

---

**Letter to Rudolph Behomeck,  
Secretary Baltimore YPSL Circle,  
from William F. Kruse,  
National Secretary YPSL, in Chicago,  
circa June 15, 1917**

*Published in State of New York, Proceedings of the Judiciary Committee of the Assembly in the Matter of the Investigation by the Assembly of the State of New York as to the Qualifications of Louis Waldman, August Claessens, Samuel A. DeWitt, Samuel Orr, and Charles Solomon, to Retain Their Seats in Said Body. In 3 Volumes. (Albany, NY: J.B. Lyon & Co., 1920), vol. 1, pp. 626-627.*

Rudolph Behomeck,  
627 N Calvert Street,  
Baltimore, Md.

Dear Comrade:—

Your order for 100 copies of the “Liberty Edition” has been received and entered. The papers will be sent to you just as soon as they are out — about July 1st [1917].

As to the action of Comrade Senkyr (whom I suppose you to mean to refer to in your last letter), that is really a matter on which the individual, and not the organization, must take the stand. If a man is subject to the draft and he has no apparent means of exemption from the tragic compulsion to slay his fellow workers, I cannot blame him if he will turn in any way he possibly can to avoid such compulsion.

We are opposed to war. We do not want to kill our fellow workingmen. The one question then arises as to how we can best make our feeling known and enforce our principles. Some think it is by refusing absolutely to touch a gun and to rot in prison, or face a firing squad rather than to do so; others feel that while we should not willingly

go into the armed force, still if we are drafted they feel that we should go and do our best to spread the light of education among the soldiers. However the case is decided, it must be decided upon the basis of the individual’s conscience. If a man’s conscience or principles forbade him to touch a gun, he will refuse to touch a gun; if they even [caused] him to resist the draft, he will resist. As an organization we are opposed to war, but it remains for the individual to say [in] just what form that opposition should be taken.

Personally, I can see no difference between the man who takes a gun and kills his brother man and thereby makes himself a good soldier, and the man who with bandages and instruments patches up another so that he may go back and once more himself become a good soldier. If I had my way, thinking as I do that all war is wrong, I would absolutely abolish the Red Cross and every other humanitarian institution that is used in warfare. I would want to make war so outrageously horrible that no man would even dare to suggest fighting another battle. War is absolutely wrong and the only way that we can ever stop it is to get the people enough of it — and then some. Let it be understood that it shall be hell let loose, that

no mercy, no justice, no humaneness would have anything to do let loose, that thing to do with the barbarities of the battlefield. That quicker than anything else would awaken the people to the true conditions that we are facing.

But that is only my personal opinion, understand. The organization, so far as I can see, has no right to throw out a man for joining a hospital unit, and especially in the case of Comrade Senkyr, I think it would be absolutely wrong to do so. However, this is a question that you will have to decide and trusting you will decide yourselves correctly, I remain yours for comradeship,

*William F. Kruse,*  
National Secretary,  
Young People's Socialist League.

***Edited by Tim Davenport.***

***Published by 1000 Flowers Publishing Corvallis, OR, 2009. • Non-commercial reproduction permitted.***