

# To The Workers

By Dorothy Day

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*Summary: An impassioned appeal to American workers asking them not to participate in the production of goods which will be used to wage war. She reminds workers of their power and begs them to unite and again sacrifice to further international truth and justice, not mass killing and destruction. (DDLW #347).*

We address this appeal to the workers of America, you whose sweat and labor is the lifeblood of our country, you whose blood must flow if the United States engages in another imperialist war, you whose fellow workers are now dying for capitalist gain and imperialist ambition in Europe.

Appeals are being made to your selfishness; you are told that prosperity will accompany a war boom, that if the United States shall sell to warring nations or other nations to be transferred to warring countries, the long awaited lift from unemployment and depression is at hand. Those who tell you this speak the truth. They know how long you have suffered, they know the agonizing years have taken toll. And, depending on your despair, they would make you party to blood profits they hope to make in a war that is the result of their actions in the past.

Firmly believing in the essential integrity of the American worker, and his sense of brotherhood with the workers of the world, we address another appeal; an appeal to your idealism, to your desire for justice, to your Charity. No matter how the legislative tide turns, no matter what laws are passed abridging the neutrality of the United States, you hold it in your power to keep our country aloof from the European war. This is our appeal, then, that you use your power as workers to refuse to manufacture or transport articles of war that are intended for foreign nations, warring or neutral. That you serve notice on your employers, in organized fashion, that you will have no part of such blood money, and that you will strike if necessary to maintain your position.

## Will You Do It?

Is this asking a tremendous sacrifice? We know it is. And yet, it is necessary sometimes for workers to make overwhelming sacrifices. You have made them in order that your right to organize, to strike, to picket, to get a fair share of the profits of industry be recognized. Hundreds of workers have suffered imprisonment, injury and death, at the hands of those very people who make war, in order that they and their work might be accorded the dignity that belongs to them. You do not think their sacrifices were in vain. You honor and revere the memory of labor's martyrs. Sacrifice has been labor's lot; it still is. Sacrifice

is always the lot of the noble, and only sacrifice can keep noble what sacrifice has ennobled.

Have you the courage necessary? You, the steel-workers, the seamen, the rubber workers, the cotton workers, the chemical workers? Can you, the steel workers, insist that the industry that is partly yours by virtue of your work engage only in peaceful pursuits, that the industry devote itself to the positive program of making only those materials calculated to build a better society, not wreck the one we have? You can if you have the capacity for sacrifice that we think you have.

Can you, the seamen, employ the same courage that carried you through the tumultuous years of organization, the strikes, the long hardships of picket lines in the dead of winter? You can, you can use the rights you have won through the suffering and deaths of your fellow seamen, to enforce a policy of real neutrality for the United States. You have the capacity for sacrifice, we have seen it; will you use it now in order that war-mongers do not get the materials they need to kill your fellows in Europe. There's something greater than mere money bonuses to fight for. Don't let those who talk unctuously of neutrality by force of arms fool you into supplying guns and gas to kill and maim your fellow-workers.

We address all workers in the same vein. It is yours to say whether the United States shall dip its hands in the blood of European workers. You can say NO! You can close the plants if necessary. You can proclaim to the world that at long last the workers are refusing to be the pawns of capitalist and imperialist gain; that they have searched for truth and have found it; that you know now that workers' security lies in truth and justice, so truth and justice will be your aims. Actually, whether you know it or not, you, the workers, hold in your hands the power to tip the scales in favor of peace or crime. Are you afraid of your power? We are waiting for your answer.