

## Peace and the International

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In spite of military dictatorship and press censorship, in spite of the downfall of the Social democracy, in spite of fratricidal war, the class struggle arises from civil peace with elemental force: from the blood and smoke of the battlefields the solidarity of international labor arises. Not in weak attempts to artificially galvanize the old International, not in pledges rendered now here, now there, to stand together after the war is over. No, here, in the war, out of the war arises, with a new might and intensity, the recognition that the proletarians of all lands have one and the same interest. The world war, itself, utterly disproves the falsehoods it has created.

Victory or defeat? It is the slogan of all-powerful militarism in every belligerent nation, and, like an echo, the social-democratic leaders have adopted it. Victory or defeat has become the highest motive of the workers of Germany, of France, of England and of others, just as for the ruling classes of these nations. When the cannons thunder, all proletarian interests subside before the desire for victory of its own, i. e. for defeat of the other countries. And yet, what can a victory bring to the proletariat?

According to the official version of the leaders of the social democracy, that was so readily adopted without criticism, victory of the German forces would mean, for Germany, unhampered, boundless industrial growth; defeat, however, industrial ruin. On the whole, this conception coincides with that generally accepted during the war of 1870. But the period of capitalist growth that followed the war of 1870 was not caused by the war, but resulted rather from the political union of the various German states, even though this union took the form of the crippled figure that Bismarck established as the German empire. Here the industrial impetus came from this union, in spite of the war and the manifold reactionary hindrances that followed in its wake. What the victorious war itself accomplished was to firmly establish the military monarchy and Prussian junkerdom in Germany; the defeat of France led to the liquidation of its Empire

and the establishment of a Republic. But today the situation is different in all of the nations in question. Today war does not function as a dynamic force to provide for rising young capitalism the indispensable political conditions for its "national" development. Modern war appears in this role only in Serbia, and there only as an isolated fragment. Reduced to its objective historic significance, the present world war as a whole is a competitive struggle of a fully developed capitalism for world supremacy, for the exploitation of the last remnant of non-capitalistic world zones. This war gives to the war and its political after effects an entirely new character. The high stages of world industrial development in capitalistic production finds expression in the extraordinary technical development and destructiveness of the instruments of war, as in their practically uniform degree of perfection in all belligerent countries. The international organization of war industries is reflected in the military balance, that persistently brings back the scales, through all partial decisions and variations, to their true balance, and pushes a general decision further and further into the future. The indecision of military results, moreover, has the effect that a constant stream of new reserves, from the belligerent nations as well as from nations hitherto neutral, are sent to the front. Everywhere war finds material enough for imperialist desires and conflicts; itself creates new material to feed the conflagration that spreads out like a prairie fire. But the greater the masses, and the greater the number of nations that are dragged into this world-war, the longer will it rage. All of these things together prove, even before any military decision of victory or defeat can be established, that the result of the war will be: the economic ruin of all participating nations, and, in a steadily growing measure, of the formally neutral nations, a phenomenon entirely distinct from the earlier wars of modern times. Every month of war affirms and augments this effect, and thus takes away, in advance, the expected fruits of military victory for a decade to come. This, in the last analysis, neither victory nor defeat can alter; on the contrary it makes a purely military decision altogether doubtful, and increases the likelihood that the war will finally end because of general and extreme