

# Economic Causes of War

## ARTICLE NO. III.

**W**HY did Italy go into the great war? Because the Allies promised her a great territorial expansion. It was not to safeguard herself against the Balkan States, but for purely Imperialistic aims, that she annexed Carniola so that she might obtain possession of the mercury mines of Idria, the caverns and grottos of Postojna (the world's greatest subterranean marvels), and her great forest areas. She annexes the Thousand Isles of Dalmatia, and Dalmatia itself for the famous fisheries. Italy will make the Adriatic Sea an Italian lake. Her own coast is sandy with shallow waters, while the opposite coast is high and rocky, easy to fortify, and has deep waters for dreadnaughts and liners. Dalmatia, with a population four per cent. Italian, does not look much like self-determination of peoples, but Italy was promised all this in the Treaty of London, so that the others could pursue their imperialistic lust in Syria, Persia and Mesopotamia.

The Albanians are the oldest people of the Balkans. They were granted their independence after the Balkan war of 1913, and guaranteed the neutrality of their country. By her geographical and strategical position on the Eastern coast of the Adriatic, opposite Italy, Albania has long been coveted by Serbia, Montenegro, Greece and Italy, ever since these nations decided on a policy of expansion. Albania interested Italy and Austria before the war, but as both powers decided to get the whole of the coveted territory, and as neither of them could be satisfied with a part, they were forced to conclude an agreement as early as 1900 by which they agreed to refrain from interference and to guarantee the independence and integrity of Albania in the event of a disruption of the Turkish Empire. This secret understanding explains why no action was taken by Italy and Austria when the Albanians won autonomy at the point of the bayonet, from the Turks in the summer of 1912, a time when a little assistance from them would have guaranteed independence. However, when the Turkish Empire in Europe was disrupted in the fall of 1912 by the Allied Balkan States, Austria and Italy hastened to intervene to prevent the partition of Albania among the several Balkan Powers. This was when Serbia won her way to the Adriatic, but she was forced to retire at the instigation of Austria, who was assisted by Britain at the Treaty of London.

So, again, we see that the independence of small nations is only possible when the Great Powers cannot agree as to who shall annex them. When the war broke out in August, 1914, the Albanians believed that the powers would be so busy fighting among themselves that they (the Albanians) would be able to manage their own affairs with peace. Their hopes were soon shattered, however, as Greece in November, 1914, occupied Southern Albania at the request of the Entente Powers, with the consent of Italy and against the wishes of the Albanians. The Italians later on in the game, landed at Valona. The ink was barely dry on the agreement which gave independence to Albania, by the powers who shouted about Belgium, when they secretly cut up Albania to Serbia, Greece and Italy in the secret Treaty of London, 1915, which bribed Italy into entering the war. The Albanians believing in the righteousness of the cause of the Allies, volunteered in both the French and Italian armies, and their faith in the uprightness of Britain was particularly strong. Valona, Albania's only good port, has been given to Italy. The Tyrol territory, given Italy in 1910, had a population of 537,374. Of these 504,458 were Germans, 19,578 Ladins, and 8,438 Italians. This is another striking illustration of the self-determination of peoples based upon nationality, and Austria now being helpless, Italy has practically no opposition to realizing her desires in Albania.

Italy was an ally of Germany and Austria because it was to her economic interest. It was about the '70's that she claimed Egypt, Tripoli, Tunis and Algeria as her natural colonies, because they were opposite her along the Northern coast of Africa, but

France, also bordering on the Mediterranean, had cast her eyes on those countries. Italy was the natural enemy of France because she checked the National Movement of Italy. In 1870, not content with conquering Rome, many Italians had the idea of occupying Tunis, but Britain to placate France at the Peace of Berlin, after the Russo-Turkish war 1877-78, hinted to France that she had no objection to her taking possession of Tunis should an opportune moment present itself. Britain did this because France would be tolerant to British occupation of the island of Cyprus.

As many Italians were colonizers in Tunis, the French occupation of Tunis, 1881, drove Italy into the German-Austrian alliance in 1882. This bitterness of Italy against France remained until the middle of the '90's. The reappraisal between Italy and France was brought about more by circumstances than through any feeling of goodwill. Tardieu, in his book "France and the Alliances," says: "On 28th September, 1896, Italy gave us a first pledge—by accepting a revision of the Tunisian treaties, which implied an official recognition of our situation in the Regency. On the 1st October a Franco-Italian treaty of navigation was substituted for the one which expired in 1886. Last of all, on the 21st November, 1898, was signed the Treaty of Commerce which had long been desired at Rome. The Italian commercial balance sheet at once showed an increase of 100 million imports and 200 million exports. Our French banks in Paris intervening just when the German economic crisis of 1900 put an end to the financial aid that had previously been obtained in Berlin, saved the Roman market from veritable disaster. But for the 100 millions of Public Debt purchased in 1901 by the Paris market, Italy would in that year have been unable to obtain her economic equilibrium. . . . At this juncture Italy was induced to draw nearer to France by the tightness of her economic situation."

Tardieu then quotes an Italian writer in his book "The Financial Reasons for the Franco-Italian Friendship," thus: "The German economic crisis rendered it necessary that Italy should seek a political reappraisal with France. Italy would have been (in any case) forced to inaugurate a policy altogether friendly to France. If, through a political blunder, such as the visit of the Prince of Wales to Metz, the patriotic sentiments of the French had been wounded, and the Paris market had again begun to sell the Italian Consols, Italy would have been obliged sooner or later to reimburse the French money invested in them. The exchange would again have advanced to its highest rate, Consols would have declined to their lowest ebb, and Italy would have found herself in an economic crisis like the one she had such a terrible experience of in 1893. The powerlessness shown by the German money market to act as Italy's banker, the need of the latter young country's continuing her economic development, and having the aid of other nations richer than herself, together with the fact that the Paris money market has once more assumed the role of banker to Italy, imposed on the government a policy which shall be in perfect accord with that of France."

So it is quite clear that the financial and commercial interests of Italy determined her friendships with France, and Delcasse said in the French Chamber when Italy renewed her alliance with Germany and Austria in 1902: "Neither directly nor indirectly was Italy's policy aimed against France by reasons of her alliances." Then France gave Italy to understand that she could step in and take Tripoli if she did not oppose French designs in Morocco, which also drove another wedge between Italy and her Allies. French writers did not count on any defence against Italy in case of war, and Bernhardt says in "Germany and the Next War": that Italy may be left out of consideration as an ally. The Turko-Italian war was over Tripoli, is believed to have been instigated by France and Britain in 1912 for the purpose of driving the wedge between Italy and her Allies further, yet it would make a horse

laugh to know that Britain encouraged Italy to renew this treaty of 1882 when it expired in 1887, 1891 and 1902 because the Italian fleet might be necessary to check France in the Mediterranean should the need arise. The truth must inevitably force itself to the surface, and E. D. Morel, in his paper "Foreign Affairs," December, 1919, quotes an Italian paper thus: "The fundamental character of the European war has been misconceived. It has been a war between two imperialisms for the conquests of the seas and of raw material, in other words, for the hegemony of the world. One of the parties was credited with idealism and the other with cupidity, the fact being that both were fighting for their interests. In fact, France was no less militaristic than Germany, nor was England less grasping. This universal lust could have been defeated only if neither party had been strong enough to annihilate the other, but had found in what power remained to its adversary a check upon its own cupidity; self-interest would then have compelled the belligerents to listen to words of moderation and to agree to a peace of compromise, which compared to the present peace would have been an ideal peace."

A few days after this statement appeared Viviani repeated once more that "This war was a collision between the forces of Autocracy and Liberty, between the dark powers of Evil and Violence and the powers of Right and Law."

Of course, fellow workers, might being right, the Allies are right, no matter what the Albanians or the Dalmatians may think of Italian expansion on the Adriatic Sea and self-determination.

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## HERE AND NOW.

R. Sinclair, \$8.50; F. Harman, \$1.50; T. Twelve-tree, \$3; A. A. McNeill, \$3; K. Dengg, \$3.24; G. Schott, 50c; H. Williams, 50c; Alex. Shepherd, \$4; F. O. Burke, \$6; E. D. Mitchell, \$4; following \$2 each, Alf. Emery, Harris Bennett, A. T., S. I. J. Knight, Following \$1 each, W. Bennett, W. B. Melsaac, Mrs. Martin, Wm. Donrey, Ed. Cohoe, Ben Sparks, Wm. Mitchell, Joe Hubble, E. E. Cole, A. Spencer C. C. Kennedy, Jake Olson, G. Wild man, C. F. Schroeder, Wm. Van Vliet, M. Goudie. From 13th to 26th April inclusive, total, \$58.24.

## PLATFORM

### Socialist Party of Canada

We, the Socialist Party of Canada, affirm our allegiance to, and support of, the principles and programme of the revolutionary working class.

Labor, applied to natural resources, produces all wealth. The present economic system is based upon capitalist ownership of the means of production, consequently, all the products of labor belong to the capitalist class. The capitalist is, therefore, master; the worker a slave.

So long as the capitalist class remains in possession of the reins of government all the powers of the State will be used to protect and defend its property rights in the means of wealth production and its control of the product of labor.

The capitalist system gives to the capitalist an ever-swelling stream of profits, and to the worker, an ever-increasing measure of misery and degradation.

The interest of the working class lies in setting itself free from capitalist exploitation by the abolition of the wage system, under which this exploitation, at the point of production, is cloaked. To accomplish this necessitates the transformation of capitalist property in the means of wealth production into socially controlled economic forces.

The irrespressible conflict of interest between the capitalist and the worker necessarily expresses itself as a struggle for political supremacy. This is the Class Struggle.

Therefore, we call all workers to organize under the banner of the Socialist Party of Canada, with the object of conquering the political powers, for the purpose of setting up and enforcing the economic programme of the working class, as follows:

1. The transformation, as rapidly as possible, of capitalist property in the means of wealth production (natural resources, factories, mills, railroads, etc.) into collective means of production.
2. The organization and management of industry by the working class.
3. The establishment, as speedily as possible, of production for use instead of production for profit.