

Future of War and Peace

III.—The Insufficiency of Pacifism.

To a humanist it appears incredible that civilized nations should use war as a method for deciding their differences. Even the gains of the victor seem scarcely able to compensate it and justify the suffering and loss of life. Revolutions are sometimes fought for the benefit of humanity, but wars seldom. The present war has, of course, shown that mere humanist considerations are not yet, if ever they can be, of sufficient strength to prevent conflicts. The war occurred in spite of every kind of opposition, religious, socialist, and the arguments comprised under the head of the newer Pacifism.

Unfortunately, it must be admitted, peace doctrine is not an integral and living part of civilized religions—it might be of a number of unorthodox Christian sects or of Buddhism. The fact that in the warring countries the Church, whatever its form, has given its religious sanction to the participation of its particular nation, shows how far imperialist doctrine has invaded religious precincts. The ethics taught by the Church as of supernatural origin have shown their true character, their class and national limits. In nations at peace as well as in those at war the leading churches and religious divisions are so far in accord with national policies as to preclude hope of imminent aid from religion in establishing permanent peace.

It is quite apparent to all thinking persons that a minority of unarmed Socialist workingmen could not have prevented war amongst states thoroughly organized in the military sense and supported by the inflamed public opinion of the majority. It is a hypocritical wall this, "Socialists failed to prevent war," especially since it comes chiefly from those who never were Socialists or gave their energies towards keeping Socialism weak as a movement. Socialism could not save these people from themselves. Nevertheless, Socialists, with notable and increasing exceptions, did not remain true to the point of view of Internationalism Socialism. In supporting their own governments against other governments, Socialists gave up the class struggle for a national struggle. The explanation of this failure is not far to seek. Capital is not as international and harmonious as many Socialists, and others, believed—national interests still predominate overwhelmingly over international interests. This fact finds impression in the nationalist tendencies of even Socialist parties. Depending as they do for their strength and character upon the development which social forces take, internationalism can become a reality for the Socialist parties only when there exists a wider basis for it in the world's economic condition. Internationalism is therefore not dependent upon present actions, but upon actions future conditions will make necessary.

The main argument of later Pacifism was that war did not pay from a moral and economic viewpoint, not merely that it did not pay the loser, but that it offered no gains to the victor. It was considered a general illusion to claim that trade interests could be extended by armies and navies. Nor were colonies of any benefit or economic advantage to the owning power. It was impossible to destroy trade rivals by military means. Unless the people were exterminated they would remain as competitors whether defeated, annexed or compelled to pay heavy fines and indemnities. The annexation of territory did not mean a transfer in the individual possession of wealth, therefore a conquering nation could not grow richer by merely acquiring a new colony.

These are some of the Pacifist arguments. But the claims are not wholly correct. On the one hand, national necessity arrested the movement of last century towards free trade, and now the tide runs so strongly in favor of protection that even England's position after the war presents some doubt. On the other hand, whatever advantages may have been won in the past from the ownership of undeveloped territory, these advantages are gradually declining as development becomes more general. The Pacifist argument is likely to gain greater force in the future. But at the present time the gains from ownership and economic control are still abundantly sufficient to cause war.

A colony even when practically an independent nation, so-called, like Canada, may yet be of tremendous value to the "mother country." The ability of one nation to produce cheaper than another is not the only thing that counts in international trade, especially where colonies are concerned. Race and language ties play their part. Britain's trade with her possessions was, in 1900, ten times that of Germany's trade with British possessions. In 1910 Britain's investments in her colonies totalled nearly as much as in the rest of the world. Barriers may be interposed to prevent even the cheaper producer from capturing trade from the dearer. The surtax and preferential tariff can be employed, as they have been in Canada, to the obvious advantage of the English capitalists over the German amongst others.

But political alliance and ownership in the national sense are sought and fought for on account of greater needs than the mass of ordinary trade demands. They are sought on account of the demands of oil, iron, steel and railroad interests, for the purpose of gaining concessions for one thing. Steel gives our era its distinctiveness. Industrial supremacy tends to the nation which produces iron and steel in the largest and cheapest quantities. Germany's immense and increasing mineral production gave tone and power to German Imperialism. Development in new countries involves a large use of steel and steel products. The movement to open up new territory does not spring from humanitarian sources, nor is it accomplished by the export of books, manufactured food products or clothes. The desire comes from the need of utilizing promising fields for investment of capital, which means the building of railways and development of mines and other natural resources. The procedure is different from the mere sale of commodities, bought and paid for. The capitalists and financiers who wish to "penetrate" a country and develop it, are seeking an outlet for their capital and products. But their investments are necessarily in such a form that they return no immediate dividends. If it is quite unclaimed territory, the land is at once annexed to a particular flag, and the capitalists are given grants, rights and privileges of development, interest guarantees and other securities. If it is simply a backward nation, the investing syndicates may use the power of their governments to wrest concessions and guarantees from the country they seek to exploit. For the purpose of securing exclusive rights and privileges military force is available. Countries like Persia, China and Turkey have on the whole submitted weakly to foreign demands and the creation of "spheres of influence." But when any great power, or little power for that matter, seeks by political and military alliance or by conquest to gain an open field for itself throughout a large area coveted by other powers because of the rich advantages offered their capitalists, the conflict of interest may produce a war.

The French in possession of Morocco,

the British of Egypt, Persia divided into two spheres under Russian and British influence, Russia desirous of strengthening herself in the Balkans where Germany and Austria were striving to make their influence supreme, Turkey in economic dependence upon Germany—all these conditions bore within themselves the germs of war. And so long as capital must seek an outlet beyond home fields, so long as there are possibilities of gain in Morocco, Persia, China or other territory, so long will the clash of material interests contain the possibility of wars.

Mere Pacifism is insufficient to bring permanent peace.

(To be continued.)

WAR AND PEACE.

By Walt Mason.

The bugles sound, the prancing chargers neigh, and dauntless men have journeyed forth to slay. Mild farmer lads will wade around in gore and shoot up gents they never saw before. Pale dry goods clerks, amid war's alarms, pursue the foe and hew off legs and arms. The long-haired bards forget their metred sins, and walk through carnage clear up to their chins.

"My country calls!" the loyal grocer cries, then stops a bullet with his form and dies. "Tis glory beckons!" cry the ardent clerks; a bursting shell then hits them in the works. And the dark-winged vultures float along the air, and dead are piled like cordwood everywhere. A regiment goes forth with banners gay; a mine explodes, and it is blown away. There is a shower of patriotic blood; some bones are swimming in the crimson mud. Strong, brave young men, who might be shucking corn, thus uselessly are mangled, rent and torn. They call it glory when a fellow falls, his midriff split by whizzing cannon balls; but there's more glory in a field of hay, where brave men work for fifteen bits a day.

The bugles blow, the soldiers ride away, to gather glory in the mighty fray. Their heads thrown back, their martial shoulders squared—what sight with this can ever be compared? And they have dreams of honors to be won, of wreaths of laurel when the war is done. The women watch the soldiers ride away, and to their homes repair to weep and pray.

No bugles sound when back the soldiers come; there is no marching to the beat of drum. There are no chargers speckled with their foam; but one by one the soldiers struggle home. With empty sleeves, with wooden legs they drill, along the highway, up the village hill. Their heads are grey, but not with weight of years, and all the sorrow of all worlds and spheres is in their eyes; for they have walked with Doom; they have seen their country changed into a tomb. And one comes back where twenty went away, and nineteen widows kneel alone and pray.

They call it glory—oh let glory cease, and give the world once more the boon of peace! I'd rather watch the farmer go afield than see the soldier buckle on his shield! I'd rather hear the reaper's raucous roar than hear a colonel clamoring for gore! I'd rather watch a hired man milk a cow and hear him cursing when she kicks his brow, than see a major grind his snickersee to split a skull and make his country free! I'd rather watch the grocer sell his cheese, his boneless prunes and early winter peas, and feed the people at a modest price, than see a captain whack an ample slice with sword or claymore, from a warlike foe—for peace is wealth, and war is merely woe.

The average workingman works hard for his wife and children and then goes to the polls and votes against them. He doesn't know or he wouldn't do it, but it is what he does every time he votes for capitalism.

SOCIALIST BULLETS

"Slackers not fit for the Kingdom of Christ's herald: 'Peace on earth, good-will toward men.'"

How happy were the cripples, the widows and the orphans when they learned that Krupps could declare another 12 per cent. dividend.

The capitalists rob the workers and then ask the workers to protect them in the robbery. It is obvious that the capitalists have unlimited faith in the stupidity of the producers.

Workers make shells while politicians make issues; the next issue gives promise of being—"Bread or Bullets."

How superior a man is to a monkey! A monkey must be taught to act like a man, but a man can make a monkey of himself without instruction.

By the way, What is Pershing doing in Mexico? Hadn't we better get the boys' out of the trenches by Christmas?

The high cost of living is going to make the contributions to Santa Claus light. Small merchants will soon see what the system is costing them.

The only remedy for a railroad strike, or any other kind of a strike, is one that the workers must apply themselves. The remedy is Socialism. The workers must apply it, capitalists will not.

Property has no rights where such "rights" interfere with human rights. Property is not sacred. Only life is sacred.

Every able-bodied man a producer or actually in some way useful to the producers—such is the demand of Socialism.

Socialism isn't going to make you a present of anything—it will simply make it possible for you to help yourself to the things you need.

Socialism will not only give every man the full social value of the product of his labor, but it will protect him in its use and enjoyment.

Two great questions are being asked. By the capitalist: Where shall I rest this Summer? By the toiler: Where shall I work this Summer?

Socialism will make this a happy nation of contented and prosperous workers. If you think that would be a bad thing, don't vote for Socialism.

If half the people were starving, the food trust would be all the more prosperous.

While labor may produce wealth, it is evident that labor doesn't use all wealth.

Soldiers have died on the battlefield and martyrs at the stake. Both were victims of nonsense, one willingly, the other unwillingly.

We are going to win this war—the CLASS War. Join up and do your bit. Attend your local. Send your own subscription in now. Hustle along the others.