . .

We were a strange *olla podrida* of human beings, good, bad, and indifferent. There was another runaway student from Jena, a bankrupt shopkeeper from Vienna, a haberdasher from Hanover, a post-office clerk dismissed from Gotha, a monk from Würzburg, a bailiff from Meiningen, a Prussian sergeant of hussars, a cashiered Hessian major released from prison, and others of similar stamp. It may be imagined that there was plenty of entertainment here; the slightest biographical sketch of these gentry would make an interesting and instructive book. As most of them had had the same experience as mine, or perhaps worse, we soon hatched a great plot to escape." A hundred and fifty were concerned in this plot, which was, naturally, betrayed. More than thirty were condemned as ringleaders; these were adjudged to run the gauntlet of the regiment from twelve to thirty-six times, and then to lie in irons "during the Elector's good pleasure." Their final release was due to the practical consideration that a soldier lying

in irons at Ziegenhain would not be paid for by the English government. They were presently shipped down the Weser, and embarked upon the English transports at Bremen.

“ On board these English transports we were pressed in layers like pickled herring. To save room, there were no hammocks, but shelves in the low under-deck, one above another. A grown man could not stand upright in any part of the under-deck ; in these bunks we could not even sit upright. We lay six in a bunk ; you may fancy what that was like ! The bunks were really full with four men apiece ; the two last had to be wedged in as best they could. Under these circumstances, and in warm weather, we did not exactly freeze. No single individual could turn round—lying on one’s back was, of course, out of the question. When we had sufficiently stewed and sweated on one side, then the right flank man would cry ‘ right about turn ! ’ and we changed our layers. When we could stand it no more on this other side, then the left flank man gave the word of command, and we squeezed again into the same mess as at first. . . .

The fare was none of the daintiest, nor even of the most plentiful. Pork and peas to-day, peas and pork to-morrow. Sometimes oatmeal porridge, with pudding for a treat, made of musty meal ; and water half from our casks, half from the sea ; and ancient, ancient suet ! The pork may have been four or five years old ; all round the edge it was streaked with black ; further in it was yellow ; just in the middle there was an actual strip of white. The same description will apply to the corned beef, which we often ate raw, without further ceremony, like ham. The biscuit was often full of maggots, which we had to eat as a relish, since there was little else left to eat. It was so hard that we often used round-shot to crush it ; yet we were too hungry to wait and soak it even if we had had water



enough. We were told, credibly enough, that this was French biscuit ; that the English had captured it in the Seven Years' War, had kept it meanwhile in stock at Portsmouth, and were now feeding us Germans with it, that we might go and shoot the French under Rochambeau and Lafayette, with God's blessing. But God didn't bless it !

The water, though it had been strongly disinfected with sulphur, lay in the deepest stagnation. When a cask was hauled up and knocked open, the under-deck stank like Styx, Phlegethon and Cocytus together. It was almost solid with fungoid growth, thick, silky tassels as long as a man's finger. We couldn't drink it without filtering it through a cloth, and even so we had to hold our noses ; yet we positively fought for our ration of this stuff ! ”

They took a circuitous route to avoid French cruisers ; bad weather came on, and the month's passage to Halifax took, in Seume's case, twenty-two weeks ! We may conclude with a sketch of one of his fellow-sufferers : “ We sickened a good deal ; but, so far as I remember, only seven-and-twenty men died out of nearly five hundred. Among these were some of my nearest acquaintances, including the ex-monk from Würzburg. . . . The cloister is a poor school for the camp. All he lacked was energy ; but idleness and indolence (which he of course called resignation and indifference) had taken such hold of him that nothing would move him. A sloth would have been a nimble beast compared with him. ‘ If I get over the ocean,’ he would say, ‘ the worst is yet to come. Hardship and want and weariness is all our prospect, until a rifleman shoots us through the lungs or a Mohawk scalps us.’ The good cloisterer was not absolutely mistaken there ; but a man of any pluck will hold out to the last, and certainly no end can be so shameful as to die of pure,

unmitigated sloth. Nobody but a monk could have dreamed of it. He was resolved not to live until the bad time came ; and it was a new phenomenon to me, quite unprecedented in my experience, that a man could die of mere indolence without any other sickness or cause whatsoever. The doctor found absolutely nothing wrong with him ; indeed, he complained of nothing but his present misery and his misery in prospect. They flogged him to take exercise, to go out and breathe upon deck, to wash, and even to eat ; the one exception was rum ; he would take a little rum without flogging. At last they grew tired of flogging and just left him where he lay. . . . When he died, the two dirtiest among the crew were bribed with rum to throw the body overboard.”

How Seume, after his return from America, was picked up by the Prussian pressgang, and with what difficulty he finally fought his way to freedom, is too long a story here. The little book has been often reprinted ; it forms one volume of Reclam's *Universal-Bibliothek* at 20 Pf. ; but this is almost impossible to procure in war-time, and I have been compelled to quote from the old edition. The episode begins about the middle of the book.

## APPENDIX VII

From the *Annual Register* for the year 1794.

“THE military list exhibited by France to the eyes of Europe for the year 1794, was such as to occasion the most serious alarm to the coalition. The whole strength they had been able to collect for a contest in which they were so deeply concerned, and the decision of which was so quickly approaching, did not exceed 360,000 men ; while

the troops sent into the field by France alone more than doubled that number. But France relied as much, if not more, on the temper of the men that composed its armies. Tutored by those who raised them, and no less by those who were employed to teach them military discipline in the maxims of republicanism, so violently predominant in France, they took up arms with far other views and ideas than those that actuated the soldiers of the combined powers. Obedience to the will and orders of their rulers was the sole motive that actuated these; whereas the French soldiers went to battle, some of them, animated with the deadliest sentiments of revenge against men whom they looked upon as the base instruments of tyranny and oppression; others, by the hope of rising in the army, and acquiring both fame and fortune, and all of them by a desire of maintaining the military reputation of Frenchmen" (p. 4).

*"Declaration of the king of Prussia against a general armament of the inhabitants of the empire, made in February, 1794.*

I. WHEN the proposition for a general armament of the subjects of the empire was made, at the assembly of the diet, the king of Prussia represented such essential difficulties against this measure, that he could not have expected that the proposition would have been carried to a *conclusum*.

II. For this reason, his majesty finds himself under the necessity of laying them again once more before the six nearest circles,<sup>1</sup> with this observation, viz.: 'That if the said circles cannot determine with themselves to

<sup>1</sup> The states composing the Holy Roman Empire were grouped, for purposes of government, into ten "circles." G.G.C.

withdraw the said *conclusum*, and render it of none effect, he will be forced, however contrary to his inclination, to withdraw his troops, as he cannot expose them to the danger which must necessarily result from this measure.

III. The reasons that his Prussian majesty opposes to a general armament of the inhabitants of the empire, are the following, viz. :

1. By employing the peasants against the enemy, agriculture will want hands.

2. That there are not arms sufficient to give to such a mass of people.

3. That it is impossible, in so short a time, to teach the manual exercise to the inhabitants.

4. It has been found, by the experience of the two last campaigns, that the soldiers opposed to the French must be perfectly exercised to make head against them.

5. Lastly, independent of the above reasons, it is infinitely dangerous, at a time like the present, when the French are watching every advantage to insinuate their principles, to assemble such a mass of men, whose ideas upon forms of government must be various, and among whom consequently dissensions might arise, disastrous in their consequences both to the armies, and to the constitution of the empire" (p. 204).

## APPENDIX VIII

THE contention in my text, that we must carefully separate the *normal* from the *occasional* and *accidental* working of a system like this, is strongly borne out by Seeley's argument on p. 102. He points out that the *moral and social* foundation of Frederick the Great's army was rotten; that there is much to be said for a Voluntary army on the one hand,

and much for Universal Compulsion on the other, but nothing for a system of partial and unjust compulsion ; that Jena, therefore, was only the final realization of the long-inevitable disaster. He proceeds :

“ It may be said that these considerations prove too much, for if they explain how the army dissolved after Jena they make it at the same time impossible to understand how it can have fought so well under Frederick. But discipline, backed by wonderful diligence and self-devotion on the part of the king, and also by much chivalrous loyalty on the part of the aristocracy of officers, may, for a time, particularly while the army is victorious, lay the minds of the soldiers under a spell. It is when an ordinary king leads them and is surrounded by old and feeble officers, and when ill-fortune arrives, that the moral hollowness of the system shows itself. Even then they do not fight ill, only defeat operates like the snapping of a spell ; once driven apart, they are not urged together again by any cohesive force.”<sup>1</sup>

This wonderful “ diligence and self-devotion ” of the sovereign, and this “ spell of victory ” have also been characteristic of the German Empire. Dr. Holland Rose says truly of the present Kaiser : “ He is one of the hardest workers in that nation of hard workers. . . . The Kaiser’s career has been a constant appeal for national efficiency, and hence the prodigious strength which Germany is now putting forth.”<sup>2</sup> Under these circumstances, we need not wonder if the German Government can, for a generation or two, counteract the essentially *defensive* character of Universal Service. For there is no possible doubt as to the predominantly defensive character of the Compulsory system. It has been emphasized by writers who look at it

<sup>1</sup> J. R. Seeley, *Life and Times of Stein*, vol. ii. pp. 102-103.

<sup>2</sup> *The Origins of the War*, 1914, pp. 28-9.

from very different points of view: Seeley<sup>1</sup>; Lord Haldane and Sir Ian Hamilton<sup>2</sup>; Jean Jaurès.<sup>3</sup>

## APPENDIX IX

### THE AMERICAN DRAFT LAW

ONE or two publicists have lately argued, with an ingenuity worthy of a better cause, that this law had little real influence upon the course of the war. By far the most distinguished of these advocates is Sir R. K. Wilson; and, as his arguments are practically identical with such others as I have read, it will be enough here to summarize his contributions to the *Nation* and the *Daily Chronicle*. I will state his arguments in his own order, answering each as it comes:

1. The Draft Act was not passed by Congress until March 3rd, 1863.

But, long before this, its eventual operation was practically certain. Lincoln had slowly brought himself to face the necessity of compulsion, and nobody doubted Lincoln's tenacity when his mind was once made up. Already, in December, 1862, the rush of professional men and others, anxious to obtain legal exemption from the coming draft, had begun; a typical scene of this kind is portrayed in the *Illustrated London News* for January 3, 1863. It is equally notorious that a large proportion of enlistments under the "Derby Scheme" in Great Britain were due to the compulsion already looming in the background.

<sup>1</sup> J. R. Seeley, *Life and Times of Stein*, vol. ii. p. 105.

<sup>2</sup> *Compulsory Service*, 1911, pp. 41, 49-51, 142.

<sup>3</sup> *L'Armée Nouvelle*, chapters iii. and v.

Moreover, as Sir R. K. Wilson has himself had the candour to admit at the end of his last contribution, some of the States anticipated the general Act of Congress, introducing compulsory enrolment before the end of 1862. In fact, we may really date the beginning of compulsion from "the call for 300,000 nine-months' militia" on August 4, 1862.

2. "Between March 3rd and July 3rd, not only was there no improvement in the military situation, but things seemed to be going from bad to worse. . . . It was during these critical months that the pro-slavery party [in the North] found in the new Enrolment Act the most convenient stalking-horse for an agitation which really aimed at upsetting the Government and stopping the war altogether; and it was ostensibly to resist the enforcement of the Draft on the appointed day that the great riot was planned which raged in New York city from July 13th to the 16th."

Under circumstances of this kind, it cannot be reckoned against the success of a measure if it cuts a sharp line of division between those who are determined to win the war and those who are not. The New York anti-conscription riots were engineered by the politicians of the minority, and carried out by the scum of the population, who plotted a simultaneous pogrom of negroes. "They dashed with the merriment of fiends on every coloured face they saw, taking special delight in the maiming and murdering of women and children." They destroyed a negro orphan asylum, and attempted to burn its 700 inmates alive. One of their leaders was a lame barber who had openly expressed his hope that the Southern army would soon march victoriously into New York. Colonel O'Brien, caught by the mob, was kicked to death. "A courageous priest sought to subdue their savagery by reading the last offices for the dying

over the unfortunate colonel ; the climax of horrors was reached by the brutal ruffians jostling the priest aside and closing the ceremonies by dancing upon the corpse." "From beginning to end they showed little courage ; they were composed, for the greater part, of the more degraded class of foreigners ; and as a rule they made no stand when attacked by the police or the military in any number. . . . A company of fifty regulars was able to work its will against thousands of them."<sup>1</sup> Though this riot cost New York a thousand lives and two million pounds, it was far from disadvantageous from the point of view of the prosecution of the war. On the contrary, it did more than anything else to discredit the anti-conscriptionists, who had already been hopelessly outvoted in Congress. Governor Seymour, the leader of this party, lost his seat at the next election ; Lincoln, on the other hand, was re-elected by an enormous majority. As an expression of a determined war-policy, and as a means of showing how gladly the country would follow such a lead, the Draft Act might be counted as one of the prime factors in final success, even if it had never brought a man into the actual field.

Nor is it true to say that "there was no improvement in the military situation." Till July, Hooker, as I have shown in my text, spent those spring months in reorganizing the Army of the Potomac for victory, and the demoralization was such that no such reorganization would have been possible but for a strong lead from the Government at the same time. Desertion had become endemic in the Northern armies, especially after the defeat of Fredericksburg at the end of 1862 ; the total number of desertions in the war is reckoned at 200,000 (Homer Lea, *The Valour of Ignorance*, 1909, p. 334).

<sup>1</sup> Nicolay and Hay, vii. 19-24.



3. " But on July 3rd came the repulse of Lee at Gettysburg, and on the 4th the capture of Vicksburg ; and these two victories made the ultimate question of the suppression of the rebellion merely a matter of time and persistence."

Quite apart from the extraordinary assumption that these victories came of their own accord by a sort of fortunate chance, and were unconnected with the strong lead given to the nation by President and Congress some months before, this argument will not serve our purpose.

Time and persistency will not help a weaker army, but only protract its agony. Gettysburg and Vicksburg, which we can clearly indicate nowadays as the turning-points of the war, were far from decisive successes in themselves, and would have availed little but for the force that lay behind them. In 1863 Lincoln wrote to Seymour that the Southern compulsory method " produces an army with a rapidity not to be matched on our side, if we first waste time to re-experiment with the volunteer system." In 1864, when the electors had decided so clearly in his favour, he drew up a formal defence of his own policy, in which he concluded " I feel bound to tell you that it is my purpose to see the draft law faithfully executed." " Time " thus fought for Lincoln only in virtue of his own " persistence "—in other words, of his persistent adherence to the strenuous compulsory system finally adopted in spite of bitter political opposition, which guaranteed a numerical advantage to his own side. From the spring of 1863 onwards, there was scarcely a battle in which the South faced the North with equal numbers.

4. Sir Roland Wilson quotes, as conclusive, Horace Greeley's assertion that all but an inconsiderable fraction of those who fought for the North were volunteers.

Greeley, to begin with, is not an unprejudiced witness ; it was he who talked of a capitulation during these critical months of 1863. Again, a whole world of misconceptions underlies this word *volunteer*, as we have seen in the case of the French Republican drafts, and as everybody knows for himself in the case of the "Derby Scheme." Nicolay and Hay put the right construction upon Greeley's contention. They write: "A comparatively small number of men was obtained strictly by the draft, but the drafts powerfully stimulated enlistments" (p. 7). How powerfully, we may see by the unimpeachable evidence of the private letter quoted in my text. Here, in January 1865, we find a mother thanking Providence that enough money had been collected in the town to render it unlikely that her son would be taken by the draft! The law expressly provided that "all were to be called out if necessary" (Nicolay and Hay, vii. 6), but the enormously greater population of the North rendered extreme measures unnecessary.

5. By the spring of 1864, the conscription had broken down in the South ; no more men could be got.

No doubt ; but this was after three years of war, and after the North had, for more than a year, been meeting the conscription of a population of nine millions by the conscription of twenty-three millions. So long as the North had hesitated to meet conscription by conscription, things had gone so badly that even respectable politicians like Greeley talked of throwing up the sponge ; and that Lincoln sternly refused to court further defeat by "wasting time to re-experiment with the volunteer system."

6. "The news of the two decisive victories of Vicksburg and Gettysburg, which completely altered the military situation, presumably affected the disposition to enlist."

Apart from this question-begging epithet *decisive*, it must be noted that our own experience has been the exact opposite ; it is the news of *reverses* which has done most to stimulate British enlistment. Moreover, in this very American war, the earlier defeat of Bull Run gave an enormous stimulus to recruiting (Nicolay and Hay, vii. 2). Later reverses depressed recruiting, because the nation had begun to doubt whether Government and Generals were equal to their task. The news of victories and reverses must act thus differently under different circumstances. After two years of war, the news of serious reverses might well depress recruiting in Britain, and again, matters might mend with the news of victories won by a Government which had itself run great political risks some months earlier, and whose judgment was now being justified. But it is folly to stake the existence of a great nation on chances such as these. The strong case for the Draft Law is that it made sure of providing the men, by so-called "volunteering" if possible ; if not, by legal compulsion. And, in any really national war, it has been found that drafted men have, in the end, made as good soldiers as volunteers. The measure of a man's unwillingness to go at first is no real measure of his earnestness when he finds the job has to be done. In the French Revolution, as we have seen, the general testimony is that the pressed men finally made better soldiers than all but the first cream of the volunteers ; for no substitution was allowed, and these pressed men came from every class of society.

In short, the whole plea rests upon that false conception of "conscript" and "volunteer" as mutually exclusive terms which has been so mischievous in Britain ; that false conception which enabled our minister of war to boast publicly that one volunteer is worth ten conscripts. It ignores the enormous amount of unwillingness which

history shows among volunteers, and the remarkable amount of willingness among conscripts, so long as their cause can be made to seem just. And, since no reasonable reader would wish for a national system which would make the soldier fight equally well irrespective of the justice of his cause, we must therefore be very sceptical of arguments which rest almost entirely upon a false and artificial psychology, however convenient they may be as political weapons. In our long-service expeditionary force, we may with some sort of justice draw the distinction which party politicians are so fond of making between the volunteer and the conscript; though, even here, our exaggerations have made us a laughing-stock to the rest of the world. But for a national army, fighting in a just and democratic cause, only the most imperious party-exigencies could ever have prompted this attempt to dispute the lesson of Lincoln's Draft Law.

I must apologise to my readers for devoting so much space to a theory which owes respectability only to the reputation of one or two among its exponents, and which would have been laughed out of court if it had not flattered the prejudices of thousands who have long refused to look at both sides of this recruiting question. Even Sir R. K. Wilson, in fact, is finally obliged to make the admission that "the indirect effect of compulsion in the background in stimulating volunteering was considerable"—an admission which practically knocks the bottom out of his own case, and which throws a curious light upon his own conception of "volunteer."

## APPENDIX X

## POPULARITY OF THE SWISS ARMY

WHEN I first began the public advocacy of the Swiss system for Britain, early in 1900, I was, of course, met by protests based upon those dangers to national morals and national liberties which are often asserted to lurk in even the most modified form of "conscription." These were serious objections ; and, convinced though I was that they rested upon an entirely unwarranted confusion between the German and the Swiss systems, which have very little in common but the vague and inaccurate designation of "conscription," yet I determined to meet them by the most definite evidence which the nature of the case allowed—by submitting them to the judgment of a number of thoroughly well-informed and competent gentlemen in the country itself.

My informants, as will be seen by the summary at the foot of the page, were of various occupations, and equally various political views.<sup>1</sup> Yet the following answers represent their *unanimous* opinions, expressed to me first by word of mouth or by letter, and in nearly every case since revised on a printed proof. Let the reader, after weighing these answers, ask himself how many English institutions could command an equal unanimity of support from Conservatives and Radicals, bankers and Social Democrats, the commander of an Army Division and the representative of the working classes !

<sup>1</sup> They were four colonels (including two Commanders of Divisions—there is no higher rank than colonel in time of peace), the Leader of the Parliamentary Radical Party, the semi-official Labour Secretary, a Conservative and a Radical editor, four University professors, two parish clergymen, a major-instructor, two bankers, two other business men, and the head-master of a private school, formerly master at a great English public school.

1. *Q.* It is sometimes feared lest even the most modified forms of compulsory service should contain dangerous germs of militarism ; and some opponents of the Swiss centralization scheme of 1874 seem in fact to have feared lest, by strengthening the Army, the new constitution might work in this direction. Has later experience shown any justification for these fears ?

*A.* None whatever. The misgivings expressed by those who opposed the reconstitution of 1874 were aroused, not by the principle of *compulsion*, which the nation has always accepted, but by a cantonal distrust of the proposed *centralization*. It is probable that such fears, even then, were rather assumed for party purposes ; but in any case the twenty-six years' experience of a more strongly-organized Army has given them the direct lie.<sup>1</sup>

2. *Q.* Is there the least fear lest an increase of Jingoism or Chauvinism might result from the training of the nation in arms ?

*A.* On the contrary, experience shows that a citizen army, officered by citizens, is the best safeguard against Jingoism.

3. *Q.* What is the physical effect of the service on the people ?

*A.* So excellent that, if for any conceivable reason it should be abolished, some system would have to be organized to replace it as an instrument of physical education for the people.

4. *Q.* What is the moral effect of the short course of barrack and camp life ?

*A.* On the whole, excellent also. The great majority of

<sup>1</sup> It may be noted that, similarly, our own old compulsory Militia always proved loyal, even in days when paid armies were a source of great danger to the country. (See Prof. Tout in the *English Historical Dictionary*, p. 730.)

parents have no anxieties beyond those inseparable from the age of the recruits (twenty) and their first entrance into the world ; while the discipline is universally recognized as an important factor in the formation of character.

5. *Q.* Is there no fear lest this discipline should weaken the individual's independence of character, and tend to reduce him to a machine ?

*A.* On the contrary, with its practical experience of little difficulties, it tends to render the men more self-reliant and resourceful.

6. *Q.* Has it any tendency to produce weariness and disgust of things military ?

*A.* Its general tendency is very strongly the other way ; and there are few national institutions which, on the whole, command more enthusiasm and affection than the army.

Question 4 was naturally the most delicate of all, and two of my clerical informants made reserves to which want of space prevents my doing full justice here,<sup>1</sup> but which amounted almost exactly to such as a careful English parent would feel bound to make about the liberty of University life. One of the two, when asked whether he would rather send his son at fourteen to a large boarding-school or at twenty to do his service, had no hesitation in voting for the army ; and the other ended his letter with the words, " I am one of the staunchest supporters of our military service." More than one parent assured me that, apart from all military considerations, he looked upon the army as a healthy training-school ; and all were agreed that, even if M. Urbain Gohier's accusations were true as to the French Army, they could not by any conceivable stretch be applied to the Swiss.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> They are fully discussed in my *Strong Army in a Free State*.

<sup>2</sup> M. Gohier's own words, in fact, definitely exclude such a comparison. "*Une année de service, à 20 ans, n'est pas malsaine*" (*L'Armée contre la Nation*, p. 18).

## APPENDIX XI

## PHYSICAL ADVANTAGES OF SWISS TRAINING

(SEE the introduction to Delmé-Radcliffe, p. 11). M. Julian Grande gives personal testimony from different Swiss citizens—a lawyer (101), the General Secretary of the International Peace Bureau (106), a watchmaker (124), and so on. This evidence may be supplemented by an anecdote communicated to me by the Major-Instructor at Zürich in 1900 : I give it as nearly as possible in his own words. He said “I happen to be intimate with Mr. X. our millionaire (for even in Switzerland we have one or two millionaires). X. has an only son, about whom he was very anxious ; not that the boy had anything definite the matter with him, but he was never strong. In his nineteenth year, the parents sent the boy round the world by way of strengthening him for his coming military service ; he came back pretty much the same as he went. But there was no definite defect ; the boy was passed for service ; and the father besought me to do what I could for him during those months—not that I could procure any direct remissions, of course ; but I meant to speak to the officers and make sure that the boy was not put by mistake to any work too hard for him. I was very busy and worried just then ; and at last, one day as I stood on this drill-ground, a recruit passed me with his kit in a bundle on his back, evidently going off service. He saluted, and seemed anxious to speak ; so I gave him leave. ‘My name is Auguste X.,’ he said ; and then it all came back to me. ‘My dear fellow ! you don’t mean to say you have finished your recruit’s course—and I who had promised your father to look after you !’ ‘I have come to thank you, sir, for leaving me alone ; I thought you had done it



on purpose. The fact is, I feel a man now for the first time in my life.' 'And,' added the Major, 'of course the boy was quite right. For the first time in his life he had spent a few really healthy weeks without any coddling. He had worked like a labourer all day upon good, plain food, and had been only too glad, after a game of cards and a couple of glasses of beer, to get to bed and sleep until réveillé next morning. And he and his parents have learned a lesson which, if they are wise, they will never forget.'

## APPENDIX XII

## SWISS SOCIALISTS AND THE SWISS ARMY

THE Commission appointed by the N.S.L. to enquire into the Swiss Army in 1907 included five Labour M.P.'s, four Liberal M.P.'s, and several Trade-Unionist representatives. The Labour Representatives arranged for two official and private interviews with their Swiss brethren, at Berne and at Zürich. It is significant that, though the eight searching *questions* formulated beforehand by our compatriots were published in a Swiss socialist paper, no official report of the *answers* was published by either party. But M. Brüstlein, the parliamentary leader of Swiss socialism, communicated the following brief account of the proceedings at one of these meetings to the *Gazette de Lausanne* (September 19, 1907). These are his words :

"I asked the representatives of the Labour party whom we had the opportunity of seeing what they thought of their visit to Switzerland, and whether they thought they could make any use of the military experience of our country. They all answered at once, with perfect unanimity, 'We

are not prepared to say so.' They said further, that the Swiss system would be difficult to apply in England, since it is based on Sunday rifle-shooting, and this would be impracticable in England, where Sunday is out of the question for religious reasons (où le dimanche est au bon Dieu), and Saturday afternoon is given up to football.

You will easily believe that we [Swiss Socialists], for our part, were more explicit than this. We took their interrogatory articles point by point.

To No. 1, which concerned the influence which Compulsory Military Service might exercise upon Syndicalism in Switzerland, we answered that it had no influence whatever.

Similarly, with Question 2, which was very like the first, and which concerned the influence of Compulsory Service on the workman's individuality, especially on his independence of judgment and his class feeling. Only Graber, Secretary of the Metalworkers' Syndicate, who is a "refractory,"<sup>1</sup> as you know, declared that this influence was great. I remarked that, far from being harmful, it was favourable, for it gives our Syndicates the spirit of discipline which they might otherwise lack.

In their 3rd question, the English asked for information about the attitude of foreign workmen in Switzerland towards the National Army. We answered them that these foreign workmen were more anti-militarist than ours were, but that we distinctly forbade them, in their own interest, to interfere in any way with our military affairs.

Question 4 ran as follows: "Are Swiss workmen opposed to the existing military organisation or system, and would they like to substitute some other system for it?" We

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* one who has refused to obey the Military Service Law, and accepted the legal consequences (four months' imprisonment and a fine). M. Graber has been one of the leaders of Swiss pacifism during the present war.

answered, "No, we want no other, and even we should be very glad to prove to Europe the superiority of our system."<sup>1</sup>

Our English comrades enquired, in questions five and six, whether whole detachments of soldiers had refused to obey, either during regular service or during strikes, and whether soldiers, workmen or bystanders had been killed during strikes. We were able to answer that we had never had to record any wholesale refusal of obedience in Switzerland, but that the soldiers had not been so often compelled to fire, as would perhaps have been the case with professional soldiers. That, so far as we knew, no persons had been killed, though some had been wounded, especially two or three at Vevey last year. But here Graber broke in and asserted that three strikers had been killed or wounded (I do not remember exactly which) during the strike at the Simplon, and eight killed at Göschenen in 1878. He added that 584 had refused to serve at Vevey, that all these had been punished by Government with a week's or a fortnight's imprisonment, and that this failure of discipline when the men were called out had been concealed from the public. I said that this information was news to me, and I could neither corroborate nor deny it.

The seventh question ran: "When workmen are called out, do they find their places filled up when they come back to work?" This time we were obliged to answer that unfortunately this did sometimes happen, but that many employers in this matter showed their good sense and justice, even going so far as to continue the regular pay of workmen absent on military service. Still, we were obliged to admit that even the Swiss system contributed in some degree to increase the insecurity of workmen's earnings.

To the last question of the English, who asked whether we saw any difficulty in substituting a voluntary for a

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* we should be glad if the Deputation converted the voters in other countries to the Swiss system.

compulsory system, we declared, that we preferred our system, since a voluntary one simply results in the creation of a new class of privileged persons."

Upon this the Editor of the *Gazette* comments, "The facts asserted by M. Graber before the English Labour delegates are incorrect. It is not true that during the repression of the disturbances at Göschenen on July 27th, 1875, *eight* men were killed. Only *six* were killed, and that is enough. But, in this fight, the 30 soldiers from the Canton of Uri, who had been called out by the local authorities to protect the Post, were acting in self-defence, directly threatened, pressed upon, and surrounded by 1,000 Italian workmen, armed with picks and crowbars; and it is well known that there has never been much sympathy between Uri men and Italians, and that the quarrel is a long-standing one. This is the only time, so far as we know, that workmen have been killed by soldiers during a strike, for it is not true that *three* workmen were killed in the strike at Brigue. *Not a single one was killed.* It is not true either that 584 refused to turn out when the troops had to be called up owing to the attitude of the strikers at Vevey, who were threatening to destroy the hydraulic and electric machinery at Montreux and Vevey. According to official data, which are not yet completed, 192 men never received the order of march (which was given suddenly, by drum-roll and alarm-bell), and these men furnished satisfactory explanations for their absence. About 50 men were unable to give satisfactory explanations. The District Commanders have been seeking them out and are still doing so, their enquiry being not yet completed. Up to the present moment about 15 men have been punished with from 8 to 10 days of arrest. Therefore, the number of 584 *refractories* (that is to say, men who definitely refused to answer the roll) is purely imaginary. This will not prevent the Socialist Press from continuing to print it."

This report of M. Brüstlein's is entirely borne out by an article contributed to the *Birmingham Daily Post* at the time by one of the Labour Representatives on the Deputation, who is also a Trade Unionist (Mr. W. J. Morgan). He wrote :

“ Whilst the majority were engaged in visiting other military establishments, a few of the Labour representatives interviewed officials and others of the General Federation of Trades, an organisation representing 70,000 trade unionists. In the course of their enquiries it was elicited that, though there were some who were opposed to all forms of militarism, yet the great body of the members actively supported the present system. Sometimes the system caused hardship by some of the smaller employers refusing to reinstate men after their military service, but, public attention having been directed to it, strong condemnation had been expressed, and some of the employers had gone so far as to recompense men for time lost whilst engaged on military duties. Many of these views were confirmed, later in the week, by an interview at Zürich, with the leaders of the Socialist party. They were unanimous in their conclusion that the effect of the system on the health and physique of the people was good, taking away many from the workshops and giving them fully 30 per cent. better food when on service.”

### APPENDIX XIII

#### “ PRINCIPLE AND COMPROMISE ”

(a) From *Hansard*, March 8, 1909, p. 79.

*Mr. Harold Cox* : “ Now let me pass to an important question raised by the Hon. Member for Barnard Castle [Mr. Arthur Henderson]. He . . . condemned the action

of an Assurance Company<sup>1</sup> which engages a clerk to work at figures of assurance, and also to serve in the Territorial Army. I entirely concur with the Hon. Member in that [condemnation]. It occurred to me that he and his friends might carry that argument a little further. I have heard of cases where men subscribed to trade union funds for sick pay, and were obliged to forfeit that unless they were willing to pay the salaries of Members of Parliament.”

*Mr. A. Henderson*: “The Hon. Member ought to remember that that was decided also on the democratic principle.”

(b) From the *Observer* of Jan. 16, 1916.

Lord Derby, rendering a public account of his own action, said :

“Why did the opponents of this Bill resent Compulsion? The sole reason for Sir John Simon—and his Lordship looked upon him as leading that party—was that when it came to compelling those men the number would be so small that they would not be worth compelling. But while we were finding out why they were so small a number—and personally he did not agree they were so small—we were losing the war. He did not for one minute believe that we should find they were a negligible quantity when the war was over.

Sir John Simon could not say that he opposed compulsion as a principle. Sir John was formerly in the Government, and he (Lord Derby) did not think he was wrong in saying that Sir John was one of the first principally concerned in providing the argument for a Bill which was compulsion in its very worst form. It was the compulsion to keep men whose time of service with the colours was up in the ranks

<sup>1</sup> The Alliance Assurance Company, and some other great firms, had passed a rule to engage no new clerks who did not join the Territorials. See col. 56.

as long as the war lasted. In other words, he who had fought from the beginning of the war was to be compelled to go on, whilst the shirker at home who had done nothing was not to be compelled. Was not that compulsion in its very worst form ?

Another argument tended to prove that Sir John Simon was not entirely opposed to compulsion as a principle—that was the passport regulation issued by him as Home Secretary. That regulation said that no man was to go abroad who was of serviceable age without a passport, and that he had got to show some good reason before he was allowed to go. What was the good of keeping a man in this country who was of serviceable age if you were not going to make him serve ? There was no principle in this, and the sole reason so far as he could see for the opposition was that there should be a great further delay in bringing about a scheme which would give us the number of men we wanted for the army.”

(c) From *Hansard*, 27th April, 1916, cols. 2509 ff.

Of militant voluntarists, the only three who spoke against the Bill were Mr. Leif Jones, Mr. J. H. Thomas, and Sir W. Byles.<sup>1</sup> The last of these had not one word to say about the unfairness of this partial conscription ; the second barely alluded to it as no more unjust than a similar measure which had been passed with regard to our naval men ; even the first was far less concerned to emphasize the glaring injustice of conscripting only boys and time-expired men, than to argue against compulsory military service of any kind.

<sup>1</sup> See *Hansard*, vol. 81, cols. 2525-2558. The two Labour members who spoke with real frankness about this injustice were two who had for some time looked upon compulsion as necessary—Mr. Stephen Walsh and Mr. Barnes.

## APPENDIX XIV

## THE MOTIVES OF RECRUITS

LORD HALDANE, speaking for the Voluntary Service Association at Caxton Hall (November 24, 1913), said : " You cannot have things perfect with voluntary service. You are never sure, for instance, that you will get your recruits. The Adjutant-General, whose business it is to get troops, always lives with perspiration on his brow, and the more prosperous the country the bigger the beads of perspiration. In bad times the Adjutant-General becomes a cheerful and prosperous man." Here he definitely supports Sir Ian Hamilton, as in 1910. Yet later, in the same speech, he plunged into a curious inconsistency. " I have talked with recruits at the depots, and asked man after man, ' What brought you here ? ' The answer has been very curious, but it generally came to this : ' I wanted to see a bit of soldiering.' People say that men come into the army because they are hungry or poor, and cannot get employment, but may they not come from the much finer motive that they really do like soldiering ? " The " people " whom he here contradicts are Sir Ian, who said the thing with brutal frankness, and Lord Haldane, who solemnly commended the book *Compulsory Service* to the public, and Lord Haldane again, who began this very speech with a similar admission. As to the men's answers when questioned, Lord Haldane does not profess to have made or recorded his enquiries systematically ; nor is it probable, even so, that the average private would answer the War Minister in Sir Ian's plain words : " I came here because I was a hobbledehoy who couldn't get a job at 15s. a week."

General Langlois, who was requested to come over and



report on the British Forces in 1909, writes of the British "Regular Army, which is, when all is said and done, composed of soldiers who are attracted by the pay" (*The British Army in a European War*, H. Atkinson, 1910, p. 38). In *The Case for Voluntary Service* this is admitted no less plainly (p. 111), "the British Army depends for its recruiting largely on the surplus of men on the labour market."

But by far the most interesting document I have seen is a letter to the *Spectator* of July 10, 1915. Mr. Le Bas, an ex-soldier, had written vehemently protesting against Mr. F. S. Oliver's statement that 90 per cent. of the recruits in normal times had enlisted on account of unemployment. I wrote to point out that, if Mr. Oliver had said "eighty per cent.," he would have had Sir Ian Hamilton's authority for his statement. This elicited a letter from the Revd. Maurice Jones, D.D., Rector of Peppard, which is of extreme value as presenting, for the first time, actual statistics over a wide area. Dr. Jones writes :

"I have recently left the Army after twenty-five years as a chaplain, and the last five years of that period, previous to my retirement in February last, were spent in charge of a large depot of the Royal Garrison Artillery. Much the most interesting work that fell to my share during that period was the interviewing of every recruit belonging to the Church of England who arrived at the depot. I kept a careful register of the men I interviewed, and in the register were entered all the essential details of the recruit's previous career. I made a special point of eliciting the lad's reason for enlisting, and these reasons, in the cases of some thousands of recruits, are on record to-day. The main point that I desire to emphasize is that "*Out of work*," far from being the almost exclusive answer to my inquiries, is found to apply to *less than thirty per cent.* of the men interviewed, and I have no reason to doubt the trustworthiness of the replies. A much more prolific cause of enlist-

ment was the monotony of life in our rural districts. *More than forty per cent.* of the recruits on my register were country lads of eighteen to twenty years of age who had been in regular employment on farms and in gardens, but who were bored to death with the life that they were leading. There was in this type of youth the making of a first-rate soldier, and, as a matter of fact, he formed the very backbone of our Regular Army. It is quite evident, therefore, that Mr. Oliver's statement concerning the type of recruit under the voluntary system and in normal times is not in accordance with facts, and even an authority of Sir Ian Hamilton's standing seems to have erred seriously on this point. It was not the lack of employment that drove the ordinary recruit to enlist, but the dreariness and hopeless monotony of the life of an agricultural labourer. He was still young enough to dream of brighter things and to sigh for a life in which he would find more colour and variety than are provided by the daily round of the farm-hand. The Bishop of Oxford's rather gloomy forecast of the future of our country life when the war is over is based on sound reasons."

It must be noted, however—

1. That these lads were all "Church of England"—a somewhat vague description (in the Army sense of the phrase) which would be assumed by more country lads, in proportion, than town lads. To this extent, therefore, the statistics are probably not absolutely typical.

2. That, in fact, farm or garden hands of eighteen to twenty had, in the country, very seldom earned as much as fifteen shillings a week: so that the majority of Mr. Jones's "forty per cent." would come, in that sense, under Sir Ian Hamilton's description.

3. Lastly, nearly thirty per cent. were confessedly out of work when they joined the army.

Therefore, this valuable generalization, extending over some thousands of cases, proves conclusively that a very large proportion of our Regulars are, in the strictest and crudest sense, hunger-recruits. It is probable that, making allowances for (1) and (2) the true proportion would be something like fifty per cent; only to that extent, therefore, can we legitimately suspect Sir Ian or Mr. Oliver of exaggeration.

## APPENDIX XV

## JUSTICE IN THE SWISS ARMY

APART from the Wallenstädt incident, quoted in my *Strong Army in a Free State*, I may mention what was told me in July, 1914, a fortnight before this war, by M. Jean Sigg, a well-known Geneva Labour Leader, who has done his four months in prison for refusing to turn out with his battalion when it was mobilized during a strike. He pointed out that, at the end of each period of training, just as the men are about to be dismissed, they are asked if they have any complaints to make. In most cases, he added, men hesitate to take advantage of this, even when they think they have legitimate cause of complaint; but he himself always made a point of speaking out, if only to encourage the rest. And he admitted that, under this system, no really serious abuse of authority could take place without leading to public discussion: that anything even remotely resembling the Dreyfus affair was inconceivable in Switzerland. And this, it must be remembered, was the testimony of a strong, though honest anti-militarist partisan.

## APPENDIX XVI

THE BOOK *COMPULSORY SERVICE*

It seems, at first sight, almost incredible that neither of the two specialists responsible for this book should have thought of making that simple arithmetical calculation which (as pointed out on p. 214) so seriously affects their main argument. But any reader may verify their omission for himself; and it gains significance from other similar indications of haste in the preparation of this book.

I. It has been repeatedly pointed out that serious mistakes are made in the calculations designed to double Lord Roberts's estimate of the cost of compulsory Territorialism. Lord Roberts put the cost at £4,000,000; the unnamed expert whose figures Lord Haldane adopts puts the cost at £8,000,000; but by taking the following liberties with his data:

(a) He puts the cost of a sergeant-instructor at £150 per head (p. 184). It has since been pointed out, repeatedly, that this is nearly double of the actual figure. The yearly cost of a sergeant-instructor, as tabulated in the Army Estimates for 1909-10, p. 48, is £86 per head. By this single miscalculation, nearly three-quarters of a million are mistakenly added to the cost of Lord Roberts's scheme.

(b) For training the recruits, nearly 5,000 officers would be required. Lord Haldane argues "for obvious reasons these would have to be professional officers, though the League reckons only 2,000 of them as such"; and he refers us to Appendix IV., where his expert adds about three millions more to his estimated budget on the strength of these extra professional officers, whose necessity is thus quietly taken for granted.

But the League calculations are simply modelled on the Swiss system, where the recruit-training is done by about three citizen-officers to every two professionals. What are the "obvious reasons" why British citizens cannot be found to undertake, as officers in a Citizen Army, duties which are cheerfully performed by the Swiss? We have only to suppose what, in these days, will probably be granted by most people—that the earnest desire for national defence can produce as laudable efforts in Britain as in Switzerland—and the objection at once disappears, and we may at once remove the extra £3,000,000 which has been added to our budget on the contrary assumption.

It will thus be seen that, of the £4,000,000 difference between Lord Roberts's calculation and Lord Haldane's, nearly all depends upon one plain miscalculation, and another altogether unwarranted assumption. If we correct the cost of the sergeant-instructors to the sum actually shown in the Army Estimates, and if we decline to assume that the British citizen-officer will take his duties less seriously than his fellow-officer in Switzerland or Norway, we at once remove £3,700,000 from the calculation given in *Compulsory Service*.

II. On p. 138, Sir Ian Hamilton appeals to history to prove the great superiority of the volunteer over the conscript. He cites the case of Hannibal as conclusive; and, if he goes so far back, we must suppose that he either claims special familiarity with that chapter in military history, or looks upon it as specially favourable to his contention. "Hannibal" (he writes), "with 20,000 professional soldiers, went near to destroying the Republic of Rome, which had some seven or eight hundred thousand men available for its conscript militia." These figures are grossly misleading even in the case where they are approximately accurate. The number of men "available"

for conscription is very different to the number of actual conscripts ; we in Great Britain had at least four and a half millions "available" in this sense in August, 1914. The question, how many Rome had untrained, is entirely subordinate here to the question how many trained men she had at any time to oppose to Hannibal. True, she nearly always had the numerical superiority in the field, and he had the glory of winning repeatedly against great odds. But his very victories exhausted him, and any British statesman would deserve impeachment who deliberately calculated upon a policy of temporary glorious victories which would bring final disaster upon the nation. It is strange that neither Sir Ian nor Lord Haldane ever asked themselves the elementary question : " Was it not the Roman power of producing fresh conscripts after every failure which wore Hannibal out, and secured the final collapse of Carthage ? "

Apart from this misuse of correct figures, Sir Ian manages to get his other figures hopelessly wrong. There was one moment, indeed, when Hannibal may have had as few as 20,000 *foot-soldiers* ; but even then he had 6,000 more cavalry, an arm which he always used with special effect. But, in addition to these, Hannibal raised 64,000 *fresh men* in the first year of the war ; why does Sir Ian take no notice of these ? Instead of counting 20,000 men, his real business was to count 90,000 ; he gets his figures wrong by 350 per cent. ! This was at once pointed out by the critic in *Fallacies and Facts* (p. 234) ; the facts may easily be verified in Mommsen's *History of Rome* (tr. Dickson, 1864, vol. ii. pp. 110, 118). Yet neither Sir Ian nor Lord Haldane made any alteration in the second edition of the book : they preferred to let the gross misstatement stand.

If Sir Ian Hamilton's initial assumption had been correct—if the Carthaginian and the Roman could alto-

gether be taken as types of volunteer and conscript respectively—the sequel of this Carthaginian War would tell still more fatally against his theory. Not only was the “volunteer” here unable to wear down the “conscript” in Italy; but the “conscript” actually made two long expeditions over sea, attacked the Carthaginians in their own territory, defeated them crushingly on the first expedition and destroyed them altogether in the second. True, the force which Scipio took over to Zama was mainly one of volunteers—but of volunteers from a conscripted nation, and a nation frightfully exhausted by long years of conscript war—on Sir Ian’s theory it ought to have been impossible to find these volunteers at all.<sup>1</sup> In short, he leaves us vehemently wondering what he is doing *dans cette galère* of the Hannibalian Wars. He seems to have cudgelled his brains to find some instance in history of a great war won by the Volunteer against the Conscript; yet, even with Lord Haldane’s assistance, he has only managed to pitch upon an example which tells heavily against his own theories.

III. Finally, we must consider the attempt of the Voluntary Service Committee to explain away the significance of recruiting from the Militia into the Line during the Napoleonic Wars. It will be necessary to go into the question at some length; but this, as both Lord Haldane and Sir Ian Hamilton remind us, is really the crucial question at issue, on purely military grounds, between voluntarists and compulsorists. It is, indeed, probably the only military question upon which future discussion will turn as to the wisdom of adopting a permanent compulsory system for home defence.

The anonymous writer of *The Case for Voluntary Service*, p. 154, rejects this argument from the militia on

<sup>1</sup> Further absurdities in this caricature of history are pointed out in *Fallacies and Facts*, pp. 235-8.

the pleas that (1) a man got nearly double bounty if he enlisted into the Regulars from the "Regular Militia," instead of enlisting straight from civil life; and (2) that from the "Local Militia" (the only body in Britain which was recruited by compulsion without substitution), "there was no volunteering for the Line."

These arguments only tend to bring out the confusion of thought underlying both Sir Ian's plea and his champion's defence.

Sir Ian is concerned to prove that men trained for *six months* on a compulsory militia system, similar to that of Switzerland, would not enlist in sufficient numbers in the Line. The two main motives against re-enlistment are, of course, (a) that the men might be "fed up" with such soldiering as they had done, or (b) that not the amount of the soldiering, but their disgust at the injustice of the compulsory system, would turn them against the army. Neither Sir Ian nor his defender make any attempt to keep this distinction clear.

So far as Sir Ian Hamilton's "one narrow beam from the searchlight of experience" is concerned, we are dealing with what he himself, for the purposes of his argument, calls *voluntary* recruits. The men enlisted of their free choice, but only an average of 36 per cent. re-enlisted. The remaining 64 per cent. were not victims of a compulsory system; they were men who had had enough of the so-called voluntary system. They thought they could get better value for their work out of civil life. And, even so, this 36 per cent. of re-enlistments was nearly twice as great as the enlistments from among the same number of civilians. Sir Ian's arithmetic, therefore, runs as follows: If out of 100 men who have done three years' service only 36 will re-enlist, therefore out of 100 who have done six months' service you will not get 23 per cent. to re-enlist. This rule-of-three sum, it is quite



evident, tends to prove that the effect of military training is to stimulate re-enlistment.

But, Sir Ian goes on to argue, your six months' man would suffer from a strong sense of injustice. Here he comes to the point, though his previous rule-of-three sum makes us ask how much injustice is necessary to destroy the otherwise stimulating effect of military training upon recruiting.

To the argument from injustice we answer that the British Militia of 1805-13, enlisted under a compulsory law, supplied 44 per cent. of recruits to the Line; in other words, twice the proportion which we should need to recruit from our compulsorily trained six-months' men. Neither he nor his defender venture to assert that the injustice of that militia was smaller than the injustice of taking every able-bodied man to drill for half a year. The old militia pressed with almost deliberate unfairness upon the poor man (Fortescue, *County Lieutenancies*, p. 40) and "all the energy and intelligence of the nation, not wholly without countenance from the Legislature, was directed from the very first to evasion of personal service in the militia" (*ibid.* 45). The lash was by no means unknown (49). The system was so muddled by Government, in its attempt to find the line of least political resistance, that it presently became a tangle of confused or even contradictory regulations, such as we saw recently under the Derby Scheme; "The people," wrote the Duke of Richmond from Goodwood, "... have become suspicious of the magistrates. They cannot understand how a new Act can violate the engagement of the old. A ballot is a ballot with them; and, when they have bought exemption from one, they cannot understand how they are liable to another. I warned Addington [the Prime Minister] of this, and hoped Parliament would make some remedy"—yet none was ever made (57).

“In Bute the local battalion of the reserve reported one man to be wanting, and the Deputy-Lieutenants held a ballot to fill the vacancy. The lot fell upon a thrifty and industrious shepherd who had contrived to buy and breed a few sheep of his own. In despair he sold all that he had, bought a substitute for £26, and was left a ruined and broken-hearted man. Shortly afterwards it was discovered that the returns of the battalions were wrong, and that he ought not to have been balloted at all. The Deputy-Lieutenant wrote an indignant report of the occurrence to the Secretary of State; but the mischief was done, and there was no undoing it” (71). It was not even as if this substitute-money went entirely to brave and honest men who sold themselves as soldiers. The system at once called forth a host of low crimps, who dealt in men, produced commonly a bad article, and kept a great deal of the price for themselves (3, 72, 143, 163). “Robert Craufurd said openly in the House of Commons that, out of 4,000 men raised under the Act by June, 1805, 2,292 had been obtained by payments to crimps” (155). The crimp could claim even a legal fee of £2 12s. 6d. per man (153). An instance of his illegal profit is given by Mr. Fortescue on p. 191: “Crimping, indeed, reached such a height that it was carried on not only by publicans, parish officers, and such-like, but by privates, non-commissioned officers, and even officers of the Army, Militia, and Volunteers; nor was there one who failed to make from £5 to £15 out of every substitute that he provided. In one case a man was engaged for the Warwick Militia by a corporal for a bounty of £10; the corporal sold him to a sergeant for £18; the sergeant made him over to a crimping publican for some unrecorded price; and the publican finally disposed of him to a parish officer for £27 6s.” The legal fee of the parish officer was always £3 3s.; therefore £30 9s. was paid for

this recruit, who only pocketed £10 (if indeed that was not partly paid in drink) for himself. How could a force of this kind be otherwise than extremely unpopular? (49-53). A minority served because they had drawn an unlucky number in the ballot, and were too poor to buy substitutes; to these men, the system was one which deliberately cast the burden upon those who bore already the heaviest load. The substitutes were, in a sense, volunteers, but under a system which no man respected; the idle crimp often took more money than the man who sold his own body; and since the men thus taken were naturally of a low average quality, it was impossible to dispense with flogging as a means of discipline (49).<sup>1</sup> It would seem, therefore, a sign of very desperate necessity to contest the plain implication conveyed by this analogy. If, even under a system so unjust, 44 per cent. volunteered into the Line, where flogging was equally common, how can we argue that not 23 per cent. would volunteer into our present Line, from a nation trained for only six months under a system which is popular in republican Switzerland and democratic Norway?

But (argues Sir Ian's anonymous supporter) these Regular Militia Volunteers were men who had only passed through the Militia to get a double bounty. They had got a first bounty by volunteering as substitutes into the Militia and a second by passing thence into the Line. This is doubtless true in the majority of cases; but it only carries the question back to what Sir Ian and Lord Haldane and Colonel Maude urge so emphatically wherever their argument demands it—that "voluntary" recruiting is a question of *money*, of supply and demand in the labour-

<sup>1</sup> The lash, it may be observed, was abolished in the French Army by the same government which began to re-introduce compulsory service; and in Prussia also this was one of the first reforms introduced by the compulsory system. Stoffel (p. 9) points out the direct connexion between universal compulsion and milder discipline, in these cases.

market. If *compulsion* and *injustice* were the primary questions, certainly the militia would not have supplied more Line recruits than the rest of the population put together.<sup>1</sup> The extra ten pounds of bounty, argues one opponent, was what ensured a flow of recruits almost double of what we should need in these days. Let us assume that the man really got his clear £10 extra; that would be the equivalent of some £20 nowadays: or, for our 35,000 annual recruits needed, £700,000. It is therefore upon a question of £700,000 a year that voluntary recruiting was declared to be incompatible with compulsory service by these experts who are now watching a war expenditure of £7,000,000 *per diem*!

But (argues the author of *The Case for Voluntary Service*) there were *no* volunteers for the line from the Local Militia, the only strictly compulsory force, which admitted no substitutes. For this crucial statement the writer gives no authority whatever, unless the reference a few lines above is intended to imply that he finds all his facts in Mr. J. W. Fortescue's *County Lieutenancies and the War*. No such statement appears in that book; indeed, its implications are strongly on the other side. Moreover, Mr. Fortescue permits me to say that he knows of no documentary evidence for the *relative* proportions of Line recruits from men who had been enlisted in the Regular or in the Local Militias; that the circumstances of the case make it very doubtful whether any such comparison could now be worked out, and that the anonymous writer's treatment of the subject does not, to say the least, suggest familiarity with the actual facts.

Indeed, Mr. Fortescue's exhaustive researches show what common-sense might have anticipated—that the

<sup>1</sup> In the two years following the measure which enabled militiamen to pass into the Line, "the Army depended chiefly on the militiamen for its recruits" (Fortescue, p. 6).

worst enemy to effective voluntary recruiting is muddle, and the subordination of military to political situations. A country whose peace-training needs fundamental and revolutionary reconstruction during a great war is certain to suffer more than any other from recruiting difficulties. The emergency measures of Pitt and Addington often produced an effect exactly opposite to their intention (Fortescue, *l.c.* pp. 66-9). "England felt the false measures of Pitt from 1793 to 1798, and of Addington in 1803-4, until the very end of the war in 1814. All measures of National Defence and military organization must be thought out and tested, as far as possible, in time of peace." When we all know that no great war has ever been won without compulsion, a very great responsibility lies upon those who would have us rely normally upon a system which repudiates all thought of compulsion.

## APPENDIX XVII

## A FRENCH VIEW OF OUR TERRITORIALS

IN 1909 General H. Langlois was semi-officially invited to come and report upon the British Army from the point of view of its effectiveness as one factor in the defensive calculations of the Entente. An English translation of his report was published, with his approval, by Captain C. F. Atkinson next year.

This report figures largely in the *apologia* of the Voluntary Service Committee; it is frequently quoted, and I believe they quote no other foreign specialists' report upon our Territorials except that of Captain Sorb in 1911. As this latter is distinctly less favourable than the report of General Langlois, the author of *The Case for Voluntary*

*Service* suggests that "the tune is somewhat changed ; for, although the Territorials had worked hard in the interval, so had the [National Service] League" (p. 15). This is, of course, the old familiar argument of the voluntarists in the Education controversy, who pleaded that voluntarism would have done much better if the compulsorists would have refrained from publishing actual and damning statistics of school attendance, etc., which "discouraged" the public.

General Langlois, then, is the most favourable witness ; yet we have only to compare his whole report with similar reports on the Swiss army by foreign experts in order to see that there is a serious difference between the two forces in business results. The comparison may easily be made. Apart from the long quotations from experts of various countries printed by Gaston Moch, and by Commandant Manceau in his *Armées Etrangères*, our own *Times* has, on several occasions during the last twenty years, published criticisms on the Swiss annual manœuvres at some length.

Let us now examine more closely what is said of our Territorials by the most favourable foreign specialist who can be produced.

He has much to say in praise of the volunteer spirit, with which we must all agree. If we were only concerned to discover whether our own country, under a voluntary system, has done better or worse than others would have done under similar systems, our feelings would always be those of almost unmixed satisfaction and pride. But the real question is, how far this voluntary system itself will stand comparison with the compulsory. The finest personal devotion is sometimes shown under thoroughly bad systems : the worse the general muddle, the greater the need of individual sacrifice in forlorn hopes.

The longest quotation from Langlois (p. 36) is really

summed up in its last sentence : “ No, this Territorial Army, *at any rate its infantry*, is not a worthless ‘ national guard,’ but a militia which even now is a factor to be reckoned with.”<sup>1</sup> But the words which I have italicized give rise to serious thought, especially when we note that the other two testimonials from Langlois on the same page refer only to the infantry. How about the artillery, which has played such an enormous part in all modern warfare, and which is so difficult to learn under amateur conditions ? The artillery is admittedly one of the weakest points of the Swiss militia ; but no foreign report criticizes the Swiss artillery in terms such as Langlois frankly applies to ours, though no echo of his words finds its way into *The Case for Voluntary Service*.<sup>2</sup> When we take careful stock of what Langlois says about our Territorial gunners, we see at once why he checked himself with that significant limitation “ at any rate its infantry.” It is only “ when the Territorial artillery has been placed on a sound footing ” that Britain will possess “ a relatively powerful artillery force ” to oppose to an invader. Meanwhile, however, this distinguished expert decided that the artillery was *not* on a sound footing. “ Later in the

<sup>1</sup> To realize what the words “ national guard ” mean to a modern Frenchman, we must read such passages as that chapter of Francisque Sarcey’s *Siège de Paris* in which the author describes his own experience in that force ; or the passage in which Stoffel gives his own opinion of the *Garde Nationale Mobile*—that Second Line of 500,000 men who were to receive their first serious training when war broke out (*Report of Aug. 12, 1869*). These two passages give an idea of what the “ national guard ” was at its latest and least inefficient stage.

<sup>2</sup> On the contrary, the author of this book goes out of his way to imply that it is one of our strong points (p. 75). He writes : “ The gunners of the Territorial Force are very largely recruited from men who are engineers by profession, while the drivers belong to that class of men, not yet extinct in this country, who are fond of horses,” with much more of the same sort. As if Compulsory Territorialism would not ensure far more regularly that the arms needing special aptitudes were recruited from men who followed similar occupations in daily life !

morning a field battery passed us at the walk. *The horses were all hired and heterogeneous.* The teams were not well matched; some, especially amongst the near horses, were evidently exhausted, and ran with sweat, while the others were quiet and easy. The men seemed to us younger still than those of the infantry, and their seat on horseback very faulty" (p. 16). Again (p. 20), "Elsewhere we saw the young artillery drivers at riding drill. These were only beginners. They showed all the goodwill in the world, and boldness as well, but their training is quite insufficient, and cannot be made up in a fortnight's camp. A field battery was drilling, thus early, as a battery, and performing a movement in line at close interval at the walk. Some of the vehicles, whose teams jibbed, fell behind, horses got into trouble, and one of them (a near-horse) threw himself down. At such moments the extremely convenient arrangement of the traces greatly assisted the drivers, but nothing could make good their inexperience, and the only way to extricate the vehicles was for the senior non-commissioned officers to do everything themselves. It is impossible, in spite of the keenness of everyone, to train men and horses at the same time, for the latter were wholly unaccustomed to be ridden and driven, and further incommoded by their unskilful riders. In brief, the Territorial field artillery has not now, and will not for a long time be able to acquire the manœuvring capacity which it should possess if it is to fulfil its mission." Other criticisms equally frank, and perhaps still more significant, may be found on pp. 39, 40, 67. And on p. 37 he points out another weak spot specially characteristic of the voluntary system: "In the [balloon company], not enough specialists were available in civil life, and Regular instructors had to be called in to undertake the training."

Finally, the passage quoted on p. 14 of *The Case for*



*Compulsory Service* acquires a very different significance in the light of the present war. The anonymous writer chooses only two sentences, and gives no page references; they occur, in fact, on pp. 75 and 79 of Langlois. They reassure us as to the efficiency of the Territorials to repel a German invasion, but upon assumptions which are no longer valid. Langlois assumes that we can, all the time, conveniently keep one Regular division at home to help the Territorials (p. 79), and that Germany, under French and Russian pressure, would be quite unable to spare 200,000 first-rate troops from those fronts; "the invasionary corps directed against England would only be composed of *Landwehr*." We know now very differently; and this miscalculation of an expert, however pardonable, is one more plain warning against the policy of cutting down our margin of security to the narrowest possible limit. Langlois' report, read in full and in the light of present facts, is calculated to produce a very different impression to that desired by the author of *The Case for Voluntary Service*, or by Lord Haldane, under whose official patronage the book was written.

## APPENDIX XVIII

## THE VOLUNTEERS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

FOR French population in 1791, I have taken the lowest of the estimates; other contemporary authorities estimate it at 25 or 28 millions, which would strengthen my case (Lavissee and Rambaud, *Histoire Générale*, vol. viii. p. 9). On the other hand, it will be seen that I have stated the number of volunteers at its heights possible figure.

The history of the French "Volunteers" is as follows: 1791 (early June) the Assembly called for 26,000 volunteers in prevision of a possible war. In July this call was raised to 97,000, and in August to 101,000. Of these, about 36,000 were sufficiently formed to undertake garrison duty by September; these included (for instance) three out of the six Parisian battalions. The fourth was not yet formed by that date; the fifth and sixth never were formed at all; and things went, on the whole, rather worse in the provinces (C. Rousset, *Les Volontaires*, pp. 8-13).

1792 (Ap. 20). War was declared, and less than 100 of the nominal 169 battalions were fit for service. Attempts to raise fresh men were disappointing (*ibid.* 48). Then (July 11) the Assembly voted that the National Guard should be *compelled* to furnish contingents proportional to the population of the district. As Dussieux puts it (ii. 375): "At the first outbreak of war, all this strange military system, framed upon general theories of liberty and voluntary service, broke down in face of the facts. We were compelled to force the National Guard to furnish 'volunteers' because the real volunteers—men who enlisted freely from patriotism or political enthusiasm—were not numerous enough to supply the exigencies of the situation." After the defeat of Neerwinden "the volunteers of 1792, in spite of their enthusiasm, abandoned the army in the face of the enemy, because they had only enlisted for a year. It is said that 60,000 went back to their homes" (*ibid.* 377).

Valmy is always cited as a stock example of what good volunteers can do; yet what are the real facts? It was only the best of the volunteers who were sent to the front at all; the second-best were to work at the base; the third-best "were sent into the towns or to the rear" (Rousset, p. 104). A month before Valmy, Kellermann

wrote home that most of the new battalions which joined him were ill armed and equipped ; " it would be murder to bring these good fellows under fire in a really stiff fight." At Valmy itself (Sept. 20, 1792) the main honour rests with the Regulars. Kellermann had 67,000 Regulars with whom some of the best volunteers had been gradually incorporated, and 15,000 volunteers unmixed with Regulars. With these 82,000 men, posted on the crest of a ridge, he withstood the attack of 36,000 Prussians, who, for some reason, never really pressed their charge home. The battle was only an artillery duel ; 300 men were killed on the French side, and 184 on the Prussian. Other circumstances concurred to make this mere skirmish into one of the decisive battles of all time ; but authors who cite Valmy as a triumph of the volunteer over the conscript go sadly astray. It is quite possible that there were nearly as many conscripts or semi-conscripts in the French army as in the Prussian.

With Feb. 1793, as we have seen, the " requisitioning " of National Guards began ; and from that time forward real volunteers formed an almost negligible fraction of the French armies.

It is almost equally beside the point to cite the exploits of a few picked battalions of volunteers in the South African and the present wars. The question is, not what a small picked proportion are fit to do some time after the outbreak of war, but what the average Volunteer or Territorial can do at the very first. As Stoffel long ago pointed out, to rely upon troops which are to receive their main training in war-time is to lean on a broken reed.

## APPENDIX XIX

## COMPULSION AND FINANCIAL BREAKDOWN

It is sufficient to quote three passages from the best qualified of the voluntarist advocates, to show the truth of Mill's remark in 1871, that British writers saw the industrial effects of compulsory service in false perspective.

A. "Whereas on the Continent a war may be a thing of six months, or, at the most, a year, with us a war may last for five years or more, and we may be required to keep not only our army but our navy in action for a great period. I have talked to a good many people abroad, and what they have said to me is this: 'You don't realise your own formidableness. True, you have not many troops compared with us, but you have a great fleet, and if with a great fleet and such troops as you have you can sustain a war long enough, then you are the most formidable enemies we can have to face for this reason. With us on the Continent war prolonged over a certain point means starvation. Our compulsory service means that our fathers, our brothers, our sons, our cousins, are all taken away from their business, from the support of their families, and it means starvation for the nation after a certain period has elapsed. With your professional navy and army you can go practically as long as you like, or, at any rate, for a very long time indeed, and that is what makes you so formidable.' Conscription is a tremendous tax upon the whole nation. If you pass on to a war footing, when the number of those so trained is increased something like six-fold, you have passed to a state of financial strain which no nation can bear for anything

but a short time. Because we have to defend not merely land frontiers but the Empire, we cannot afford to have armies and navies that can be employed only for a short time" (Lord Haldane, *Democracy and Voluntary Service*, 1913, p. 5).

B. "Compulsory service exactly suits the needs of a State mainly agricultural, provided that warlike operations are conducted between harvests and carried out with such energy that a final decision is rapidly attained, but it is death to a highly organised industrial system in which work is constant all the year round, and there is no time when the natural leaders of men can be conveniently spared.

Napoleon, by learning how to win decisive victories, between harvests, forced all the Continent of Europe to follow the French example.

Those who have followed the inner history of the Prussian organisation it is now proposed that we should adopt will recall how this ideal of a revived feudalism or militia system haunted the dreams of its creators. Both Scharnhorst and Clausewitz found their model in our own Militia, and in all Clausewitz's schemes prepared after 1815 to meet a possible renewal of French aggression, the idea of forcing a decision rapidly, between harvests, in fact, is fundamental, and substantially he uses it as an argument for such an organisation as would enable Prussia to put every man, horse, and gun in the fighting line from the very first, because Prussia, a poor, and in those days mainly agricultural, nation could not and dare not afford the risks and expenses of a delayed decision.

Such an organisation Moltke eventually elaborated, and it succeeded, because in 1870 industrialism had

only touched the fringe of German territories, and the relative perfection of his methods enabled him to overthrow France by sheer weight of numbers before the latter could draw upon or derive advantage from her vastly greater wealth and resources.

Meanwhile Germany has been moving more rapidly than any other country except England towards Industrialism; and thinking Germans—those whose position precludes their writing for the daily Press—are already beginning to ask how this new factor will affect their fighting powers; and some at least are wishing they were able to follow our example.

If any other European nation but England ventures to mobilise, the paralysis of her industrial system is in precise proportion to her industrial development. Every healthy, able-bodied man must go, no matter how important to the civil existence of the State his work may be; and since in these days of heightened competition only healthy and able-bodied men can survive in the struggle for commercial existence, the outbreak of war hits more than only the financial credit of firms—it practically suspends their operations altogether” (Colonel F. N. Maude, C.B., in the *Westminster Gazette* for Dec. 9, 1912).

C. “The essence of compulsion lies in this drastic truth, that from the moment mobilisation is decreed, every man on the list, whatever be the post he holds in civil life, has to give up his business and take his place in the ranks.

When the system was first introduced, three-fourths of the population being agriculturists, the net loss to the community was small, however great the suffering of the individual.

In a commercial State the industries are all so closely interwoven that it is impossible to say how far the misfortune due to the collapse of any one firm, *i.e.*, the consequences of taking away its most efficient partner or one of its best foremen, might not create. The elasticity of the old voluntary system—to which in all essentials we shall have to revert—gave us the best possible guarantee against unnecessary disturbances of the course of trade. There will be enough and to spare under all circumstances of sudden hostilities, and the men thrown out of employment by these misfortunes will be amply sufficient to fill our ranks with ‘more or less trained’ men many times over. But our whole ultimate hope of survival depends on keeping this necessary disruption of normal commerce within the smallest possible bounds.

The changes in the conditions of enlistment brought about by the new Territorial system overstep these limits far more than is either politic or desirable, and they account for the marked drop in numbers and the actual quality of the recruits presenting themselves to fill the new ranks.

The steady, serious-minded men, the very backbone of the force in case of war, hold back from signing an engagement which commits them to throwing up their employment at a moment’s notice. And this very holding back is a proof of their character and quality; it shows that they are prepared to take their responsibilities seriously and will not light-heartedly incur a liability they do not see their way to fulfilling.

These are the class of men an officer prefers to have at his back in a tight corner, and it is in their loss that the weakest point in our present organisation lies” (The same author, in the *Contemporary Review* for July, 1911).

## 370 COMPULSORY MILITARY SERVICE

Quotations need not be added to remind the reader how many politicians and journalists, during this present war, warned us that we should bring the industrial system about our ears by attempting a mobilization which in fact was easily carried out as soon as the nation made up its mind to the need.



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