

INTERNATIONAL
SOCIALIST BUREAU

People's Palace
BRUSSELS

International Socialist Congress of Vienna

(August 23-29, 1914)

DOCUMENTS

3rd Commission : Imperialism and Arbitration

REPORT BY H. HAASE

Capitalistic production has developed at a tremendous pace in all industrial countries, in Europa as well as in America. Individual employers give way to powerful companies. Independent undertakings are united in big concerns. Monopoly takes the place of free competition. Amalgamations and trusts control the economic life. At the same time banks also are amalgamating.

The close connection between the big banking concerns and the big industries has a disastrous effect, upon production, trade, and home and foreign politics.

In their lust for increased profits the ruling classes seek out and secure new raw material districts, new markets for the products of industry, new districts where their capital can be used for the purposes of exploitation. Goods and capital are being exported in increasing amounts.

Imperialism is the deciding factor in the life of the modern State. Efforts are directed towards the bringing together of the mother State or Country and her Colonies in an united empire, the efforts towards the establishment of an empire, so large, that it is able to provide all raw material for its industries and to find markets for the products of its industries within its own borders.

This idea is so utopian that it has captivated not only the bour-

geoisie but also the materialistic middle classes and intellectual people.

The colonial policy, accompanied by the forcible expropriating and proletarianising of the natives and the expansion policy which is followed with the object of securing the influence in countries in which capitalism has not developed is the fulcrum of foreign politics.

Capitalism, forcing its way forward, disturbs the existing social order everywhere, destroys the independency of primitive people, threatens the independence of countries which have not progressed so far economically.

The suppression and exploitation of foreign people, and also the increase of the danger of war between rival capitalistic states are inseparable accompanying circumstances.

There must be struggles and conflicts in the fight for the same booty. In order to hold a superior position in comparison with other competitors, war materials are continually increased, and secret preparations for war are carried on. The competition in armaments which has developed to the degree of insanity lives upon the very marrow of the people, absorbs an ever increasing amount from the income of the State which should be devoted to educational purposes, and strengthens the impulse to engage in combat.

In consequence of the blind obedience which is cultivated the standing army becomes a tool at the disposal of the Imperialists. The hypocritical talk about the « mission » of capitalistic states to « spread civilisation » throughout the whole world is not enough to hide the real character of Imperialism. In reality, Imperialism practises an unscrupulous policy of robbery in the interests of the profits which are regarded so sacredly and a policy which results in the destruction of the people.

All the Imperialists, especially those who are interested in the armament industry, see their corn ripening, when unrest develops and increases. They do not allow the people to rest in peace, they do all they can to prevent peaceful and friendly understandings, they sow again and again the seeds of mistrust and hatred between various people and by means of the chauvinistic press which depends upon the Imperialists and which is the devoted servant of imperialism, they poison the streams of international relationship.

The « International » regards these criminal activities not only with abhorrence, but opposes them with all the strength available.

It emphatically demands the conversion of the standing army in all countries into an army efficient for the purposes of defence. United to fight the existing standing army and to fight militarism, the International makes a firm and passionate protest against the insanity of the competition in armaments which is destroying the people, and incessantly appeals for a simultaneous limitation of armaments. The « International » will do all in its power to prevent the people from becoming the play ball in the hands of the diplomatists, who carry on their work in the interests of the ruling classes, in order that their destiny might be decided by the secret agreements of the diplomats. It demands that any difficulties differences arising between different people are to be referred to and settled in all cases by arbitration courts. The alleged insult to the honour or injury to the life interest of a nation to which the diplomatists always refer, when they wish to incite and encourage war, is no reason for refusing the method of the arbitration courts.

Imperialism is a specific stage in the development of capitalism, and only by overcoming capitalism can this be overcome.

But the danger to the freedom and well being of the people connected with imperialism may indeed be reduced and restricted by the watchfulness and activity for the working classes. The stronger the battalions of the workers are and the more they realise their historic task, the more numerous and more closely the proletarian forces are united in the spirit of socialism, the less able are the ruling classes to take the risks of war, inasmuch as they have to deal with the masses who are filled with the spirit of peace.

The feelings of enmity which existed between Great Britain and Germany and which the Basle Congress, 1913, regarded as the greatest danger to the peace of Europe have now given way to a better understanding and feeling of trust. This is largely due to the ceaseless efforts of the International and also to the fact that at last the ruling classes in both countries are gradually coming to realise that their interests are best served by bridging over the differences.

In order to remove the antagonism between France and Germany —an antagonism which constitutes a danger to international peace —the workers in both countries, assisted by the International, will double their efforts, and will, with patience and persistence, further better relations between the two nations, in spite of all chauvinistic activities.

Socialists everywhere, in all lands, will put forth all their strength to oppose Imperialism, the stirring up of strife between and the oppression of people. With all the means in their power they will seek to secure peace and prevent war, acting on the principles laid down in the International Congresses in Stuttgart, Copenhagen and Basle.

H. HAASE.
