

SOCIALISM AND THE WAR.

With startling suddenness at the out break of the European war these international forces broke down, on which civilization had relied to maintain peace and community between the nations. Even the socialist international seemed to disintegrate, and the socialists of the various countries joined with the non socialists: unanimously supporting the war in Germany, where the nation is unanimous, or in Belgium; dividing in England between supporters and opponents of the war policy. It would be a mistake to consider this as a failure of socialism, but more and more, as the destruction progresses, the intelligent and thinking people realize that in socialism lies the only hope of avoiding such terrible disasters in future. The last year has shown, that modern civilization, international finance, arbitration treaties and international law charts can not avoid war, but that war will be stopped only by making it useless.

The socialist international was formed before socialism had become an idea seriously considered and discussed by all thinking men of all countries, and a power with which society has to reckon in the economic and the political field, and the international therefore was more

critical than constructive, and its temporary eclipse, with a future reconstruction on constructive lines, should be rather an advantage to constructive socialism.

To understand this, we must broadly consider what socialism is.

Socialism is an economic doctrine. It shows, that the human race can enter a just and stable condition only when all the means of production are owned by society, and their monopolistic ownership by a minority - or by impersonal capital - can not deprive the producer of a - continuously increasing - part of his product. To illustrate: If I manufacture 1 000 rugs during a year, and use 800 by exchanging them for food, shelter etc.. I have 200 left as surplus production: my private property, since I produced them. If I keep these, after a year, or ten years, they still are 200 rugs - less if I use or exchanged same - but they can never be more. As medium of exchange, gold has been established by civilization, and instead of keeping the surplus commodity as rugs, I would exchange them to money, against 2 000 dollars for instance. But now a strange thing happens: if I invest these 2 000 dollars - representing 200 rugs which I made - after ten years they have grown to 4 000 dollars, more or less, without any effort or work of mine, and then represent 400 rugs. I

have thus received the additional 200 rugs - or their money equivalent - without producing them. This means, that somebody else has received nothing for his product, or received less than he produced. This plainly is unfair, and therefore can not be maintained for ever, but it is the necessary consequence of the private ownership of the means of production: before I can produce, I have to obligate myself to turn over a part of my product to the owner of the means of production, to have him allow me their use, and money, that is, the equivalent of commodities, thereby becomes capital, that is, money which multiplies itself without work of its owner.

The part of the product which capital receives, becomes additional capital; that part, which the producer received, either is consumed, or, if saved, also becomes capital, and thus capital continuously increases, and thereby its control over the producer, so establishing the unstable condition of society which we now see around us.

It is obvious now that socialism does not mean elimination of private property in money or commodities, or communism, but it means the abolishment of capital, that is, of the ability of money to multiply itself without any effort of its owner. Socialism has nothing to do with religion, with nationality, or with politics — except that like

prohibition, or womens suffrage, it may be made a political issue, and is so in the socialist parties of all countries. Also, it has nothing directly to do with the form of government: while we consider democracy as the highest and final form of government under socialism, other people may be able to imagine a socialistic monarchy, or even a socialistic theocracy - and some of the great popes of the middle ages were close to it, and in the clergy, separated from local interest by celibacy, the church of Rome already has an administrative organization.

Nations, as groups of people of similar race, customs and language, may persist under socialism, but there could be no war, as there would be nothing to fight for: all the means of production are universally available to every producer, and private property is inviolate and no financial interests exist. War thus could bring about no change in anybody's condition, and preparation for war, armaments and militarism would cease as useless.

Thus universal peace and the elimination of war, is a necessary result of socialism, but it is no more socialism than Mr. Carnegie is a socialist, and within our present capitalistic society, socialists may well differ whether and how far war armaments and military preparation may be necessary.

The socialist international - especially in those countries, where socialism had not yet advanced to the power of carrying out a constructive policy - had taken a stand against preparation for war under any condition, and been antinational rather than international, and therefore, when the nations of Europe considered - whether rightly or wrongly is not for us to decide - that their vital interests require decision by war, and nationalism ran high, the international was eclipsed, and the socialist parties of the different nations went their separate ways: but they are still socialists, accepting the economic doctrine of socialism.

There will probably be a number of attempts to reconstruct the old international as an antinational, by accentuating those features, which have been its weakness during the present crises, but these in my opinion must remain abortive. Socialistic ideas have now advanced too far, to be satisfied with a mere negative program of antinationalism, anti-war, anti-militarism etc., and a constructive program is demanded. Thus the socialist international will be reformed on the single principle of economic socialism, dealing with the international - but not necessarily antinational - aspects of the constructive work of socialist re-organization of society, without scattering its efforts and wast^{ing} its energy in fighting against things.

which are unavoidable under capitalism, but which would vanish as a matter of course with the socialization of society, such as war and militarism etc. then, by combining the constructive forces of all the nations, such an international will be a power controlling the destinies of the world.

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