

Levi Pennington

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Pennington to Representative John W. McCormack, March 22, 1948

Levi T. Pennington

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March 22, 1948.

Hon. John W. McCormack,
House Office Building,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. McCormack:--

The proposals to enact laws providing for universal military training and peace time conscription are of deep concern to me, as to millions of others from whom Congress will not hear directly, the inarticulate heart of America. I trust that you have too much statesmanship and courage to be stampeded, with lesser men, by war hysteria.

If war were inevitable, these are not the means by which it would be fought, mass armies of boys with superficial training. If war comes -- which God forbid -- it will be fought with modern weapons, rocket planes, guided missiles, bacteria, atomic bombs. We have the only atomic bombs in the world. Russia does not have them, for she could not know she had without a demonstration, and our instruments would detect such a demonstration if it were made on the other side of the earth. And Russia knows that we have enough atom bombs to blow the heart of that country from the face of the earth. Let's give her credit for some degree of intelligence. Russia is not going to attack us.

But my objection to these two measures goes deeper than the recognition of their military futility. To adopt them would be to enthrone in America the very evils that made Germany, Italy and Japan what they were, and led to their destruction. Let's continue to be a free democracy, and not move in the direction of a military despotism. These measures are futile from the military standpoint, ruinous from the economic standpoint, destructive to democratic ideals, the greatest peril America has ever faced.

Sincerely yours,

Levi T. Pennington.