

Levi Pennington

People

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Pennington to Wayne Morse, August 7, 1947

Levi T. Pennington

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August 7, 1947.

Hon Wayne Morse,
Senator from Oregon,
Senate Office Building,
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Morse:--

Your letter of July 12 in answer to mine written on behalf of Newberg Monthly Meeting of Friends, of which I am the presiding officer, was read to the monthly meeting in its monthly session for August last night; and it is no exaggeration to say that it was a pretty keen disappointment to the gathering. They have on the whole looked upon you as a man both able and willing to see better things for the world than the reign of blood and iron.

You say you have a strong feeling that we may better advance the cause of peace if we are in a strong position than if we are unprepared. I suppose you mean by "a strong position" a position in which we are better able to kill and destroy; you mean, I supposed, that we should be prepared to do a better, faster, more thorough job of killing than any other power. Is that the strongest position we can take? The past would not seem to indicate it. Is that the way we may best advance the cause of peace? If you were a citizen of Russia, would you think that universal military training and peace time conscription were moves in the direction of peace on the part of the United States?

Why can't some great leader push the matter of the international abolition of compulsory military training and peace time conscription? Why can't some great leader take a stand that might mean political suicide or might be a stepping stone to a higher immediate honor, and would certainly mean undying fame in the years to come? Some day there will be a William Wilberforce, a William Lloyd Garrison, a Wendall Philips of the peace movement. I wish that future fame might be that of a man of Oregon, and I know of only one man -- but who knows the resources of the Almighty?

Sincerely your friend,

Levi T. Pennington.