

other I have intimated that he might lose the second if he does not take the first and I have also tried to alarm him as to public feeling in America. Affectionately yours, E. M. House

TLS (WP, DLC).

¹ It is printed as an Enclosure with WW to EMH, May 8, 1916.

A Memorial to the President of the United States by the American Union Against Militarism¹

[c. May 8, 1916]

Sir: The American Union Against Militarism does not stand against sane and reasonable "preparedness" nor for "peace at any price." But, profoundly convinced that the big army and navy programs, with their accompanying propaganda, are a menace to democracy, we adopted your suggestion to "hire large halls" and ascertain how the country stands upon this grave issue. In New York City, and in ten cities of the middle west we stated our convictions as to the issue between militarism and a democracy; before great meetings in Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, Minneapolis, Des Moines, Kansas City, St. Louis, Cincinnati and Pittsburgh. These meetings all gave enthusiastic endorsement to the view that the so-called "preparedness" movement is not merely unnecessary but against public interest, that in its inception and propaganda it is a dangerous expression of class and national aggression. The response was everywhere the same.

But, Mr. President, our appeal to the country found us embarrassed by questions which we could not answer. Men came to us and said: "If the President feels constrained because of the international situation to make some concessions to the 'preparedness' movement, if he asks us to uphold him in making a considerable addition to the army and navy at this time, at what point may we count upon him to resist the fanaticism and the extremes to which the movement would drive us? When will the president say to the militarists: 'Thus far shall we go and no farther?'"

We told them, Mr. President, that we would ask you.

1. Recent political events have demonstrated the existence of a strong and widespread distrust of the movement which, in the guise of "preparedness," is rapidly introducing Old World militarist institutions into American life. It is a distrust which is seeking political expression and is breaking down party lines [lines] in its search. It feels itself faced by a conspiracy of class and press, and seems determined to free itself and the country from

that conspiracy. These American citizens crave some assurance from you that under your leadership we need fear no break with the splendid anti-militarist traditions of our past.

2. May we not hope that you will choose to tell the American people that you see, as clearly as they, that much of the so-called "preparedness" movement is rooted in motives sinister and even sordid?

3. The country is facing a shrewd, persistent propaganda in favor of compulsory military service. The mass of the people—if our experience is any guide—are apparently not misled by the adroit attempts to disguise this compulsory military service as Swiss or Australian. They know this country is not Switzerland or Austrian [Australia], and that what the proponets [proponents] of conscription really want is a military organization comparable with that of Germany. We found a widespread desire for some expression from you as to your views upon this matter.

4. You have been widely and incorrectly pictured as demanding the greatest navy in the world. Millions of people view this with dismay. To them it means an armament race with Great Britain, involving enormous taxation, and at the end of the race a devastating and senseless war. We hope that you may find, some time, an opportunity to make your position clear.

In short, we come to you, not only as the President of the United States but also as the man who has stood most firmly for the maintenance of our democratic institutions. We bring to you the evidence we have found of an abiding American spirit, tenacious of democracy, that fears the militarist propaganda as an ass[ault] upon democracy. These people are far less fearful of an invading army than they are of the enemy in our midst. East and West, and North and South, we find good true American citizens, wage earners, farmers, members of the professions, and business men, who are stirred by a common desire to join with those in our own country and elsewhere who stand for democracy and against militarism.

At this crisis they, and we, look to you to clarify the discussion and make articulate the fundamental principles of the country.

T MS (Lillian D. Wald Papers, NN).

¹ Wilson met in the Oval Office for over an hour on May 8 with representatives of the American Union Against Militarism. Besides those mentioned in the next document, the delegates present included Paul Underwood Kellogg, editor of *The Survey*; John Lovejoy Elliott, teacher and social worker of New York; Alice Lewisohn, social worker and philanthropist of New York; Frederick Henry Lynch, Congregational minister and peace advocate of New York; Crystal Eastman, feminist leader and social investigator of New York; and Charles T. Hallinan of Chicago, the executive director of the Union. The American Union