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THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL AND ARBITRATION

Social-Democracy, the proletarian International, is the only power in present-day society, truly and strenuously opposing the ever-threatening war and the preparations thereto, which are exhausting the vital forces of the nations.

Though there are many elements in the different bourgeois parties who do not differ from us in their opinion on the subject of armaments and the settlement of international conflicts by violent means, they have never and nowhere formed a real power for this purpose.

The individuals, constituting the bourgeois peace movement, are very often in their own respective countries found cordially supporting increase of armaments, and instances of opposition from their side are extremely scarce.

Notwithstanding the fact that the danger of ever increasing armies to humanity and to civilisation is more and more being realised in all classes of society, there is no country that does not continue to increase its armaments. The welkin rings with exclamations for peace, but the war budgets ring louder still.

The nations are groaning under the burdens laid upon them for the support of militarism ; they meekly bow under the power of the soldiery, that plays a leading part in every country ; and if from the ranks of the bourgeoisie now and the voice of common sense and

of humanity lifts itself, the very first patriotic outburst causes politicians, press, and clergy to bow their knees in unison to all-powerful militarism. The patriotic cant, fed by those interested in the manufacturing of engines of war, may cause dislike among the bourgeoisie, but never any real resistance.

Regarding the open, energetical struggle against war and militarism, the proletariat alone has never laid down their arms.

The international congresses of the socialist parties have so often and so clearly put the case of the proletariat against the militarist excesses of the modern States, that repetition may be considered superfluous.

The struggle against armaments has meanwhile been carried on by the socialist parties alone; the bourgeoisie as a whole has over and over again been willing to assist the increase of armaments. On the other hand a movement is on foot, which up to now has obtained more confidence with a part of the bourgeoisie than with the socialist proletariat, viz. the movement for the promotion of arbitration in international differences, so as to finally arrive at a situation in which all such differences can and will be settled by way of arbitration.

It is perfectly true that the governments, especially those of the great Powers, have hitherto either not at all, or else very reluctantly moved in this direction; but it is also undeniable that there are many amongst the foremost bourgeois politicians, who will not have anything to do with the struggle against armaments.

But, though it is certain that within measurable time the idea of arbitration will not have made headway sufficiently to make a means of opposing armaments—it undoubtedly is a means to settle rising conflicts otherwise than by violent measures.

The point of view of the socialist parties regarding this matter has already been discussed a few times at international socialist congresses, and always in a spirit of adhesion.

The London international congress of 1888 already desired war to be replaced by arbitration.

The resolutions of Paris (1889), Brussels (1891) and Zürich (1893) do not mention arbitration, but the latter contains this sentence:— « that the socialist parties shall support all such societies that promote peace. »

The London resolution (1896) demands:— « Establishment of

an international court of arbitration, the decisions of which to be binding. »

The Paris resolution (1900), however, protested against « peace conferences as that of The Hague, » which are simply frauds, « as the recent war in South Africa has proved. »

But at Stuttgart (1907) the case was put as follows :— « The Congress is convinced that under the pressure of the proletariat sincere application of international arbitration shall be put in the place of the insignificant steps of the governments in this direction, and the blessing of disarmament can be obtained, which will make it possible to apply the enormous personal and financial sacrifices, now absorbed by armaments and war, to purposes of civilisation. »

The resolution of Copenhagen (1910) requires socialist members of parliament to stand for :—

a) the oft-repeated demand that all conflicts between different States shall invariably be settled by international courts of arbitration ;

b) international treaties aiming at general disarmament, in the first place the conclusion of agreements by which naval armaments shall be restricted, and the right of privateering shall be abolished.

It may be stated with satisfaction that the social-democratic groups in all parliaments have repeatedly and on every suitable occasion acted on these instructions. And the idea that recourse to arbitration ought to take place more than is now the case, is increasingly permeating public opinion and governments.

This is in no small measure due to the feeling that every effort at settlement by violence will be strongly opposed by the social-democratic parties, which enhances the risks for the governing classes. But another factor is here the fact that the modern armaments are of such a kind, and of such dimensions that governments become more and more reluctant to risk the terrible consequences of a war between great Powers.

Conflicts, arising out of the commercial competition between the different countries, will recur as long as this competition, unavoidable under capitalism, shall exist.

Such conflicts may arise out of economical matters, or out of the imperialistic rivalry over a country about which two Powers are contending.

The commercial affairs forming the subject matter of such a conflict, may be important for a few individuals, or for a certain coterie of individuals, but never for a nation as a whole. And however great their importance and significance might be, it is out of the question that they would ever be equal to the cost of a war.

Take as an example the Panama canal. The question whether American shipping will be privileged in regard of canal dues is certainly important. But the cost of a war between Europe and the United States would be ample to pay for the construction of one or even more competing marine highways. But this would not even be necessary, for if the United States succeeded in monopolising the canal for American shipping, many commercial interests, American ones too, would be harmed in such a degree, that in that country itself so many voices would be raised against it as to put an end to it.

It is moreover, nowadays communis opinio that no State can wage a war, which, even if won, can yield such economic advantages as to balance the economic loss caused by that war.

International traffic and relations have become such that the loss entailed by a sudden stoppage of the same between a couple of modern industrial or commercial states, could not be estimated.

The sum total of the world's commerce, importation and exportation, has risen from 75 milliards of Marks in 1890 to 139 milliards in 1910.

Nowadays it is impossible to disturb the economic life of one country without seriously hampering that of many other countries. From the capitalist standpoint, too, no nation can gain any advantage through going to war, even if it were a foregone conclusion that the victor could charge the entire cost of the campaign to the vanquished. The economic ruin of one great country means an economic calamity for the whole civilised world.

The objects of strife, in the shape of countries fit for colonisation by European Powers, have almost disappeared, now that Morocco and Tripolis have been appropriated. The manner in which the dispute about Morocco, so repeatedly extremely dangerous to European peace, was settled, is an example of an international agreement concerning an extraordinarily difficult subject, which certainly held for us the abomination that the fate of countries and nations was decided without any reference to their will and desires, but it

was nevertheless satisfactory that Europe was spared a war, which would all the same have brought these countries and nations under a foreign yoke, but then at the cost of sacrifices which could hardly be enumerated.

It is the task of the socialist parties in the different States to pursue such a policy concerning these countries, annexed for purposes of colonisation, that the autonomy, of which they have been deprived, be restored as soon as possible—an autonomy which will then assume a higher form as previously had been the case.

A third category of conflicts between great countries results from the question which country will be dominating power in a given part of the world, without directly annexing the same. Such a conflict was the cause of the Russo-Japanese war; such a conflict threatened during the last war in the Balkans; such a conflict is evident in miniature about Albania. It is, however, hardly probable that over such things a European war will be waged. The conferences of the great Powers will arrive at a solution when the nations are vigilant, and the governments plainly show that such differences are not worth the spilling of blood.

Even because real, tangible interests, which would make war worth while, are lacking, do the jingo-politicians in the different countries go about with so-called ethical motives: the honour of nation, the national virility, and such like, to promote increase of armaments. Like Moltke they call universal peace not even « a beautiful dream; » they contend that war enhances the will, the energy, the power of the nation, that continual peace enervates human nature, that supremacy in the world has ever been, and will always be the privilege of those nations showing greatest powers in war.

These sophisms have to do service, now that the indescribable damage to the interests of the peoples caused by every war, is becoming more and more evident.

It need not be show that they are sophisms, when the situation of the different countries is reviewed. If it were true that the nations become enervated through long periods of peace, even to decline, then the Swiss, the Belgians, the Scandinavians ought to be the enervated, the Turks the energetic. If the fighting peoples were those that dominate the world, then Mexico and Venezuela would take first rank among the nations.

That the struggle between the nations has hitherto been an armed struggle does not prove that this has been to the advantage to these nations or the humanity. This can certainly be proved of struggles of other kinds. But the fact of such worthless arguments being brought forward shows that it is no longer possible to convince the nations of the necessity of war. This being conceded, the cry for deliverance of the burdens of militarism must at last awaken the masses. The natural method of preventing war is every method of settling disputes without recourse to armed force.

This method has already been indicated by the undeniable facts : it is the method of international arbitration. This method has already been applied by many governments, and its chance of being more widely accepted and used has never been greater than at the present time, when the burden of militarism has everywhere become almost unbearable, and the nations are very nearly exhausted. From 1899 until 1910 the Court of Arbitration at The Hague has been notified of 90 agreements, concluded between different nations, all of which being concerned with the settlement of eventual conflicts. There are, besides, another 30 treaties in existence. Among these are undoubtedly many of which can be said that they were concluded between countries, between which war is highly improbable, as, for instance, the model treaty of February 26th. 1904 between Denmark and the Netherlands, the first treaty making no other reservation than that the conflicting interests should not concern a third nation.

The usual paragraph providing that only such matters as do not concern « les intérêts vitaux, l'indépendance ou l'honneur » are to be subjected to arbitration, does not appear in that treaty.

The following summary shows which countries concluded arbitration treaties :—

Germany, 1 ; United States, 21 ; Argentine, 10 ; Austria-Hungary, 3 ; Belgium, 8 ; Bolivia, 11 ; Brazil, 4 ; China, 2 ; Columbia, 3 ; Costa Rica, 1 ; Denmark, 11 ; San Domingo, 9 ; Equador, 1 ; Spain, 18 ; France, 11 ; Great Britain, 14 ; Greece, 2 ; Guatemala, 9 ; Haïti, 1 ; Honduras, 1 ; Italy, 8 ; Japan, 1 ; Mexico, 11 ; Nicaragua, 2 ; Norway, 11 ; Paraguay, 9 ; Netherlands, 6 ; Peru, 9 ; Portugal, 14 ; Rumenia, 1 ; Russia, 4 ; Salvador, 10 ; Sweden, 10 ; Switzerland, 8 ; Uruguay, 9.

If the South and Central American republics loom large in this

summary, it can certainly not be denied that the danger of war between these countries has been greatly diminished. Of the great Powers it is Germany that has hitherto held aloof, and has concluded hardly any treaties.

The treaty with Great Britain of July 12th. 1904 and renewed December 7th. 1909 has remained the only one effected by that nation. A certain reluctance about treaties with near neighbours is evident. France made a treaty with the Netherlands but not with Belgium. Austria did not enter into any agreement with any of the surrounding countries.

About the contents of these treaties there is not much to be said. There are among them with many reservations, and there are also that subject everything to arbitration. The principal thing about such a treaty is that it is in existence, that it indicates a way which can be trodden in case of conflicts arising, without the danger to any of the parties of being desserved by the jingoes at home as cowardly and craven, when it declares itself willing to negotiate.

The greatest practical value in the standing treaties is contained in the fact that the mechanism of the court of arbitration is as it were automatically put in motion as soon as the conflict arises.

Moreover, when it is known in the countries concerned that a conflict is to be settled by arbitration, public opinion remains calm and does not fall an easy prey to jingo demagogues. Naturally, it is important what kind of treaty is effected. There are now some in existence which may serve as models : The Italian-Netherlands treaty of November 20th. 1909; the Italian-Danish of December 16th. 1905 ; the Danish-Netherlands of February 12th. 1904 ; the Danish-Portuguese of March 20th. 1907 ; and the treaty of the Central American republics of January 29th. 1902.

During the latter years not so many treaties of arbitration have been concluded as during the years 1904-1909. It is not impossible that the international situation, which during the years 1910-1913 was decidedly more unfavourable than during the years 1904-1909, partly accounts for this. But a favourable factor is assuredly to be traced in this connection in the attitude of the United States, as well under president Taft, as under president Wilson.

This government is of late endeavouring to introduce a new sort of treaty, purporting that the government of the United States is prepared to enter into agreements with all the nations of the world,

by which the contracting parties bind themselves to subject all differences, of any kind whatsoever to the judgment of an international committee of enquiry, the said committee to report within a year's time. The states retain their liberty to do as they like with the conclusions of the report, but they are bound not to declare war, nor to perform any act of war, during the enquiry. In its latest form this scheme has been called « Bryan's peace scheme, » because the principle has already been defended by Bryan at the XIVth. inter-parliamentary conference of 1906, held in London. It need not be explained of what importance the conclusion of such a treaty would be to the peaceful settlement of conflicts. The greatest danger of war is still to be found in the possibility of confounding public opinion in a case of a conflict unexpectedly rising, the facts by both parties being coloured and exaggerated, while there is no time for the truth to manifest itself.

It is the great danger of secret diplomacy. And when war is once broken out, then things are not cleared up at all for reasons of state. Would the history of the telegram of Ems ever have seen the light if Germany had been beaten in the war of 1870-1871?

There seems to be serious possibility that the proposition of the United States will meet with success. On December 3rd. 1913 minister Loudon acquainted the Parliament of the Netherlands with the fact that a treaty between that country and the United States, based on the Bryanite principle, was on its way to Washington. It seems to be intended to make that treaty serve as a model.

On September 1st. 29 states had declared to be willing in principle to enter into such an agreement, viz. :— Italy, Great-Britain, France, Brazil, Sweden, Norway, Russia, Peru, Austria, Netherland, Bolivia, Germany, Argentina, China, San Domingo, Guatemala, Haïti, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Denmark, Chili, Cuba, Costa Rica, Salvador, Switzerland, Paraguay, Panama, and Honduras. It is of the greatest significance that the six great European Powers, as well those of the Triple Alliance as those of the Triple Entente are included in this number.

It may be readily granted that these things would lose a great deal of their significance, if the determined peace party, consisting of the socialist proletariat, were lacking. But for the success of the work of that peace party they are of great importance. The History in Italy has shown that chauvinistic outbursts can temporarily be very powerful. When war is once broken out, the chauvinistic

storm blows stronger every day. But if a period of twelve months intervenes between the *casus belli* and the possibility of actual war, it will be a hundred to one that during such a period common sense gets the upper hand, especially in those countries where a strong socialist party is in existence, with a parliamentary group and a well-equipped press, and also the courage to squarely oppose the war parties.

The conclusion at which I arrive is not a new one. It has been arrived at by many international congresses. But the circumstances lend her great actuality. It is possible to entertain optimistic opinions about the growing power of the socialist parties, and the means they can adopt to prevent war, even when the governments have resolved that there will be war. In this respect I do not belong to the optimists. War once declared and begun, it is not wisdom that speaks any longer, it is the cannon; such has been taught by experience. Nationalist sentiment then prevails, the spirit of war is supreme—a spirit against which the working classes, too, are often far from immune.

The socialist party itself will continue to stand for peace, but there is the greatest danger that she will be crushed under foot by the foolishly blinded masses. Therefore it is much safer to be able to have recourse to arbitration.

Prevention is better than cure. And if the cry for arbitration is neglected by warlike governments, the anti-war movement against such governments will be strengthened.

Arbitration treaties being generally entered into, it cannot long before the nations will see that armaments are not only unsupported but also useless. This latter feeling is now lacking. The danger is now too evident, which prevent any country to take the first step, or to refrain from taking further steps in the direction of increased armaments.

In every country it is now possible to say:— « Look about you; your neighbours, who to-morrow may be your enemies, are armed to the teeth. What do you mean than by your demand for decrease of armaments? Convince them of its necessity first, and then come to us. » General adoption of arbitration will bring about that feeling of security, which will have to be realised before there will be any possibility of decrease of armaments.

As in so many matters, decided upon by international congresses, the choice of the means toward realisation has in this case, too, to

be left to the discretion of the socialist parties in the different countries. Action in parliament, so as to spur on the governments to enter into arbitration treaties with possibly all nations in the world, stands first. But it will also be useful to support the peace movement in each country in such a wise that its influence on the governments will be most effective. The antithesis : « Here the peace-loving proletariat, there the warlike bourgeoisie, » ought to be abandoned, as it is not true that the non-proletarian classes as a whole would find their interests served by any war. As regards economic interests this is sufficiently evident ; and for the rest, the times are in so far past that the governing classes were able to use the governed as their catspaw, that through universal service in nearly all countries war would claim the blood and life of all classes.

The struggle against war, carried on especially and thoroughly by the proletariat, has this in common with so many other activities of the proletariat that it does not alone serve proletarian interests, but thereby also those of humanity as a whole.

To bring about the co-operation of all the elements that may be mobilised in the war against war, so as to force the governments into accepting arbitration in all cases—that is the practicable task which each socialist party in its own country, according to circumstances, has to perform.

By reason of the foregoing theses the undersigned has the honour to propose that the Congress decide to include the following paragraph in a resolution on Imperialism and Arbitration :—

« The Congress enjoins the socialist parties of all nationalities, to bring to bear every possible force upon the governments, as well by their representatives in parliament as by all sorts of activities without parliament, whenever practicable in co-operation with such other elements as strive to attain the same object, so as to promote as soon as possible that all international differences will be submitted to the judgment of arbitration committees. It is desirable that the nations stipulate in such arbitration treaties that such differences will be laid before such committees by means of previously arranged procedure. It is equally desirable that the composition of such committees is determined in the aforesaid treaties. »

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