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DISARMAMENT

LYING propaganda has revamped an old toy—disarmament. And probably it will serve its "good" purpose of turning away our attention from the things that matter, to the things of no account. It is such a nice "brotherly" sentiment and offers great political openings. It makes no difference that similar efforts have already failed: that Hague conferences, international tribunals and Leagues of Nations have played with it, and deserted it for lovelier—and more profitable—excitements. We forget so easily.

In recent days, Lloyd George has taken the mendacious hunchback on his knee, and talked to it of British friendship for America. Which shows the blowing of the wind. Neither is America slow to dilate, somewhat raucously, on the great ideals of "peace," while the "great men" of the flowery kingdom are fervent in similar expressions. Brutus, of course, is an honorable man, but—

Meanwhile, Japan has a not insignificant naval programme, which goes steadily on towards completion. America yearns for a two-power standard and has an appropriation bill for half a billion dollars (less "pork barrel.") Britain is apparently more tentative in naval commitments, not because she is less "progressive" than the others, but because the source of war seems to indicate new weapons and more deadly devices of injury. Research work in electricity, poison gas and disease germs, goes mightily on, with silent but sinister purpose. And it is not without meaning that reduction of armaments applies less to armies than to navies. Rather a strange road to disarmament. What is its prospect of success?

Behind armaments is trade. Large and extensive trade, large armaments and vice-versa. Prior to 1914 the race for huge armaments lay between Brit-

ain and Germany, because between Britain and Germany lay the race for the world market. Germany disposed of, Britain emerges as a dominant power. But, of necessity, face to face with new competition for the self-same world market. Hence dominance implies domination, force, and resistance to force. The world market being limited, the expansion of one power involves the limitation of the others: the business of trade, being paramount and supreme, necessitates the force to safe-guard the routes leading to the market; the monopoly of the world market, being the inexorable necessity of capital, compels the rivalry for armaments. The economic consequences of the last struggle demand two irreconcilable necessities—on the one hand a vast extension of commerce; on the other, a limitation of importations. The consequences of such a situation must be keen competition and potent forces of defence. Given the society of capital, its inhering antagonisms develop all its complex of phenomena.

Thus the forces of monopoly, imperialistic and progressive in character, struggling in competition, are compelled by and for trade expansion into the lethal race for armaments. They cannot stop, or go back; that means failure and defeat. They must go fatally forward; fatally, because success involves the destruction of their civilization.

On the other hand, there is a more numerous but less powerful section of society, individualistic and reactionary in character, whose interests, in contradiction to the broad issues of the future, are entirely centred in the narrow field of the passing moment, and therefore insured only by the continuance of the vanishing conditions of individual business (small production). Like Lot's wife they yearn for the times irrevocably behind them—and, looking backward, are doomed. They cannot see that the forces of progress are identical with the forces of

social development: that the two things are two aspects of unity: that society can only rise to new heights on the strong wings of its unfolding potentialities. In a word, they see the changes going on within society, but not the evolution of society itself. And because they do not understand this evolution those changes are an unfathomable mystery. Caught between the millstones of armament burdens and monopolistic competition: with their eyes fixed on the ideals of Puritan Philistinism: not knowing what is happening, they are being forced by capitalist expropriation out of petty trading and individualism, into the broad and swirling current of proletarian communism.

This section favors armament reductions, and international arbitration, not for love of humanity (although true to the native hypocrisy of trade, it preaches this), but because its existence is threatened by intolerable taxation and aggressive monopolies. The imperialist, on the contrary, knowing the impossibility of arbitration, conscious of secret treaties, invested in the exploitation of the future, fearfully alive to the challenge of new rivalries, plays with disarmament, gauges it as a weapon in the armoury of diplomatic duplicity, but wisely presses forward with the capitalist necessity of preparedness.

Surely while capital lasts there can be no disarmament. Capital is commerce and commerce is exploitation. And because it is exploitation, because its own development intensifies its antagonisms, an ever-increasing force becomes a necessity for its maintenance. Armaments are the tools of capitalist business, for forcing the gates of the world market, and war is nothing more than business (by proxy) in armour plate. Hence, while business exists so must armaments and their burdens continue. There is no middle way. R.

A Review of Capitalism in 1921

Great Britain.

NOT within a decade has there been a more portentous gathering assembled in London, England, than that of the recent conference of chiefs of States within the British Empire. The most vital question, discussed at this caucus was the next theatre for future demonstrations of British naval power—the transfer of naval forces from Atlantic to Pacific waters.

This is rather significant, amounting, as it does, to a frank confession that British trade in Europe has "gone to the dogs," and that a new market must be opened up, in order that the trading class of this country may dispose of their commodities. Where could this market be? Asia, as has been stated more than once in these columns, is the only potential field for an extremely limited number of capitalists to discover profits in.

And the presence of the "grey dogs of war" in Pacific waters means Britain will be a competitor against Japan and the United States for this source of future income. These three competitors, armed to the teeth, will soon confer in Washington, D. C., as to what tools should be used in robbing their victims. The Canadian representative at the London conference is opposed to any demonstration of the British navy in the Pacific, as it would develop hostile feeling between the United States and Great Britain in trade rivalry.

The amount of American capital invested in Canada during the past few years is greater than British, and with all such "investments" grows the desire for political control of the country the money is invested in. Wall Street, New York, is the financial mart for Canadian loans, and Meighen speaks for Wall Street.

However, the wheels of industry are not turned with words; a market for British industries must be found that profits may accrue to British merchants; the forces of the State, not being ornaments, will be employed in the way that will best serve the interests of the propertied class. And if it is necessary to have an election in order to find an executive body that will coincide with British interests, then an election may take place soon.

Europe.

Upper Silesia is still a bone of contention for the ruling classes of Germany, Poland, France and Britain to worry over.

It is a country a little smaller than Belgium in area, prodigiously rich in natural resources which have been developed by the Krupps and Stinnes of Germany. At one time, according to some authorities, eight centuries ago it was a part of Poland. When "self-determination" became popular Polish capitalists invoked all the existing ancient historical titles to this territory, while the Germans plea for the rights of existing ownership, aided and abetted

by French and British interests, who saw in this country under a change of ownership, a bar and a means to further economic expansion.

Burnet Hershey, American journalist, writing in the "New York Times Current History," in an interview with Korianty, reports as follows:

"My campaign (Korianty said) called for an effective counter-propaganda against the powerful publicity methods of Wilhelmstrass. My fellow-countrymen needed much education concerning the movement for a plebiscite. I enlisted the interests of the church, religion being the most powerful factor in the lives of the average Polish worker and peasant. It has been my most potent auxiliary. Next I organized the labor forces. Remember that the Poles here make up the toiling class, and that appeal to class consciousness could not help but yield results."

This labor-fakir, working in the interests of French and Polish capitalists, concludes his remarks in these words:

"France is our ally and will always be ready to back our efforts against the Germans."

The divergent interests of France and Britain developed through the war and, further widened by the terms of reparations, the spoils of war, may end in breaking the entente between these two countries.

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