
Murderous War in Europe is the Inevitable Culmination of Murderous European Capitalism.

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Through centuries of struggle and hardship man raised himself by slow and painful stages from the depths of brute animals to the heights of refined civilization. Each generation of men added its mite to the store of knowledge of man. Each generation marked and advance in the process of unraveling the deep mysteries of nature, harnessing its wild powers and extracting its hidden treasures.

With its strongly organized nations, its perfected industries, treasures of art, and achievements of science; with its systems of law, codes of morals, and humane religions, mankind greeted the dawn of the 20th Century with justifiable pride as the triumph of creation, the victory of reason. And then something incredible happened. Something horrible and ghastly, something crushing and overwhelming — like the materialization of a mad nightmare born in the distorted brain of a delirious maniac. The elaborate edifice of European civilization suddenly crumbled and collapsed like a house of cards before the fury of a tornado. All work was suspended, all industries destroyed, all reason crushed, all laws violated, all morals discarded. The cultured nations of Europe turned into one howling, savage mob, drunk with the lust of blood — shrieking for murder, murder, murder.

It is as if some malicious and powerful demon had deliberately struck with madness the greater part of the earth's population, and set them to annihilate each other in blind fury for his hellish amusement.

Causes of War.

What makes this war a particularly gruesome and almost uncanny horror to us is the seemingly incom-

prehensible cause of its outbreak and the fatalism of its course and spread. No one will ascribe the war to the assassination of the Austria heir-apparent by the young Serbian patriotic fanatic. No one can indicate any other specific cause.

None of the involved nations, with the sole possible exception of Austria, seemed eager to precipitate the conflict. Each realized the far-reaching disaster of a general European conflagration; each endeavored to deter the other, and each was finally forced into war by a panicky distrust of its neighbor.

There is no aggressor in this war. All belligerent nations are on the defensive. Russia entered the battlefield for fear of Austrian aggressions; Germany called its sons to arms to protect the fatherland against an invasion of the barbarian Russian hordes. Belgium and France fight to defend their territories from the attacks of the hostile German legions, and England helps them in the defense.

The greatest of all wars in the history of the world is fought over no definite issues, has involved no inspiring rallying cries, and produced no popular war heroes.

It was a sullen, dull business of slaughter without spirit or enthusiasm, and participants and onlookers alike remain dazed and stupefied before the inexplicable calamity, and ask themselves, "Why?"

Involves Capitalist Countries.

And still the causes of the war are quite plain, and the wonder is only that it has been deferred so long. *The entire industrial and political development of Europe within the last generation has pre-*

destined it with the inexorable determination of fate — the murderous war in Europe is but the inevitable culmination of murderous European capitalism.

The countries most prominently involved in the war are among those in which capitalism has reached the highest levels of development. Their industries have long been conducted for the private benefit of individual capitalists, thus leading to the enrichment of a small group and the impoverishment of the large masses.

The vast majority of the population were left without means to secure the necessities and comforts of life which they produced for the capitalists. The capitalists, on the other hand, were left without a sufficient home market for the sale of the commodities which their workers created. And so production of necessity became halting and restricted, while the productive forces increased steadily through the introduction of ever more perfect labor-saving devices. Thus there soon were more workers than jobs, and the problem of unemployment became a standing and burning question in all modern European countries.

Unemployment served to reduce wages and thus to curtail still further the purchasing powers of the workers, and the increased prices of all necessities of life by which the capitalists sought to recoup themselves merely aggravated the evil.

The economic life of the European nations was hopelessly demoralized. Production became stagnant and business chronically depressed. Rumbles of revolt became audible among the workers and grew ever louder and more threatening. In this critical situation the shortsighted capitalists of Europe saw but one solution — finding of new outlets for their goods by the expansion of the national territory and the conquest of colonies.

And so the fateful policy of imperialism sprang up. As each individual capitalist competed with this compatriot capitalist for the markets of the home country, so the collective capitalists of each country competed with the capitalists of the other countries for the world market. And as each individual capitalist maintained a force of agents and canvassers for the acquisition and protection of his home market, so each capitalist country was bound to support a host of soldiers and sailors for the conquest and maintenance of its

foreign markets.

The foremost capitalist countries of Europe were forced into a most ruinous policy of military and naval rivalry as a necessary counterpart of their commercial rivalry. Each country tried to outdo the other in the size of its standing army and in the number and deadliness of its dreadnaughts until the nations groaned under the crushing military burdens.

Unable to halt or to move in the consuming process of armament, at the limit of their industrial growth, and menaced by their exploited working populations, the capitalist nations of Europe, armed to the teeth, stood threatening each other for years.

Each of them saw at least a temporary salvation in downing the other and robbing it of its colonies and markets. Each waited for an opening. Europe was an armed camp long before the present hostilities began. Its nations were at war long before the formal declarations. None of them was taken by surprise — they were all prepared when the first pretext came.

War Will Not Help.

The war will not relieve the desperate social and economic conditions of capitalist-ridden Europe. It will kill off a large portion of the unemployed and disaffected workers; it will cause for a time a feverish activity in reorganizing the ruined industries, at least in the victorious countries; it may even result in a temporary wave of “prosperity.”

But the rally will be in the nature of the proverbial “improvement” of which the patient dies. War is the most powerful and dangerous stimulant that can be administered to a moribund industrial system. It may induce a sharp and short flicker of life, but it is bound to leave the system more hopelessly weakened than ever.

As yet it is impossible to say whether capitalistic Europe will survive the present war. In these extraordinary times events move fast and they shape themselves in the most unforeseen and astounding way. The general European war may yet develop into a general European social revolution.

Socialism Must Come.

If the present war will not end in a complete

collapse of capitalism, it will not be the world's last war, as our professional peace apostles fondly predict. The barbarous institution of periodical international slaughter is the inseparable companion of the barbarous system of economic robbery called capitalism — the two are partners in life and death.

War will become a horrible memory of the past only with the termination of the system of wealth production for private gain — with the advent of Socialism. And yet the powerful movement of European Socialism has proved itself powerless to prevent the appalling catastrophe. As yet the dark forces of capitalism are stronger than Socialism.

The Socialists and organized workers of Europe could no more resist the brutal logic of capitalist warfare than they could escape the class wars and horrors of the capitalist regime in times of international peace. Reluctantly but irresistibly they were drawn into the insane vortex of mutual slaughter.

But neither the revolutionary spirit nor the struggles of the workers will be crushed by the war. Their ranks will be depleted by murder, their organizations will be weakened, but their grievances will be more acute, their mission more sublime than ever. They will rally and organize; they will preach and fight, and finally they will conquer.

For this terrible war will remain the most striking proof of the criminal bankruptcy of the capitalist misrule, and the world will be forced to turn to Socialism for salvation from savagery and complete social ruin.

Warning to Americans.

We, on this side of the Atlantic Ocean, have so far escaped the direct horrors of the war. This has been due principally to the fortunate position of geographical isolation of our country and partly also to the fact that as yet we have not been drawn very deeply into the economic rivalries of Europe, and have not had the opportunity to develop a pronounced imperialistic policy or a strong military regime.

But let the American people take warning from the horrible example of Europe. Already our capitalist classes are making a strong bid for the markets of the world. Already we are developing a "colonial policy," fortifying our army and building up a strong navy with steady and fatal consistency.

The ruling classes of the United States are even today steering the ship of state towards a devastating world war as surely and irresistibly as the ruling classes of Europe have been during the last generation.

The next great war will be waged by the United States unless the workers of the country will in the meantime have grown strong and intelligent enough to put an end to the ruinous and murderous system of capitalism. In the United States as well as in Europe the salvation of the nation and the guarantee of domestic and international peace lies with Socialism.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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