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NEW TACTICS AGAINST WAR BASIS OF A NEW INTERNATIONAL

BY ANTON PANNEKOEK

More than a conference of delegates from the Socialist parties of the neutral nations is needed to re-organize the International. Such a conference cannot even be an instrument for peace, for now that all the high-sounding resolutions of the Social-Democracy have become mere empty talk, no one feels any respect for its power.

Even if the leaders of all Socialist parties should meet when the war is over, fall about each others' necks and forgive each other their nationalist sins, their "International" would be nothing more than an International of Leaders for the protection of common interests. An International that obediently falls apart into opposing national armies when the Bourgeoisie demands war for the support of its interests is no real International of Labor. The International of the Proletariat is possible only when founded upon incessant opposition and increasing struggle against the ruling classes. The first condition for a real international policy of the Proletariat is the *tactic of the class-struggle,* the emphatic denial of all opportunism in inner politics.

But more than this we must take up the fight against war, not with resolutions but by doing everything in our power to prevent war. To prevent war the working-class needs mental power and material power. The creation of this power alone can make possible a re-organization of the International.

Mental power is necessary. As long as a ruling class can so influence their minds that the workers will take up arms against other nations, so long will it be impossible to prevent wars. As long as bourgeois theories and catchwords can sweep the workers into the tide of war and war-enthusiasm, so long will the ranks of the laboring class be disrupted again and again, so long will Social-

ism be a dream. One of these bourgeois catchwords is that of "Wars of Defense."

The War of Defense

A number of American Socialists have expressed the opinion that the German Social Democrats were to blame for having failed to hinder the war; on the other hand they maintain that the French and Belgian comrades were absolutely justified in defending their country when it was attacked.

If this judgment, which fundamentally arises out of an already fixed attitude in favor of one nation and against the other, was right, then the German comrades would stand exonerated, along with those of France and Belgium. For in Germany every worker and every Social Democrat was absolutely convinced that his nation was in danger of invasion by the enemy. They believed, as firmly as did the French Socialists, that they were taking up arms only for defense.

Who was right? Who was wrong? First let us look at France. For more than twenty years France has been in a firm alliance with Russia. In 1902 came the understanding with England, the *Entente*, settling all old conflicts with England, France, choosing sides with England in the growing antagonism between England and Germany. By France we here mean the French government, the clique of politicians, controlled by High Finance, doing the bidding of the money-wolves, and controlling Parliament by a corrupt party machine. The people have just as little influence in France as in Germany or in England. Of these governments we speak when we discuss the conflicts and alliances of France, England, Germany and Russia. The objects of their conflicts are always foreign lands which they desire to control as colonies or as "spheres of influence," seeking tremendous profits for their own capital. The *Entente* of 1902, for instance, consisted merely of an understanding concerning Egypt and Morocco, France relinquishing its claims upon Egypt and turning it over to the English, who have occupied it since 1882; England, on the other hand, turning over Morocco to the French capitalists. But here a new claimant came to the front. Germany demanded the right to be heard. The English author Brailsford, whose book, *The War of Steel and Gold* (appearing shortly before the war) presents in its first part an excellent exposition of the economic foundations of Imperialism and modern politics, says:

"The German thesis was perfectly simple, and in principle defensible. It was that France and Britain had no right by an exclusive bargain to settle the fate of Morocco without consulting other Powers. The answer of the French and British press was more plausible than convincing. It was our case that as what we

call the 'trade' of Morocco is mainly in French and British hands, Germany was not in any real sense an interested party. The 'trade' of Morocco, if by that word is meant the exchange of European manufactured goods against the raw produce of its agriculture, is at best inconsiderable. No one would risk the lives of soldiers and the money of taxpayers for the sake of the Moroccan market. What matters in Morocco is *the wealth of its virgin mines*. This was an open field, and here Germany has as good or bad a claim as anyone else. A German firm, the Mannesmann Brothers, could indeed boast that it had obtained an exclusive concession to work all the mines of Morocco in return for money which it had lent to an embarrassed Sultan during its civil wars. That this was the real issue is proved by the terms which were more than once discussed between Paris and Berlin for the settlement of the dispute. A *détente* or provisional settlement of the dispute was concluded in 1910, which had only one clause—that German finance would share with French finance in the various undertakings and companies, which aimed at 'opening up' Morocco by ports, railways, mines and other public works. No effect was ever given to this undertaking, and German irritation at the delays of French diplomacy and French finance culminated in the despatch of the gunboat Panther to Agadir as a prelude to further 'conversations.' Had M. Caillaux remained in power we know, from the subsequent investigations before the Senate's Committee, how these conversations would have ended. They would have effected not merely an adjustment of French and German colonial interests, but a general understanding which would have covered the whole field of German-Franco relations. The points on which he had begun to negotiate were all economic, and chief among them was a proposal to put an end to the boycott by French finance of the Bagdad railway, and to admit German securities to quotation on the Paris exchange."

Like two hungry beasts that have both fastened their eyes upon the same prey, these governments watch and stealthily follow each other, growling and threatening, now ready to attack, now retreating—and then, when suddenly the whole pack springs up, jumping upon each others' backs, throttling and biting, shall the priest come and decide: this one here is to blame, he was the first to spring; the others are merely defending themselves? Among the servants of French capital it was Delcassé above all who strove, together with King Edward, to isolate Germany, to rivet more firmly the ring of its opponents, to loosen the bonds that bound it to its allies. Germany felt itself "penned in," was hindered on all sides in its efforts towards expansion of the *Entente* powers. This was true at the time of the Agadir crisis, when Lloyd George threatened in his Mansion House speech that England stood ready to place its armed strength at the disposal of France, and urged Germany to retreat. It is worthy of special notice that this threat, which might have precipitated war at that time, was agreed upon by three per-

sons only, Asquith, Grey and Lloyd George: that is, the English Parliamentary government! This autocratic attitude on the part of three English ministers is one of the causes of the present war: For it left with the German bourgeoisie the firm conviction that its enemies, in order to prevent the growth of Germany, had prepared to surround it with an ever increasing force, until the hour should come when they were ready to pounce upon it.

The immediate cause of the war came from the East. France was drawn in as an ally of Russia. This alliance chained it fast to Russia; we could speak of a French defense only if Russia as well had been forced to defend itself against a German attack. Was this the case? The first to attack was Austria, when it presented its ultimatum to Servia and declared war. Russia stood behind Servia and threatened Austria; Germany backed up Austria, and issued an ultimatum to Russia. Russia might have avoided a war by stopping its mobilization, Germany might have avoided it by bringing pressure to bear upon Austria. And should we say: "The real reason lies much further back; Russia mobilized because Germany had humiliated it in 1909; not Austria but Servia was the first aggressor, when it inspired the murder of the Austrian prince"?—it but proves that a close examination of the question as to who was the aggressor, leads us into a tangled web of past quarrels and antagonisms. We come across Austria harrassing the Serbs striving for a large national state and export harbors; Austria aiming to extend its powers over the Balkans; imperialistic conflicts between Russia and Germany in Armenia.

The war of 1914 did not come because one nation attacked another voluntarily with malice aforethought; it came because at a certain degree of tension Russia and Germany both said to themselves: "If it must be le, let it be now!" They grasped the opportunity. In the last days of July a fruitful attempt had been made to persuade Austria and Russia to come to terms in the Servian controversy; what prevented peace was the ultimatum issued by Germany—according to England; was the mobilization of Russia—according to Germany. In reality there is no way of distinguishing the aggressor from the defender; each one attacks and defends himself from the other. In this struggle for world-power any differentiation between "aggressive" and "defensive" wars is senseless.

Nevertheless this differentiation has played an important part in the Social Democratic movement. Repeatedly Socialists have declared openly that they were opposed to all war, but that they would defend their countries if attacked. Prominent party leaders like Bebel espoused this point of view. Kautsky opposed him in the convention of 1906 in Essen, calling attention to the fact that

the government can always make it appear its nation is attacked. How true this standpoint is, the war of 1870 with Bismarck's falsified message, as well as the present war, plainly show.

But this does not entirely dispose of the matter. This point of view is founded on the conception that wars are precipitated at will by the action of one's own or a foreign government. The position of the proletariat then should be: Down with the disturbers of peace! That may have been true at one time; but not to-day. War to-day is imperialistic war; the disturber is capitalistic development, capital hungry for world-power. They all want power, land, colonies. They threaten and are threatened by each other. None of them desired war voluntarily, knowingly, but they all knew that it was inevitable, and struck when chances were favorable. These circumstances make the war appear to every bourgeoisie, to every government, a war of defense. It was more than mere hypocritical attempts to deceive the people. It was a war *in defense of their world-power, their world-aims* against those of their competitors. Thus each felt that he was in the right, and went forth with all the energy and conviction he possessed to clear the track for the future. For the mass of the people the word defense has an *entirely different meaning.* Farmers and small citizens know nothing of world politics. When they are told, "The Russians threaten us, the Germans are attacking us," it means to them a defense of their peace and their livelihood. The catchword so many Socialists use, "Take part only in a war of defense," is the political translation of the old bourgeois and small farmer standpoint: "I will leave him alone who leaves me alone, but him who will disturb the peace of my home I shall strike upon the head."

So it was natural as well as necessary for the ruling class to make the war appear as a war of defense. This lie alone could make the mass of the people support war. The middle class and farmer elements came of their own accord, the Socialist party responded to the old formula that provides for participation in wars of defense. This formula at the present time serves only to make the workers willing to go to war for Imperialism. If in times to come wars are to be prevented by the action of the proletariat it will first be necessary that they become mentally free from bourgeois influence and middle class traditions. *A new International can be built up only upon one principle: "Down with all war, down with the war of defense!"*

Action Against War

It is not enough for the workers to oppose war, every war, to refuse to be led astray by the cry of national defense. They must also have the power and the means to prevent war.

In the *International Socialist Review* for November a writer rightly condemns the European Socialists in no measured terms for having violated their duty as Socialists. He picks to pieces their flimsy arguments of "defense," "fatherland" and "culture." But when he comes to the question, "Could the Socialists have acted otherwise than they did? Could they have prevented the war?" his answer is: "A careful analysis of the facts proves that they could. It lay within their power. There was just one course they could have adopted. It was desperate. It was bloody, but it could have saved millions of lives. It was the only weapon that could have beaten down the murderous clash of militarism. *It was revolution!*"

This answer will fail to satisfy a great many readers. Furthermore, it will excuse the German Socialists in the eyes of a great many others. For there is not the slightest doubt that Germany, not to speak of the others, was not ready for a proletarian revolution. The number of those who oppose Socialists there is again as large as the number of those who cast Socialist votes. Even among the latter only a part would fight actively for Socialism. Behind the others stands the whole might of the nation. If Revolution were the only alternative, we should have to concede that the German Socialists, as well as the others, could not have acted differently, that they were forced to submit without opposition to the commands to war of the bourgeoisie.

But this conclusion is false. To make this clear let us first examine the meaning of the word "revolution." What seems in the distant horizon a single fine streak of color becomes, as we approach it a broad landscape with hills and valleys, full of variation. So a revolution, which in the distance looms up as one indivisible final goal, as one single, glowing deed, becomes as we approach it a whole historical period with peculiar characteristics, full of charges, of ascents and descents, of great events and deadening reverses. He who stands far from the goal in the midst of the first period of propaganda and rallying of forces, in the first period of the workers' awakening, is right when he points to the revolution as something in the distant future, as the signal for all great coming changes. There lies the mountain, the glowing summit, whose view inspires us with courage and patience as we painfully force our way through thicket and morass. But when the great masses have been organized and are filled with the spirit of Socialism, then Revolution ceases to be an ideal and becomes a practical question. The distant ideal becomes definite, difficult practice. *How* shall we go on? He who stands at the foot of the mountain still has the most difficult, the nearest way to go.

Now only can he see it plainly. This was, approximately, the position of the German working-class movement. To the comrades in other countries it seemed so large, so mighty, so strong, that they asked: Why do not the Germans make a Revolution? In reality they but stood at the foot of the mountain. In reality the German saw most clearly how difficult, how great a struggle still remained, how far off still was victory and Socialism.

Revolutions are not made; they grow out of deeds, movements, struggles, when circumstances have become ripe. This ripeness of conditions depends upon the existence of a revolutionary class internally so strong, possessing such great social power, that every struggle, every action, results in a victory. The great French Revolution, for instance, was a long chain of rebellions, of meetings of delegated bodies, of peaceful legislation and bloody wars. It was due to the strength and the stubborn self-confidence of the middle class that the beginning, the calling of the "Generalstannde" for the alleviation of the financial straits of its governments, culminated in the Revolution. Every courageous word, every bold deed, every bitter battle with the government aroused energy and enthusiasm in thousands and drew them into the struggle. Their determination forced the government to make concessions, but each new concession, each new attempt at suppression weakened the position of the government. The first representatives that met in 1789 had only modest aims; they hardly knew the strength of their own class. Only during the Revolution and through it, their strength and the strength of the middle class grew and with its power grew its demands. In 1848 we see similar developments. The immediate cause was a parliamentary conflict between the middle class opposition and the government. The prohibition of a public demonstration resulted in tumults, which fed by the deep dissatisfaction of the masses and the small bourgeoisie grew until the whole governmental system was overthrown. And if we look upon the Revolution in a still wider sense, as the conquest of power by the new class of the bourgeoisie, we see a process that lasted for hundreds of years, bitter class struggles alternating with periods of quiet growth of economic power.

The proletarian revolution, which is once more to place a new class into power, will also be a *long historical process,* though it may be completed in a comparatively much shorter time than the ascent of the bourgeoisie to power on account of the rapidity of economic development. This process divides naturally into a number of individual *revolutionary actions.* which alternate with periods of quiet, of peaceful organization and even of periodic collapse.

For a revolutionary action of this kind it is not necessary that the majority of the workers think as Socialists, that they must be willing to sacrifice all for the Socialist Revolution. Minorities can undertake such actions when they feel that the unthinking masses will sympathize with its aim and can be swept along by the force of the movement. Of course, the might of the proletariat, its organization and class-consciousness, must have reached a certain stage to engage in this revolutionary action. And by this action hopefulness, energy and proletarian class-consciousness, the solidarity of the masses, in short the strength of the proletariat, are strengthened so that they will be capable of undertaking still more difficult struggles. The aim of such an action is not the Revolution. These actions are undertaken to gain more *insignificant ends*, that may be termed *important reforms*. But the success of the struggle or perhaps the opposition which necessarily calls forth more energetic activity, will mean increased strength, courage, self-confidence. Aims will grow larger and higher as the scope of the struggle widens. The "Etats généraux" of 1789 thought neither of a republic nor of parliamentary government, the opposition of 1848 desired only more liberal Ministers. But the development of a feeling of power in the people carried them far beyond this original aim. To be sure, citadels may be won in such a storm that lie beyond the strength that has been gained, and may then be lost in a counter-revolution.

Reformists promise the workers that they can win improvements and reforms by uniting with capitalist parties and giving up the class-struggle, that these reforms will improve the condition of the workers, that they will receive constantly increasing rights and influence, so that the world will finally become quite an attractive place for them. Many Radicals speak of the final goal, the Revolution, for which we must strengthen our organization, so that we may, when the hour has struck, suddenly overthrow the rule of Capital by a gigantic rebellion. We maintain, on the other hand, that capitalist rule cannot be destroyed at one blow, that it will take a series of struggles, which, each in itself, will bring a partial gain in as much as the masses will force the ruling classes to give in. But each partial victory must be won by the revolutionary conflicts. In 1893 the Belgian Parliament, and in 1905 the Czar, were forced to give in to a mass strike. In Russia, in recent years, the workers were forced to fight for the most fundamental rights, for their organization and their press by the quiet means of collections and imprisonment, by the greater means of demonstrations and strikes. In America the workers fought for the right of organization and assemblage in a revolutionary manner, by sacrificing their own interests. They could not expect to win these reforms by begging and the good will of the bourgeoisie. They did not say: "Why fight for such insignificant measures? We want the Revolution!" In Germany the struggle for popular suffrage in Prussia was begun five years ago with the revolutionary means of colossal street demonstrations, in spite of police prohibition. This movement has since come to a standstill because the leaders feared that the government would crush the organizations of the workers. Each one of these actions strengthened the power, the courage, the organization of the workers. Their discontinuance marks the beginning of the decline, was the precursor of the present downfall.

At the time of the bourgeois revolutions the decisive actions were civil war, as in England in 1646; armed rebellions, as in Paris in 1790; street battles and barricades, as in 1848. In the proletarian movement the method of armed conflict played a part only in the earliest period, when the Army was still small, technique primitive, cities small and the people middle class in character. To-day we are in a period of gigantic armies and compulsory military service, centralized governments, gigantic cities with millions of working-people;—and other methods prevail. The pressure the masses are now able to exert by demonstrating in the streets and expressing their wishes in spite of policemen's clubs, is a warning to the government; the readiness to sacrifice is the measure of their determination. More effective still is the mass strike, when the proletariat uses its power over production to cripple the whole industrial life of the nation; no government can rule for any length of time against the determined resistance of the masses.

These mass actions are the revolutionary method of the modern proletariat. They are only possible when the numbers, the readiness to fight, the solidarity, and the understanding of the proletariat has reached a high level. But, on the other hand, they awaken these qualities in no small degree, they attract new fighters who have stood aside, they increase their courage, their knowledge, their solidarity.

Instead of a single Revolution we find a series of revolutionary actions, which run through the whole historical period in which the proletariat is fighting for supremacy. Each of these actions has a concrete aim, which is not the whole Revolution and consequently can be granted by the ruling class if forced to it by necessity. Each of these struggles, each of these actions, increases the strength of the proletariat. Each one helps to build the foundation of its supremacy, and undermines a little the power of the ruling class. When, at last, the power of the proletariat has been completely built up, when its organization, its power and its solidarity, its

class-consciousness and social understanding have reached the highest point, when at the same time the moral standing, the authority, the strength and the physical force of the government have broken down, then the class rule of capitalism will crumble like an empty sheli. The Revolution will be accomplished.

If we ask again: could the German proletariat have done anything against the war—because it was strongest in organization and knowledge—the answer is *yes*. It could not have made a Revolution, but it could have used *revolutionary action*. It might have exerted an extraordinary pressure upon the government by calling mass demonstrations and mass-strikes in the week before the war broke out, had it been determined to combat war with all its might.

We know that the conditions were not ripe for such a struggle. There were great Socialist masses and strong organizations—such as will be necessary in other countries as well—but they did not know how to act on their own initiative, the leaders feared that a struggle would mean the destruction of the organization. The movement was not preared for the use of revolutionary tactics—and mass action. But this war will not be the last one.

In a few decades we may be facing a new and greater world-war. Then the proletariat of Europe and America will again face the question: How can we prevent this war? Then we must not beg the question as we did in Basel in 1912. Then the International of Labor must know that it must oppose the war spirit of the ruling classes in all nations with the revolutionary mass action of organizations and a Socialist working-class, lest it be again torn and crushed in the turmoil.

The determination to adopt a revolutionary tactic against war must be the foundation of the new International!

LIGHT AND SHADE OF THE GREAT WAR

BY H. M. HYNDMAN

In accepting the invitation of the Editors of the NEW REVIEW to put my views on the European situation before its readers, I think I may reasonably take a few points for granted:—

1. That this great war is not a capitalist war, or a war desired by capitalists as a class in any country.
2. That the war is due to the action of the last hereditary militarist caste left in the world, the Prussian Junkers, who have dragged their country into a campaign of aggression, long and most assiduously prepared for, in order to maintain their own ascendency over Germany and obtain control over Europe.
3. That Great Britain was unprepared for war and did her utmost to maintain peace.
4. That the attack upon Belgium and the declared intention of Germany to crush France and after France Great Britain inevitably forced Great Britain into war.
5. That Germany as a military power will be finally overwhelmed by the combination she has wantonly raised against her.
6. That Belgium and France at least must be compensated by Germany, so far as is possible, for the hideous wrongs done them.
7. That, subject to such indemnities, to the return of German conquered provinces (as may be desired by their inhabitants) either to their former rulers or to self-government, and the security against another outbreak of megalomania at the expense of her neighbors, Germany must be left quite free to manage her own affairs in her own way. So far as Great Britain is concerned, there is none of the hatred of Germany which Germans so vehemently express against England.*

I believe that is the state of the case to-day and will be for the next few months. What may happen, should the war drag on, and Russia, with millions of victorious troops, hold a dominating position on the continent of Europe, I do not pretend to say.

It is no satisfaction whatever to me that my blackest forecasts

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*I assume that the English White Book, the French Yellow Book, and the disclosures of Messrs. Salandra & Giolitti are well known in America; as well as the official reports on the German atrocities in Belgium and the proclamations of the German generals. These prove that the Germans not only forced on the war, but that they have conducted it in most ruthless and barbarous fashion on the territory of a small neutral power. I remember the Franco-German war of 1870-71 very well. Harsh as were the measures then taken by the Germans against the French, in conquered provinces, particularly by General von Goeben in the north, there was nothing at all comparable then to the frightful conduct of their troops in the present campaign.