

Though the war-making agencies are largely economic, the Red Cross is no less their accomplice in keeping warfare alive.

Before the United States frankly took its stand as a belligerent nation its first official function in relation to the war consisted in setting aside a day of prayer for peace. After this sanctimonious hypocrisy had been gone through with, the government proceeded to lend its good offices to big business to send over to the soldiers grains, meats and other food-stuffs, guns, powder, shot and shell, to keep the slaughter going—all in the interest of profits.

The question naturally arises, had we a right to lay upon our souls the unction of neutrality by claiming that what we did for one side we were willing to have done for either side? Can one participate helpfully in an iniquitous business and so evenly distribute his force between the two sides as to neutralize himself and virtually not be a participant? Surely we fed the war upon what war needs to keep it alive.

In the same catalogue of neutral hypocrisy is the Red Cross and its allied agencies, with sweet-voiced nurses and bandages and sheets and pillow-cases and goodies and cigarettes and soft beds—all with the assumption that they are mitigating the horrors of war. However much they are mitigating the discomforts of individual warriors, one thing is certain: they are prolonging war; and war is nothing but horrors. Sentimentalism, combined with a confused ethical sense which calls for impartiality, results in the promotion of war. The ingredients in the hellish retort are not neutralized. A simple mind can grasp the fact that, if one helps one side in warfare, he damages the other side. We need yet to push our mathematics one step farther and prove that if we help both sides, we damage both sides.

Sentimental neutrals, if they were really interested in mitigating the horrors of war, would employ their energies to end the war. To end the war is the best way to mitigate war. The last thing that one who really loves his fellow men, and who truly revolts at war, would think of doing would be to go into battle with a double-edged sword and fight against both sides. This is what the well-meaning neutral spirit of the Red Cross would do; and when we look upon the cost of one day of war we may calculate

what will be the cost of the next day—the cost to both sides, for both are daily losing; and in the end both are destined to be losers by the aggregate of their days of warfare.

Were the Red Cross neutrals desirous of mitigating the horrors of war, instead of maintaining merely a commercial and sentimental interest in it, they might be acting more reasonably to throw all of their help upon one side and end it. War continues so long as the damages are fairly balanced. It ends when the balance is lost and an unbalance of damages takes its place.

Official Red Cross organizations, of course, do not pretend to be neutral; they are belligerent organizations. Indeed, in this war when the balance of power was being lost by one side and defeat was imminent, the Red Cross redoubled its efforts to restore the balance and perpetuate the war.

Let us not lose sight of the fact that the soldier is a person who goes forth to kill his fellowman. The hope that he may kill but not be killed sends him on his errand. He is not only a cold-blooded murderer; he also is a gambler. He hopes to do his unholy business, come off with his life, and be ever after proclaimed a "hero." Society with its nationalism, patriotism, race hatreds, militarism, perverted histories which glorify war, and the International quest for commercial profits, creates the soldier—the dupe of war. If he *knew* that he were to fare as badly as he *hopes* his "enemy" will, he would not attempt the adventure. The nearer to one hundred per cent. the mortality of warfare approaches, the less will be the enthusiasm for its "glories." If the mortality could be brought up to one hundred per cent. the problem would be solved, and war would cease. Do the activities of the Red Cross make for the abolition of war or for its perpetuation?

If the man of fighting age refused to go to war, or if he was proclaimed the hero who had heroism enough to stay at home and do his work and refuse to participate in the miserable business, then the problem would be solved. Does the Red Cross, which rushes to the front to keep alive this "sport of kings," make for war or peace?