

The Conquest of Capitalism

(Continued from last issue.)

THE methods used by British Imperialism have varied greatly: lashing the negroes in the rubber industry until the blood oozed from their pores, starving the Hindu by robbing him of his wheat, fleecing the Mexican and the workers of Tammerfors in the cotton industries. Such is the history of the *making of wealth from blood*—from the blood of the slaves, semi-slave people (coolies), wage workers, small tillers, lumber workers, of barbarian and "civilized" people. Still more wealth, and still more territory in which to invest it! Still more colonies, and still more *battleships* and professional soldiers to maintain discipline!

So long as England led the other nations industrially and was master of the seas, she boasted of not needing duty on her "free trade" for the support of her monopoly. But when competition appeared, the English capitalists demanded protective tariff to unite the mother country and her colonies against the rest of the world.

The developing industry of the United States had all it could do in satisfying the demand of the United States, but this demand was protected by high tariff. In 1898 the United States started on an ocean adventure, returning victorious over Cuba, the Philippines, and some Pacific islands. She entered the race of Imperialism; began to strive for world power. France schemed for Algiers, Russia for the far East, Italy for North America. Austria for the Balkans, Japan for Korea and the islands, Germany for Africa and Mesopotamia, and all of these for China. Statistics indicate, that in 1876 only ten per cent of Africa was colonial territory, but in 1900, this had jumped to 90 per cent. The subject territory of Polynesia had increased from 56 per cent in 1876 to 98 per cent in 1900. In America and Asia there is no unsubjected territory. Between the years 1884 and 1900 England grabbed 3,700,000 square miles with a population of 54 million; France 3,600,000 square miles, population 36,000,000; Germany a million square miles with a population of 14,000,000; Belgium 900,000 square miles, 30,000,000 people; Portugal 800,000 square miles, 9,000,000 people.

When we remember that capital seeks for openings in strange areas we will readily understand that the work of the diplomats increases. It becomes the duty of the embassy not only to attend to political affairs but also to look after business matters. Battleships and large armies are then needed to carry out the plans of the embassy. Moreover, at the same time that the preparation for the war offered the best opportunity for investments (national loans) and the best market (preparation for the army), it became the first duty of the "patriotic" newspapers to support all clamour for war.

Imperialism and the Workers.

How did the economic evolution whose political manifestation became Imperialism affect the workers? The experience of Finland was that the organization of the employers made the winning of strikes more difficult. Frequently, behind many industries, a glimpse of the bankers could be seen; the small business man confessed that he would like to grant the demands of the workers, but the bankers threatened to discontinue credit and to force him into bankruptcy.

We know that it has been the object of the trust to crush trade unionism. The steel trust

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has severed all connections with the unions, even demanded slave contracts; to get employment with the Steel trust a man must repudiate unionism. Everywhere in the world the ever increasing organized workers found themselves opposed by more rapidly increasing organized capital, and many bitter and bloody strikes either failed or became defeats. Even though some groups (English miners) succeeded in getting a few concessions, figures will prove that they did not keep pace with the increase in the cost of living, to say nothing about the improvement of conditions. It is not strange that the form of organization (international, industrial), and the methods of attack (mass action, general strike) became subjects of vital discussion.

The world war broke out. It continued for more than four years. Here we shall not discuss its causes. Let it, however, be observed that the imperialists of both groups have exposed the sins of the "enemy" countries, but these wrongs will be greatly overshadowed by the graft of the foreign embassies disclosed by the revolution.

It is, however, important for us to note that this war has exposed the rottenness of Capitalism. In the beginning it elevated the development of Capitalism to an apparently high stage. The predicted panic did not come, and the centralized bankers cunningly handled the whirlpool of immense sums by manipulating paper. The organizing ability of the capitalists became evident in the admirable system by which the machinery of the banks, trusts, corporations, and trade unions was united under the supervision of the government and its officials (also numerous citizens' organizations) into one great unit. This machinery was created to *serve death*, to destroy the human race. Its work has been very thorough: on the slaughter fields twenty million have been crippled and killed. Plague and pestilence have raged among the soldiers and civilians. "Organized" and unorganized starvation has gnawed the lives from tens, hundreds, yes, millions of men, women and children not only in the warring but also in the neutral countries. And as the industrial machinery was transformed into meat-grinding machines, so the substitutes, chemical slops which poison the vitals of the body, have taken the place of food.

Politically the phenomenon of the imperialistic war proved to be just as horrible. Unhesitating despotism was declared on the first day of the war. In the guise of "military necessity" strict censorship was established. Those opposing war (Jaures, etc.) were shot as a warning to others. The Bourgeoisie instituted a persecution of the bourgeois "peace advocates," and any of these, particularly in America, who opposed the war were given prison sentences from 10 to 20 years. In Russia the Bolshevik representatives in the Duma were sent to Siberia. Karl Liebknecht in Germany, McLean in England, and numerous others were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. No one knows the number of men shot as "rebels" and "vicious men"; the courts-martial of Hungary alone butchered over ten thousand.

The skilfully arranged reason for the war—"the enemy is attacking the fatherland"—

surprised the workers. The sudden mobilization swept them into the ranks, in front of the revolvers of the officers. The treason of the representatives of the Social-Democrats in supporting a defensive war confused the issue. So capital for once could admire its achievement: obediently, yes, enthusiastically, millions marched to their doom for the interest of the exploiter, at the same time that behind the front line the peace was signed and all the powers of body and mind were sacrificed to the war idols.

Capital could not dream for anything more. It hauled in the gold and lived in luxury. But a crash came.

A crash was bound to come. The wonderful system of capital was constructed on a treacherous foundation. Humanity cannot live on slaughter. Revolutions came. First in Russia, then in Bulgaria, Austria and Hungary, finally in Germany. It is about to begin in the land of the cocky, crowing, English-American capitalist. There also the necessities of life are exhausted; production has served death only. Capital will not have time to swing it over to serve even the livelihood of the slaves; it has time for nothing else, at present, but war. It must maintain discipline in its colonies and provinces (India and Ireland). It must attempt to strangle the revolutionists of Germany, Austria, Russia. And it must discipline its own workers as well as struggle against Socialism throughout the world.

But still very few understand that the only remedy for these horrible conditions is Socialism. Certain Social-Democrats and trades union men, who during the war have prostituted themselves in the service of Imperialism, are trying to convince the world that Capitalism is unconquerable today. They argue that it still has the possibility of life, that democracy will eliminate its most "glaring" faults, that it is possible to do away with secret diplomacy, without abolishing the secrecy of business, that we can create a "league of nations" and can gradually introduce Socialistic reforms.

This is all imagination; still worse, it is a dangerous deception. It is unnecessary to argue that Capitalism's hour has struck. It made its system serve death and rottenness, therefore it must pass away. It desired to subject the worker still living into a slavery which would be the stepping stone to starvation, disease, misfortunes on the job, and slaughter in future wars. By these means it drives the workers on the road to revolution. Unfortunate are those who claim to be "of the workers and Socialists" but are not organizing the revolution nor fighting in the ranks of the revolutionists. Those workers who listen to their stories find no time to organize, nor have any real part in the fight. This leads to an ever increasing number of the victims. These victims become the burden of the compromising Socialists.

Are not the workers ready for victory? They are! They must conquer. What they now lack they will learn in action. This has been proved in Russia. It does not pay them to go to the capitalist school, for there their ability and intelligence would only deteriorate. Furthermore, Capitalism is using its butchers to strip the workers of their weapons. The workers must not drop their rifles, nor let go the machine gun. Capitalism desires still to slaughter, and is slaughtering the workers—before long it must be slaughtered.