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# THE CANADIAN FORWARD

WORKERS OF  
WORLD UNITE  
YOU HAVE NOTHING  
TO LOOSE BUT  
CHAINS, AND A  
WORLD TO GAIN.

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE SOCIAL - DEMOCRATIC PARTY

New Series, Vol. 1, No. 19

TORONTO, CANADA

August 10, 1917

## Why Must The War Go On

By Arthur Ponsonby, M.P.

(This remarkable document by Mr. Ponsonby, the distinguished diplomatist and Member of Parliament, was written just prior to the German peace note of December 12. It was presented to the American Neutral Conference Committee in New York under circumstances almost as dramatic as those attending the Bertram Russell letter.)

The policy of the aggressive German militarist party has been completely defeated. Germany is crippled and bankrupt. Millions of the best lives in Europe have been lost. Millions of men have been disabled and maimed. Millions of homes have been destroyed. Vast territories have been devastated. We are paying six millions a day, and financial ruin stares Europe in the face.

If we are fighting for our own safety do you think the country is in any danger from Germany now?

If we are fighting for France are we quite sure that the Germans would not evacuate all the territory of France they have occupied during the war?

If we are fighting for Belgium are we quite sure the Germans are not prepared to agree to the evacuation of Belgium and to restore to her complete sovereignty and independence? If so, would not this be a better way than the further destruction of Belgian homes and cities?

If we are fighting for Serbia and a free Poland are we quite sure that the Austrians would not agree to a settlement of the Serbian question—which is part of a much larger question—on the lines of nationality? And that Germany and Austria would not consent to the reconstitution of a Polish kingdom?

### Do You Expect a Decisive Military Victory?

Is such a complete victory probable in modern warfare? And, if it could be achieved, would not the sacrifice be out of all proportion to the advantage gained? Moreover, is it a decisive military victory that will bring a lasting peace to Europe? A dictated peace has always meant a vindictive peace. There can be no permanent settlement with such a peace as that. But, if a decisive victory is not probable, then the vast sacrifices which the continuance of the war must entail will be wasted. Is a gamble for a possible temporary triumph of arms—a triumph which cannot in itself provide a guarantee of permanent peace—worth such a terrible price in human life and suffering?

### Do You Want to Punish Germany?

You cannot punish a nation. You cannot even reach those who are responsible. You cannot, by punishment inflicted upon all sections of the people, convince a nation which believes in the justice of its cause that its belief is wrong. Should we believe that we were in the wrong if Germany punished us? Of course, we should not. Punishing a nation means massacring the people and allowing

your own people to be massacred at the same time. This process has been going on for over two years and still continues. The German people are being punished severely, and so are the French people, so are the Belgian people, the Russian people and other peoples. But no government is being punished.

### Do You Want to Starve Germany Into Submission?

This may take years and will cost millions of pounds, and hundreds of thousands of lives. You will starve the British prisoners, then the poor, women and children as well as the men; you won't reach the army for a long time, and you won't reach the rich and the governing classes at all. And when you have done it, and reduced our own country and our Allies to a condition of exhaustion and paralysis, you will feel that Great Britain has been the great upholder of civilization, will you feel that you have laid a sure foundation for a new and peaceful Europe? If you want revolution this is a straight road to it.

Are you sure the war is not going on because of secret agreements we have made with Russia, with Italy, with France? What are these agreements? Ought we to go on fighting without knowing what we are fighting for?

The only powers that can stop this war are Great Britain and Germany. The Allies depend on us. Our financial strength gives us a predominant position. Would it be weakness on our part deliberately to take the lead and bring Europe back to peace? It is a

far greater weakness to go drifting on just for the sake of what is called "winning the war," not knowing what winning may cost us, only knowing how little permanent gain ever comes from the mere triumph of force.

Force and violence cannot bring any government to reason, but only to temporary submission. Force and violence cannot bring contentment to any people. Force and violence cannot create a peaceful Europe. Surely it is better for Great Britain to come forward as the champion of civilization than to continue to be a participant in the most hideous barbarism the world has ever seen.

### Do You Want the War to Go On?

Liberty and justice are not in the gift of any existing government. Militarism and oppression are characteristic in varying degrees of them all. What has been the effect of our attempting to crush German militarism by force of arms?

We have established militarism at home. We have deprived men of their liberty, punished men for their consciences, censored opinion and suppressed free speech. Militarism can only be crushed by the people themselves in a country where a free democracy exists. We cannot free the German people by warfare, but we can enslave our own.

The war for liberty and justice has yet to come. It will be the war of united democracy against the state traditions of discredited governments—not a war of peoples against peoples. It will be a war against bad conditions, against poverty, misery and ignorance. The real enemy is established inside every country. It is the spirit of tyranny, greed, materialism, intolerance and militarism. It is the unfair distribution of wealth, the neglect of education, the idolization of riches. The victims of that enemy are to be

found in slums, in workhouses, in asylums and in prisons. Why not make ready to fight the enemy instead of wasting life and treasure in the slaughtering of men who are as anxious as you are to turn their attention to the real evils that surround them?

The longer you continue this European conflict, the outcome of diplomatic intrigue and the product of the reckless ambition of government, the longer will the real war be delayed.

### Do You Want a Lasting Peace?

If so you must prevent the intrigues of diplomacy and the entanglements of secret engagements, you must avoid a settlement based on a renewed competition in armaments, you must control foreign policy through Parliament, you must defeat the attempts to institute an embittering economic war which must make peace impossible, and you must demand the right of every people with national ideals of its own to develop these ideals unhampered and unthreatened.

If you want to prevent this fearful calamity from happening again you must substitute co-operation for rivalry among the nations, the harmony of an international council for the conflict of international armaments.

These great objects might be obtained without further bloodshed, not by a frenzied desire for revenge and triumph but by the wise determination of the people to insist on the government stating their terms and opening negotiations.

### THE GREATER TEST

(Ernest Crosby.)

So he died for his faith. That is fine—  
More than most of us do.  
But say, can you add to that line  
That he lived for it, too?

In his death he bore witness at last  
As a martyr for truth.  
Did his life do the same in the past,  
From the days of his youth?

It is easy to die. Men have died  
For a wish, or a whim,  
For bravado, or passion, or pride—  
Was it harder for him?

But to live—every day to live out  
All the truth that he dreamt,  
While his friends met his conduct with  
doubt,  
And the world with contempt—

Was it thus that he plodded ahead,  
Never turning aside?  
Then we'll talk of the life that he lived,  
Never mind how he died.

If more lived for their country there  
would be little call to die for it.

### BEEES."

A story is told of a Japanese student at one of the universities, who after going through a course of reading of all the classical political economists, was asked his opinion of the entire subject. He replied that though these books were differently worded, they all taught the same thing: "the art of extracting the honey from the hive without alarming the bees."

What happened to the virtues of voluntary enlistment? Placed in the Capitalist junk-basket, we presume.

**RUSSIAN WORKERS' ANSWER TO HENDERSON, THOMAS AND VANDERVELDE.**

Petrograd, Wednesday.

The Executive Committee of the Council of Soldiers' and Workers' Delegates of Petrograd, in reply to a letter addressed to it by M. Albert Thomas, Mr. Henderson, and M. Vandervelde, publishes a statement in which it explains the program of the impending International Socialist Conference and the part played by the Council in the preparation of the conference. The statement says:

"The Russian Revolution, which is the revolt of the people not only against the tyranny of Tsarism but also against the horrors of the world war, the blame for which falls upon international Imperialism, has placed before all countries with extraordinary acuteness the urgent need of concluding peace. At the same time the Russian Revolution has indicated to the nations the way of realizing this problem, notably the union of all working classes to combat all attempts of Imperialism to prolong the war in the interest of the well-to-do classes and to prevent a peace without annexations or indemnities.

"Having recognized the right of nations to dispose of their destiny, the members of the conference will come to an understanding without difficulty regarding the future of Alsace-Lorraine and that of other regions.

"Moreover, the working classes, relieved of the mutual distrust which the Imperialists envenom, will agree as to the means of granting compensation and the amount of such compensation to the countries devastated by the war, like Belgium, Poland, Galicia, and Serbia; but it goes without saying that such compensation must have nothing in common with contribution which is imposed on a conquered country.

"The Council of Soldiers' and Workers' Delegates considers it futile for parties to make it an absolute condition of their taking part in the conference that the preliminary consent of other parties shall be obtained to any obligatory decisions, for that would give rise in the imagination to irreconcilable contradictions on questions the amicable discussion of which might lead to a solution acceptable by both parties.

"As for your desire to obtain previous complete agreement between the allied Socialists, the way in which we put the problem renders futile any such understanding. We consider that the conference can only succeed if Socialists consider themselves, not representatives of the two belligerent parties, but representatives of a single movement of the working classes towards the common aim of general peace."